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**A study of the experiences of international migrants in the UK: a life history approach.**

**Volume One**

**Richard Toalster MSc MA**

**Thesis resubmitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy**

**October 2011**

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# Abstract

Globalisation can no longer be thought of as a term that merely describes the practical, political and procedural networking of capital, commodities and consumers. Working reflexively it networks people, who use the physical, electronic and psychological networks set up to serve the interests of global commerce to travel from one locale to another. Like the cheap frocks, fridges or foodstuffs globalisation has weaned society to expect, these people are a ubiquitous source of labour, prepared to work in our factories and in our fields, servicing our hotel rooms, cleaning our homes and teaching our children. Yet despite this little is known about the lives of international migrants in the UK from their own perspectives, and there is relatively little social research (educational) with which to contextualise the migration statistics or evaluate the claims of the British press.

This thesis starts by discussing the impacts of rising international migration on a place, Nottingham. It moves forward to discuss the relationship between UK society, globalisation and international migration to explore the idea that globalisation is reflexive, and that people are able to use what Appadurai (1996) terms the scapes of globalisation to network themselves from poorer regions of the world toward regions where they will experience higher levels of safety, structure and reward for their labours. Investigating the range of statistical, policy, evaluative and scholarly research relating to international migrants in the UK, this thesis focuses in on the need to 'get beneath' the statistics, the reports and the evaluations, to understand international



migrants, their lives in Britain and their relationships with UK society and its social structures from their own perspectives. The study, which drew on material from a series of interviews held with 20 international migrants over the course of a year, succeeded in giving 'voice' to a set of deeply personal narratives about circumstances, motives, dreams and aspirations that belonged to a group of people who are often spoken of, but rarely heard; those living the 'silenced lives' (LeCompte, 1993) of the 'hard to reach'.

The study found that reflexive globalisation is not a fair and equal process; migrants enter and travel through 'zones of migration', which they navigate and negotiate via the differing amounts of agency apportioned to them by the UK State on the basis of their legitimacy within and in relation to a tiered policy of immigration and asylum. Framed by this relationship with the UK State, migrants become agents of this legitimacy, which serves to empower or restrict their abilities to act. Further agency is found in securing paid employment and by 'diasporic clustering' rather than integration. The thesis argues that the concept of reflexive globalisation adds to the literature around 'glocalisation' and the 'geography of power' and that the study itself (in its development of substantive and lasting relationships with a 'hard to reach sample') offers practical insights from which other researchers may benefit.

## Acknowledgements

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## **List of abbreviations used in this thesis**

A8	Accession Eight
ALP	Association of Labour Providers
ASHE	Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BERA	British Educational Research Association
CIC	Commission on Integration and Cohesion
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
ESRC	European Social Research Council
EA	Electronic Appendices
EEA	European Economic Area
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HE	Higher Education
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HMBIA	Her Majesty's Border and Immigration Agency
HM	Home Office
HMSO	Her Majesty's Stationary Office
HOBIA	Home Office Border and Immigration Agency
iCoCo	Institute of Community Cohesion
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund

IMS	International Migrant Stock
JRF	Joseph Rountree Foundation
LFS	Labour Force Survey
LGA	Local Government Association
NRDC	National Research and Development Centre
NSO	National Statistics Online
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONS	Office for National Statistics
TUC	Trade Union Congress
UK	United Kingdom
UKCIA	United Kingdom Council for International Affairs
UKCISA	United Kingdom Council for Student Affairs
UN	United Nations
UNDESA	United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs
US\$	United States Dollars
WB	World Bank
WRS	Workers Registration Scheme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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# **Chapter One**

## **Setting the Scene**

### **1.1 Migration, Multiculturalism and a Regular Black Americano: A Snapshot of a Coffee in Nottingham's Market Square**

Asylum seekers, people traffickers, gang masters, detention centres, sex workers, illegal immigrants, Eastern Europeans, migrant workers, tuberculosis. Migrants, migration and their impacts on, and implications for, the United Kingdom have provided the British press with a reliable source of 'front page copy' for a number of years now, and the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2007 was no exception as The Local Government Association (LGA) had just published a report that attempted to estimate both the scale and impact of migration at the local level (iCoCo 2007). The report identified that international migration had been a significant issue for local authorities for some time (it overtook the ratio of births to deaths as the principal factor in population change back in 1998), but strongly criticised the adequacy and robustness of official migration estimates used by central government to determine the funding necessary to support such groups in the community. The crux of this criticism lies within the data the estimates drew upon, which to date has primarily come from two sources: the International Passenger Survey (a relatively small scale study that surveys people arriving and

departing from UK ports and airports) and data from the last census (conducted in 2001). The report argued that the accuracy and veracity of both these sources had been thrown into dispute by the emergence of a range of administrative data that had arisen through international migrants interacting with UK social structures (applications for National Insurance numbers, electoral registers, GP registrations, the Worker Registration Scheme, etc.), which appear to indicate that levels of international migration have been much higher than the official estimates suggest.

In the light of such a disparity the authors of the report argued that greater statistical accuracy had become increasingly important, especially in the three years that followed the 2004 expansion of the European Union, which saw almost 720,000 new EU citizens register for a UK National Insurance number. The authors suggested that migration from our new European partners, coupled with an existing pattern of increased migration from the Commonwealth, was part of a 'growing global phenomenon', which would 'continue alongside and as part of globalisation' (p3) and have direct and substantial implications for local authorities. Based on information collected from over 100 councils and other public bodies, the report raised the proposition that local authorities would require significant rises in their funding if they were to cope with the impact international migrants would bring to bear on the planning and provision of services to the communities they serve.



According to the report:

- Schools would be faced with realigning their resources towards translation services, mid-term arrivals, the numeracy and literacy needs of international migrant children and cultural differences.
- Child protection services would be stretched by the complexity of investigating and ensuring child safety within transient families, which would be complicated further by language and cultural differences.
- Language would pose significant challenges within communities, as both basic information requirements and complex advice needs would need to be met through translation and interpretation services.
- Areas experiencing significant economic activity could expect international migrants to live in overcrowded properties, possibly in a poor state of repair. Housing benefits, homelessness and destitution could also become issues in some areas.
- Issues of community cohesion would need to be addressed and planned to ensure that tensions and possible conflict are diffused. Interagency action plans would need to be put in place to provide information to both migrants and host communities.
- In terms of community safety, migrants are more likely to be the victims of crime rather than the perpetrators, although there is a higher than average incidence of vehicle related crime (absent or forged documentation and drink driving) attached to the migrant population.
- The National Health Service is already experiencing inappropriate use of Accident and Emergency facilities and an increased use of maternity services, which are often used too late, making planning difficult.

Refugees and asylum seekers in particular appear to experience a higher than average incidence of mental health issues (iCoCo 2007).

Unsurprisingly, the report grabbed the day's headlines and provided yet another opportunity for journalists and politicians to question the Government's track record on immigration. I read this political posturing on that morning (the 1<sup>st</sup> of November 2007) as I sat drinking a 'regular' sized 'black Americano' (a cup of black coffee) in one of the glass walled 'coffee houses' that overlook 'the Square' and was instantly aware of the small team of baristas huddled together to perform the opera of serving stimulants to the sleepy at 7.30 am. The recitative of the lady at the counter, "Hi, what can I get you ... any cakes or pastries with that?" followed by the 'attack' of her mezzo voice on the phrase, "tall skinny macchiato". Sailing high into the air the phrase is taken up by the light baritone of the man conducting the orchestra; the whirring coffee grinder, the hissing steam, the timpani of grounds banged out into the bin. Finally the phrase was echoed by the rich contralto voice of the young lady operating the till who asked for "£2.80" in a way that suggested she needed a double espresso herself. I became aware of them because, judging from their accents, two members of this trio are 'international migrants', and I wondered if they had read that day's news, and if so, what they might have felt about what seemed to be a consistent stream of media attention focused on them. But this was Nottingham, and as I looked outwards towards the Square a tram slid down Market Street and ribboned slowly past me on a silent arc before pausing on South Parade to spill its passengers out across the open space. As it did I could see a whole

range of different faces and fashions, colours and creeds, diversity and multiculturalism, if not at work, then certainly on its way to work.

One might argue that such a city, whose citizens celebrate a wealth of ethnic heritage, home to two universities and one of the largest colleges of Further Education in the UK, which draws pride from sporting achievements gained on international stages, which welcomes visitors from across the world to its local legend, might prove fertile ground for an increasingly diverse population. On the other hand, having lived and worked in Nottingham for the better part of twenty years, my experience is that many Nottingham people are not comfortable with the growing number of international migrants in the city. My family, my friends, people talking at the bus stop and in the coffee shops have been discussing migration and migrants for some time now. They have been wondering who these people are, where they have come from, whether they are invited guests or gatecrashers, and who it was that called the party in the first place. And it is important that this work considers such wonderings, for they are born out of feelings that spring from throwing the clay of 'people' onto the 'wheel' of place at a particular time. They are feelings that are spoken, heard, seen and acted out on the pavements and in the pubs, where they become narratives that mix and mingle to make sense of the phenomenon of migration and migrants discursively, together.

Such narratives speak of emotional responses evoked by the triumphs and tribulations, choices and challenges and constant change of life, and of the city. They are stories and accounts that communicate how and why people

attach the meanings they do to the events and experiences they live through and within (Chase 1995). Such narratives are deep and abiding; they communicate private lives lived in and made sense of in public spaces (Ellis and Bochner 1992). They are the links that join the personal to the social; they are expressions and accounts of discourses thrown into the arena of the city. They are the discursive attempts to make meaning out of happenings and occurrences, and narratives of migration and migrants are ones that have been thrown up reflexively in the very heart of the city and its citizens. In part these narratives are also my own, for they speak of a city that I have lived within, identified with, and contributed to for a significant part of my life. They link me to the research in that they partly inform my understanding of a world in which I have lived for a moment in the history of the place, latently seen, tacitly spoken and thoughtlessly conceived each time I walk through its streets, stand at its bus stops or speak with its people.

### **A Narrative of Nottingham: a snapshot of the city**

For Nottingham people, Nottingham is their home. What is important are the cultural artefacts that link them to the place: standing to eat 'pots of peas' with mint sauce, meeting friends in front of the lion statues that guard the steps of the council house in the Market Square, going upstairs in Yates's public house to touch the brass figurine boy for luck, things their parents did, things their grandparents did. For them, the students who come to the universities, the professionals who 'flit' from city to city occupying well paid roles in health, law, education and local governance are as distant as the

circles they move within. And that was always fine because such people were transient, and their very transience was part of a status quo that had long been accepted: that as long as they stayed in the places where they lived, and out of those areas that still worked around largely parochial systems of belief, value and purpose, then it would be OK. Yes, sometimes someone would wander into the wrong place at the wrong time, but that just served as a lesson to educate the uneducated.

The first time I noticed a change in attitudes was when I was living in Sneinton (one of the less affluent parts of the city) and heard people starting to complain about the rowdy and unruly behaviour of students. Twenty years ago, this would have been 'sorted' in the traditional manner: someone would knock on the front door and thump the first person that answered it. But now there were too many of them. They were there because private landlords had capitalised on a shortage of student accommodation in the city by 'buying up' the cheap terraced houses in the poorer areas close to the city centre and renting them out to students. And like the Pakistani community that came before them, once established in sufficient numbers, the students were grudgingly tolerated as some kind of 'group' that coexisted, if not with the local community, then alongside it. People in the pubs even laughed that the students were adding to the local economy, as burglaries and muggings increased as soon as the local youths realised they were easy and profitable targets.

Shortly after the students came the refugees, who arrived to occupy the large three-storey terraced houses on and around The Dale and Sneinton Boulevard. They were immediately distinguishable by their faces, or rather the shapes that made up their faces – the darkness of their eyes, their angular foreheads, the blackness of their hair. Unlike the students, who could be recognised as falling within the spectrum of appearances that had until then rubbed shoulders with the people of Sneinton, ‘these people’ were different, unknown; they were ‘other.’ And there were tensions. People became concerned with the attention some of the young men paid to the teenage girls who would ‘hang out’ on the streets, too young for the pub, but too old to be stuck in the cramped living conditions that are the reality of large families trying to live in small two and three bedroomed terraced houses. But there were no uprisings, no riots, no assaults. The rough and ready parish of Sneinton grumbled when it met in the Post Office and the pub; it even made the occasional posture, but it did little more.

When the ‘Poles’ first arrived people seemed a bit more comfortable. Here were people that wanted to work, to pay their own way, to keep themselves to themselves, and they were white. But as their numbers swelled, and their ‘work-ethic’ became increasingly recognised by employers and landlords, they rapidly came to be viewed as a threat to the local ways of life because they were competing for the same kinds of low paid, largely manual labour that had been the mainstay of the local populace for generations. Even the big ‘wage earners’ – the plumbers, plasterers and builders who had been benefiting from a general shortage of skilled labour – were beginning to feel

the 'pinch' as Polish tradesmen began to compete within what had, until that point, been highly lucrative markets. Maybe it wouldn't have been as bad if they would have spent their time in the 'local', or shopped at Akbar's mini market, or queued for fish and chips or a kebab at 'Georgio's Plaice', but they didn't. They drank alcohol standing outside their homes, in groups, on the street, they kept themselves to themselves, and heaven knows what they ate, some kind of pickled cabbage or something.

And it is at this point, standing on the ground that lies between what is effectively ten years of increasing international migration and its impact upon local communities such as Sneinton, that this research truly begins. Such ground is not only hotly contested by the media and politicians, it is also a space that is increasingly occupied by the day-to-day lives of both migrants and UK citizens. The day before the LGA report hit the newspapers (the 31<sup>st</sup> of October 2007) at the headquarters of the 'blue chip' company for which they worked, my partner, Catalina<sup>1</sup>, and her Polish colleague, Viola, were subjected to a tirade on how 'foreigners' were taking jobs, housing, schooling and benefits that belonged to British people. When she and I spoke about it that evening Catalina told me she was hurt because, as a Portuguese national, she knew that this was directed toward them because they were foreigners. At the same time she was deeply disappointed because their accusers had failed to account for so many factors that should have informed their attitudes and behaviour toward her and her colleague:

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<sup>1</sup> These names have been changed

- That they all work for a global company that has offices and interests throughout the world.
- That Catalina and her colleague had been recruited to perform international roles on the basis of their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge.
- That there are many British nationals living and working in her country, the majority of which make little or no attempt to speak Portuguese or respect local values or attitudes.
- That despite the illegality of both racism and harassment in the workplace these people felt empowered to verbally attack them there.
- That of the two who delivered the harangue one was of Indian heritage, while the other had a Polish surname.

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to consider whether they understood their accusations as racist or a form of harassment, the incident serves to illustrate that issues relating to international migration and the lives of international migrants are being played out in the 'realpolitik' of everyday life in Britain. Clearly such an activity is not surprising given the sheer weight of discourses being created and acted out in the media and political arenas, but what Catalina and her colleague experienced at their place of work serves to raise a number of issues that are relevant to this study. One is that there exists an essential difference between people who have left their homes in search of work, security and a better life in another part of the world and those people whose lives are largely grounded within systems that operate on the local level. Many people, especially if they did not leave home



to go to university, will pass from their local schools, where they met their local friends, to a local job, they will marry a local lad or lass, live locally, and their children will attend the same schools they did. This is not only true for poorer areas, but throughout the UK: the National Office for Statistics found that for the population as a whole, 96% of people lived in the same general locality from one year to the next<sup>2</sup> (NSO 2005).

What these 'local people' are experiencing in their localities, what they are talking about and trying to understand is change – the rapid erosion of 'the known' and 'the familiar', that which they have come to understand as the natural order of things. People I have known for many years, people I have overheard on the bus, even members of my family are alarmed, anxious and apprehensive; they are repeating the same questions. How has this happened? Why weren't we asked? Who is in charge here? And of course such feelings find both form and voice through narratives, which are told and acted out wherever people come together, be it the wine bar or the workplace.

Another issue raised by Catalina's experience is that she and her colleague did not report the incident; they might have felt hurt and angry and embarrassed but they 'let it go' because they did not want to cause trouble. Having discussed it they agreed that the incident was just one of the realities of working in the UK as a foreigner. Had she not come home in tears, such an incident would have remained untold, unheard, unnoticed and un-

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<sup>2</sup> Figure relates to migration within the UK for the year 2000 to 2001

understood, just another act in the play of the life of the kind of people who can be seen all around us these days, making our coffee, cleaning the toilets, queuing for buses and washing our cars. It strikes me that there appears to be a gaping absence of material that focuses on the actual experiences of international migrants. For although the media has been full of facts and figures relating to international migration that people have been discussing on the doorstep, in the doctors surgery or at the dinner table for some time, the human stories behind why international migrants come to Britain and what they experience when here just don't seem to convert into the kind of punchy headlines or jaunty narratives that grab an audience's attention.

But such accounts of ambitions, motivations and of lived experiences are crucial to understanding the impact of international migration and migrants in Britain, for they will represent the very 'meat and potatoes' of what it means to come to and to live in Britain as an international migrant. They will also represent 'voices' that speak of the radical change that is acting at the very centre of our society and our communities.

## **1.2 From Snapshots toward a Bigger Picture**

The 'snapshots' above are, of course, my own personal narratives that tell of a morning drinking coffee in November 2007 and of particular places, events and experiences I have perceived and conceived whilst living and working in and around Nottingham during the past 20 years. Such personal narratives

provide insights into social processes that can often prove difficult to perceive through the distanced 'normalising' practices and procedures of research that are too often relegated to the margins and footnotes of social investigation (Rosaldo 1993). In mobilising them to 'set the scene' for this investigation, I have sought to utilise them in order to portray and express something of the setting, situation and 'sense making' that has stimulated and shaped this study and its undertaking. But these narratives are not merely mine, but are inlaid and interwoven with the narratives of my friends and my family, of conversations both entered into and overheard, be it at bus stops or post office queues, that speak of concern and confusion about the social change that has taken place in the city they understand as home. Having percolated in the city, such narratives permeate mine. They have not become mine, for the demands of academia require I account for the ideas and sense making of individuals, schools and traditions that permeate both time and space on global proportions, but they serve to ground both myself and this study within a time and place, as a citizen, and as a part of and participant in one of the communities that make up the city.

The platform provided by such narratives not only grounds the study in the feelings, ideas, concerns and narratives in and around Nottingham at the time of this study, but it also brings them to the very heart of the social analytical process (Rosaldo 1993) and provides the canvas onto which the line, form and colour of the research will be applied. Bringing them to the heart of the research is to accept that the kinds of conversations, discussions and discourses that were going on around me when I started to think about

this investigation triggered an initial mandate for this study, which was to look deeper into international migrants and migration as a social phenomenon.

This is a very real and substantive phenomenon. The 2001 Census found that 1 in 12 people resident in the UK at that time had been born outside of the UK (NSO 2005). In terms of Nottingham the ratio was slightly over 1 in 10 (NSO no date). Since 2001 the city, like other parts of the UK, has been subject to various events that have served to increase the number of people born outside the UK who are living and working in the city. These include the effect of consecutive years of successful international recruitment by UK universities (HESA 2007), the 'dispersal' of asylum seekers away from Greater London towards other UK regions (Anie, Daniel et al. 2005), and the effect of Accession 8 European citizens coming to live and work in the city from 2004 onwards. However, as subsequent chapters of this work will show, quantifying the number of international migrants in the UK with any accuracy has proved to be a difficult task – a problem that has been conceded by the National Office for Statistics (NSO 2006) – and it is likely that migration statistics will continue to be at best 'fuzzy' until the results of the next census in 2011 are released.

Despite such 'fuzziness', statistics are powerful tools and appear to have been used extensively in the debates on immigration that have been raging between political parties, the British press and the man and woman in the street in recent years (Berkeley, Khan et al. 2006; Finney and Simpson 2009). Whilst policy makers, service providers and local and national

government have been trying to understand the levels to which international migrants are impacting upon their duties, obligations and mandates to manage social provision and maintain social stability (iCoCo 2007), the British press has been trying to determine how many new people are arriving:

***“Nearly 600,000 new EU migrants”*** (BBC\_News 2007)

Whether or not it is right for them to work in the UK:

***“Half of new jobs taken by immigrant workers”*** (Peev 2007)

Or to receive state benefits:

***“Benefits bill for Eastern European migrants hits £125m. One in six Eastern Europeans is now claiming benefits”*** (Slack 2007)

Or their impact on public services:

***“Migration causes pressure in UK. Almost every UK region has difficulties in housing, health, education and crime because of increased migration according to official report”*** (BBC\_News 2007)

Or which political party is going to do something about the situation:

***“Immigration: The disgraceful censorship by all political parties of the greatest issue of our time”*** (Osborne 2007)

Even the pros and cons of rounding them all up and sending them home:

***“If we send them home, then who'll do the dirty work?”*** (Riddell 2007)

Although such headlines might be viewed with scepticism by scholarly or social researchers, they clearly seek to discursively provoke and persuade the public at large to consider recent immigration in terms of whether immigrants should have access to jobs, benefits and social provision when they have made little or no contribution to ‘the system’. Such headlines are not only heavily weighted toward a particular perspective (Finney and Simpson 2009) that essentially amplifies the concerns and agendas of right and far right politics, but also serve to produce and perpetuate a ‘particular ignorance’ of the motives, circumstances and aspirations of international migrants (Daley 2009). Operating discursively such ‘particular ignorance’ appears to understand immigrants as some kind of ‘swarm of locusts’ that are greedily devouring British jobs, state benefits and eroding away our very British-ness, and it is persuasive because it fails to account for the motives, circumstances or rights that international migrants hold within the UK (Daley 2009).

The problem with such ‘particular ignorance’ is that it serves to facilitate the cognitive separation of the immigrant population in the ‘abjection’ of ‘them’

from 'us'. 'Us', being British and therefore deserving of our nation and its provision by birthright, and therefore separate and discrete from 'them': those immigrants, or to put another way, the 'generalised other' (Sibley 1995). Such generalised 'othering' flows from the identification of international migrants as people who are outside the realm of what is known or familiar to the communities in which they are making their homes (Zetter, Griffiths et al. 2006), people who are outside the range of looks, languages, accents and ways of doing things that people have come to accept and therefore think of as 'British'.

Inhabiting, playing a part in and being accepted within such communities is a learnt (and taught) experience that entails people socially learning (and being socially taught) about the meanings that are attached to the enactment of particular ideas, concepts, actions and ways of doing things. Learning is undertaken by both formal (education) and informal means (family, peers, the media, etc.) and helps people 'internalise' the meanings attached to those social actions that are seen as legitimate within a particular locale. These may include some generic meanings like the values that underpin the concept of queuing for a bus, putting milk in tea or being polite to strangers, but they may also include the values that underpin not seeking help from the police, wearing sports gear or buying 'bootlegged' cigarettes. By acting out such social meanings people are able to 'identify' with a social map that apportions social meaning to social action in a way that informs appropriate social action in given situations. It also enables them to identify, and be

identified by, others who share the same sets of social meanings (Wenger 1998).

However, such a process not only facilitates social 'practitioners' with the ability to identify those espoused to a central set of social meanings, but also serves as a framework with which to determine those who are not. Those who look different and dress, act or speak differently are easily identified by their actions. The danger inherent in this 'particular ignorance' is just that: knowledge of the rights and circumstances of international migrants would provide local communities with the social meaning necessary to understand and contextualise presence and participation in the community as legitimate, whilst ignorance facilitates 'othering', which in turn produces further sets of 'parallel lives' within communities that are already judged to be fragmented (Cantle, 2001, 2004, 2005). Such fragmentation would not merely create separateness of international migrants from more established groups within the community, but would also heighten the probability that they will fail to access (or be hindered from accessing) the social resources that would enable them to play more active parts in society, communicate with others and express their feelings and perspectives in ways that would enable others to listen and take notice. In other words, they face the likelihood of becoming systematically oppressed into lives with limited options, limited mobility and an increased exposure to social deprivation (Young 1990).

One might argue that such 'particular ignorance' and the 'othering' and oppression it might facilitate are in fact the effect of a more general problem



that stems from the way immigration has been debated, and therefore understood, by the media and public bodies alike. This debate appears to assume international migration is a phenomenon that can be understood through quantitative, statistical scrutiny alone, rather than by a broader assay of the phenomenon capable of unearthing the spectrum of meanings, conditions and circumstances that underpins, and therefore provides, a source of context with which to understand international migration. For Goffman (1990), the focus on statistical reporting, which appears to have led both the debates and ways of understanding international migration to date, flows from a focus on the 'front region' of the social phenomenon: the observable, quantifiable, surface level artefacts thrown up as a consequence of international migrants moving through the administrative functions of social structures. Such statistical data provides the 'what', 'where' and 'when' answers to the international migration question (within the overall 'fuzziness' of the figures) and shows that significant numbers of foreign nationals have entered the UK for a variety of reasons in recent years. However, such data is not helpful in answering more qualitative questions, such as 'who' are these people and 'why' have they chosen to come to the UK?

There are dangers associated with the failure to ask such qualifying questions, because this lack of context disables government, policy makers, those planning social provision and the general public's ability to make any informed decisions about the levels of need international migrants experience or their potential impact on services, systems or society in general as individuals and as people with their own sets of priorities, requirements and

opinions. Such a focus, on the 'front region' (Goffman, 1990) of international migration, also serves to inhibit international migrants from playing an active part in the design and assessment of services, systems or frameworks that they have a legal right to access and inform. As Young (1990) would observe, the failure to allow or enable international migrants to participate in the determination of their social actions, or the conditions of their actions within the remit of their legal rights, will bring into being a scenario in which they are forced into a relationship whereby they will be dominated by the social systems of UK.

### **A Mandate for this Study**

If, as the National Office of Statistics (2005) suggests, attempts to quantify international migration in the UK are at best 'fuzzy', and that public, political and media led debates relating to international migrants are by and large failing to unpack the ideas, motives or circumstances that have brought them to the UK or the kinds of lives they are living and experiencing in the UK once here, then the task of understanding the relationship between international migrants and migration and the UK will be a difficult one. As the following chapters will reveal, the immediate problem appears to stem from the fact that although a body of 'fuzzy' statistical data exists that seeks to quantify international migration in the UK, by and large scholarly, policy and social research has yet to provide a significant body of qualitative research with which to contextualise, illuminate and triangulate this numerical data (Phillimore & Goodson, 2009; Robson & Reeve, 2006). This is perhaps due

to the rapidly evolving nature of recent international migration, or the fact that qualitative approaches to the investigation of international migration have proven to be as 'fuzzy' as attempts to gather statistical data, and it may even be that the 'authority' provided by statistical reporting has tended to dominate the agenda because it lends itself to the kinds of political and media debates that have surrounded international migration to date (Finny & Simpson, 2009).

However, investigating this arena is important on a number of levels and it is these that form the mandate for this investigation.

Firstly, as the narratives in the first section of this chapter indicate, international migration and migrants have had both real and realised impacts upon the lives of people in Nottingham for some time now. Without alternative ways of understanding migrants and migration people will continue to understand the phenomenon within the discursive frameworks provided and promoted by the 'particular perspectives' of politicians and the media. The narratives suggest that the time is ripe to unearth the human face of international migrants to contextualise the politicking and reportage. The revealing of this human face can only really be achieved by accounting for the kinds of motives, circumstances, beliefs and aspirations that led individuals to make their migratory journeys.

Secondly, as the LGA report (iCoCo 2007) indicated, these impacts are not merely relative to Nottingham, but are indicative of wider impacts that have

occurred across the UK and its regions, with implications for public services. No self-respecting public sector planner or service manager in the current political arena would consider planning, funding or delivering provision to the public without considerable assessments of 'needs' or consultation with client groups. However, as the following chapters will reveal, there is little evidence to suggest that this has occurred to any significant extent in any area of the public sector, which suggests international migrants are more likely to experience imposed (rather than informed) public service designs. This not only begs questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of services that are international migrant 'facing', but also raises a more general question about the kinds of relationship they enter into with the State and its structures.

Adding these together brings about a third aspect of the mandate for this investigation: the kinds of relationships that international migrants are realising within the communities they work and live in while in the UK. Only by unearthing the 'lived in' experiences, stories, needs and aspirations about the places in which international migrants live, work and make their homes can we, as a society, understand the kind of woof that international migrants are adding to the warp of local communities. By assessing the experiences of international migrants we will be able to evaluate the cohesiveness of the communities in which they have newly arrived.

Such a mandate indicates that this investigation will need to get 'up close and personal' with international migrants; close enough to hear their voices,

personal enough for them to tell us their stories about what it is like to come to and live in the UK, why they might have done this and what they would like to happen now they are here. For Goffman (1990), this kind of data cannot be approached via the statistical 'front region' of international migration because it cannot be counted or accounted for by quantitative data gathering methods. Rather it lies unseen, unheard, hidden within the 'back region' of international migration as a social phenomena. This suggests that to unearth and capture the experiences of international migrants living in the UK, to understand why such people have come here, what they would like to achieve here and what it is actually like to live their lives in Britain, will require the study to go 'behind the scenes' set by the first chapter of this thesis in order to investigate the 'back region' of internal migrants and migration.

### **My Place in this Mandate**

As this first chapter has indicated, I occupy a central place within this thesis. The scene that has been set is very much a personal one, as it draws upon narratives that speak of the physical, social and psychological changes I have seen, entered into and rubbed shoulders with in the town of my birth, Nottingham. They also tell of how reactions to such change have impacted upon the life that my partner and I share together. In doing so, the narratives place me at the very heart of this investigation in that they contextualise the time, the place and the kind of discourses, discussions and disputed ideas that nudged me toward the journey that has become this thesis. This context is important, because while I sat drinking my 'regular black Americano'

overlooking Nottingham's Market Square that November morning with a newspaper spread across the table and the music of multicultural coffee commerce in the air around me, a thousand people streamed across the openness of that space to dissipate into the side streets and thoroughfares. Each had come to town from a place personal to them (a room, a home, a family) for their own personal reasons (to work, to shop, to meet friends or just to pass through), yet each was there, migrating across the Market Square, sharing the activity as a purposive act, and regardless of their creed or colour or the brunette or blonderness of each English, Estonian or Ethiopian crossing the space, it struck me that each served to bring into relief the fundamental contract we hold with society, with humanity and with ourselves: that to occupy the same space without fear of those factors that serve to undermine societies (lawlessness, disease, homelessness, civil unrest and violence) each individual requires legitimate recourse and access to fundamental rights and basic agency that underpin and overarch that society.

If amongst the thousand people I witnessed hurrying across Nottingham's Market Square that morning there were a significant number of international migrants whose lives, experiences, ideas and opinions are largely unspoken, unheard or unknown to us as a society, then how can we, as a society, serve and protect them from exploitation, oppression, violence, poor health, educational failure, etc. as a way of serving and protecting ourselves and our communities? In order to achieve this, to plan and provide for these people, house them, police them, school them, etc. there exists a fundamental need

to understand that they are already taking an active part in society and our local communities, and that there is an active requirement to find out a lot more about them and their experiences in the UK.

### **1.3 The Research Questions**

This first chapter has claimed that although international migration and migrants have had both real and realised impacts on the UK and its regions, international migration has proved something of a 'fuzzy' field for statisticians, researchers and the man or woman on the street alike, perhaps due to the rapid changes that have occurred in recent years. Subsequent chapters of this thesis will seek to unpack some of this fuzziness and, in so doing, interrogate and critically analyse a number of key issues that relate to international migrants and the UK. These include:

- That a disparity exists between public and media perceptions of international migration and the reality. The statistics suggest that the idea of international migrants coming to the UK to take advantage of public services and benefits is a myth. Rather, rising levels of migration mirror rises in the global population, and of those who have come to the UK, most wish to work and are prepared to do low skilled, low paid work to support their lives here.
- International migrants enter and reside in the UK under the terms of the UK immigration and asylum policy and therefore their presence in the UK is legitimate within this policy. Various groups are granted such

legitimacy (EU nationals, international students, immediate family members of UK citizens, refugees and asylum seekers and those with employment or 'own' rights of settlement), but the rights to reside, to work and to access social structures (e.g. health or education) are not universal. The UK State grants different rights to different categories of international migrants and in doing so shapes the kinds of relationships that each migrant category will experience in the UK.

- Although national and local government bodies have sought to consider the impact of international migrants on public services, society and local communities, their assessments have tended to be bureaucratic, 'top down' assessments that estimate numbers and hypothesise potential impacts of international migrants as an aggregated, objectified grouping, rather than as a set of individuals with their own voices, requirements and subjective needs.
- Reports flowing from the northern race riots of 2001, which found the multicultural model of society to have produced divided communities in which people were likely to lead parallel lives, have shaped policy thinking relating to international migrants. The UK Government would like to see greater integration and communities bound together by shared futures, mutual respect and a shared sense of citizenship.
- Government reports have identified work to be a key facilitator for integration as it offers a variety of acculturating opportunities. However, for those who find it difficult or are hindered in the UK job market, education serves as a key facilitator, not merely in providing language teaching, vocational skills and UK qualifications, but also in



its ability to ground students in the kinds of cultural and social knowledge that will help them to understand, negotiate and be cohesive within UK society and its communities.

What is clear is that little is known about international migrants and their journeys, motives, circumstances and experiences of the UK from their own perspectives (Robinson and Reeve 2006). Evidence suggests that the relationship international migrants enter into with the State when they enter the UK through its immigration and asylum policy determines their ability to act once in the UK, yet those who might be expected to have most authority to relate and explain the nature of this relationship, international migrants themselves, have remained relatively silent in the literature (Robinson and Reeve 2006). Even in education, which has been identified as a key facilitator of integration into UK society because it provides international migrants with formal and informal opportunities to learn language, gain qualifications and engage with social meanings, relatively little attention has been paid to how international migrants engage and are enabled by such experiences (Phillimore and Goodson 2008).

It is part of the mandate of this study to unearth such missing perspectives, because only by capturing the voices of international migrants themselves can this investigation hope to:

- Reveal the human face of international migration by accounting for the kinds of motives, circumstances, beliefs and aspirations that led individuals to make their migratory journeys.

- Understand the kinds of relationships international migrants are entering into with the State and its structures.
- Understand the kinds of relationships international migrants are realising with the communities they work and live within.
- Unearth the 'lived in' stories, circumstances, motives, aspirations and experiences that will describe international migrants and their relationships with the UK.

However, in order to unearth the kind of data capable of meeting such a mandate the research questions of this investigation must be able to gather real, tangible, personal and subjective circumstances, experiences, motives, feelings, needs, opinions and aspirations that relate to and contextualise the lives of international migrants living in Britain today. Doing so will not be achieved through what Goffman (1990) identified as the 'front region' of the phenomenon, but through the 'back region', which is the place where the investigation would expect to find those who can provide the study with authentic accounts that 'voice' their own 'lived in' experiences of what it has been like to come to the UK and the relationships they have realised within the UK, its society and its social structures.

By approaching the 'back region' the study will bring international migrants to the centre of the research, as it is they who are best placed to provide this investigation with data relating to their own migration to the UK, their relationships with the State and the relationships they hold with other UK social structures such as education and society itself. Doing so also makes clear that the questions the research needs to mobilise, in order to meet its

mandate, will flow from the qualification that international migrants have to provide data on their own lived in experiences. This provides the investigation with three clear research questions that will together serve to provide:

- A platform with which to contextualise the statistical ‘front region’ of the phenomenon.
- A deeper, richer understanding of the kinds of personal circumstances, experiences and relationships that international migrants are experiencing within the UK, its society and social structures.
- A framework within which to consider the evolving nature of integration, multiculturalism and social cohesion in the UK.
- A set of recommendations for policymakers, practitioners and researchers and those responsible for the planning of social provision.

The three questions are as follows:

### **Research Question One**

*What are the experiences of recent immigrants to the UK?*

### **Research Question Two**

*How does the relationship they have with the State mediate that experience?*

### **Research Question Three**

*What kind of relationships do recent immigrants to the UK have with UK social structures?*

## **1.4 The Structure of the Thesis**

This first chapter has sought to 'set the scene' for this investigation by inter-relating the findings of a Local Government Association report, which brought together data on international migration from over 100 local authorities and public bodies across the UK, with personal narratives that relate to how I have experienced and understood the effects of international migration within the local area that I have lived and worked in for the majority of my life to date. It has also introduced the mandate for this investigation: the need to provide an alternative to the political and media standpoints that tend to draw on statistical data without qualitative context, to indicate the gap that public sector planners, managers and practitioners need to fill if they are to effectively and efficiently serve this section of society, and to think more critically about the evolving nature of multiculturalism and cohesion in UK communities. It concludes by making explicit the research questions that this study is seeking to investigate.

Chapter Two moves the thesis forward to consider the social context that international migrants have migrated toward and within which they live out their lives in the UK. To do so it considers the evolving nature of Britain from the advent of modernity to consumerism and globalisation and also considers the notion of 'reflexive globalisation'. The chapter concludes by discussing Appadurai's (1996) 'scapes of globalisation' and how these provoke and provide agency within a globalised world, and the relationship between international migration and the State.

Chapter Three will inspect the range of data and research relating to international migration and migrants in the UK. The first half of the chapter will draw upon the available statistical data in order to discuss international migration and the UK context, and to undertake an assay of the different groups that have migrated to the UK from other countries over recent years. The latter half will appraise the policy documents and qualitative studies relating to UK immigration policy and the 'integration', 'education, training and employment' and 'community cohesion' arenas in recent years.

Chapter Four is concerned with the data-gathering instrument for this study. The chapter opens with a discussion of methodological options and considerations, then moves forward to refine the data-gathering instrument and concludes with an audit of how this instrument was mobilised to gather, analyse and report data.

Chapters Five and Six present the data gathered from the interviews of those who participated in this study as a set of narrative 'voices' that speak of the journeys, motives, trials, tribulations and aspirations of international migrants living in the UK. The voices are then analysed (in their respective chapters) in terms of their journeys and the relationships they have realised with and within the UK, and also in terms of Appadurai's (1996) scapes of globalisation.

The seventh chapter represents a discussion of the findings by considering the international migrants as migratory agents and the agency of migration. In doing so it theorises four distinct zones of migration in which and through which migrants experience differing relationships with and within the UK. It discusses the rise of reflexive globalisation and the agency of international migrants and concludes with a discussion of how the findings of the investigation inform multiculturalism, community cohesion and the social contract.

The final chapter of this thesis summarises the key findings of this investigation, describes how they contribute to the body of scholarly knowledge and makes clear the implications of the research for policymakers, practitioners, further research and myself as a researcher.

## **Chapter Two**

### **Times, People and Places**

The first chapter of this thesis (Setting the Scene) sought to communicate something of the conceptual character and context of this investigation into the lives of international migrants in the UK and how it came into being. To do so it drew upon narrative 'snapshots' of a local area (Nottingham) and personal reflections relating to some of the changes I have perceived and conceived whilst living and working in the city over the last 20 years. The chapter also considered these 'snapshots' within the context of rising levels of international migration that has impacted upon national and local areas and the reactions to this in some sections of the media. In doing so the chapter developed a mandate for this study and the research questions that will mobilise this mandate. Both were underpinned by the need to understand more about the kinds of international migrants and the relationships they experience with UK society and its social structures.

However, before considering how this study might address such an undertaking it is important to first consider the society that international migrants have travelled toward, the kinds of relationships they might encounter with that society and the kinds of factors, frameworks and facilitators that might have empowered, enabled or inspired their journeys to the UK.

## **2.1 From Modernity, through Consumerism to the Global**

### **From Modernity**

According to Bauman (1998), an individual living in Britain before the advent of modernity would have understood his or her place in society by mastering and enacting the meanings and ways of behaving attached to and underpinning the 'social position' he or she was born into. Therefore, being born into the landed gentry would expose people to a whole host of socially embedded norms, values and assumptions with which to understand their position in society (as part of a land owning class), ways to behave (activities, manners and modes of communication associated with that class), obligations (as landlords, magistrates, etc.) and their relationships with others (signposting who to befriend and later to marry). Such 'social position' served to hinder social mobility, shape the kind of lives individuals could expect to lead and frame how they understood themselves in relation to the world. Therefore, by and large, a noble would become a noble by act of birth, as would a gentlewoman, a yeoman or a merchant, and each would experience life through the agency apportioned to their social status, which would include the likelihood of marrying someone of equal rank and social status.

The advent of modernity saw this change, in that one's work rather than one's social position became the criterion with which people defined and understood themselves and their place in the world. In working, through working, individuals were able to identify with society through the skills and



competencies attached to the work they undertook in the place they undertook it, and validate this with how much money they received for this work (Bauman 1998). As such, a child worker in a cotton mill might grow to become a loom operative, and later on an overseer or foreman, particularly if he or she was able to acquire the skills and knowledge of the cotton mill, its machinery and its processes: the system. In doing this workers would not only experience some form of social mobility for which they would gain increased remuneration, but also they would become enculturated (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970) into a world that reflected the very machinery they worked with and served. This machine-like, scientific world (perhaps best described by the methods proposed by Frederick Taylor) was designed, engineered and overseen to maximise productivity and increase profits by the reduction of workers' inefficiencies. This was achieved by deconstructing the complex tasks of production into sets of simplified, component tasks, and then prescribing the work necessary to complete each of these, along with the way each was to be undertaken, to a single worker or group of workers. Thus the concept of 'assembly-line' style mass production was born, and with it the prevalence of the skilled craftsman went into decline as simpler component tasks required less skill, experience and competence. This effectively took control away from the workers, who were relegated to 'operatives', and made it both the monopoly and prerogative of management, who, having identified the 'one best way' to perform a given task, translated that knowledge into fixed procedures and processes for the operatives to replicate and repeat. Thus, by systemising the functional constituent operations of organised production under a hierarchical structure of

command, 'scientific management' differentiated the workplace into composite parts of a line of production where efficiency and productivity were developed through competency, focus and repetition. To control and manage such a world a hierarchical structure of relationships was put in place, and this ensured that prescribed ideas were communicated and achieved through formal, symmetrical and rigid structures of command and control. The military style 'chain of command' had found its way into the world of work (Clegg 1990; Johnson and Gill 1993).

But the machine that punched out the time on the shop floors of Britain's industrial towns did not stop there; its rhythm passed out of the factory gates, walked along the streets and into the very homes of the townsfolk. For the process, which essentially transformed the practices of work and the workplace from technocracy to bureaucracy, was not only self-replicating in the factories, where workers came to believe in its legitimacy as 'the way things were done' (Clegg 1990), but it also found legitimacy within a wider set of assumptions that were already at work in the 'ether' of society. These were essentially grounded in a belief that the social world and actions within it were underpinned by sets of rules and laws that were discernible and discoverable in much the same way as the natural sciences (Clegg 1990; Hancock and Tyler 2001). Therefore, social thinking reflected the conviction that society and the efficiency of its structures could be enhanced by ensuring both design and practice were informed by empirically discovered 'truths' or tendencies pertaining to given social scenarios. The persuasiveness of this sprang from modernity acting as a 'grand narrative'

via a self-legitimizing 'metadiscourse' that flowed from the 'dialectics of Spirit, the hermeneutics of meaning, the emancipation of the rational or working subject ... [and] the creation of wealth' (Lyotard 1984). Hence, when a foreman leaves his workplace one might expect him to go home to a terrace of identical houses, each built to exact uniformity, his children, like the children of his peers, will receive at least a basic education, he will live within the parish of a church to which he can apply for charity if need be, and he can sleep soundly in the knowledge that a policeman patrols the street beneath his window.

In doing so the individual may be seen as living within a social web that seeks and serves to frame, guide and provide meaning to the activity and function of his life. On the one hand, one might understand this web to represent the social contract the individual enters into with the State and its bureaucratized instruments, which operate and administrate particular functions (law and order, public service or social provision) in universal manners (Rousseau 2004), therefore suggesting a reflexive activity (Beck 1992) whereby individuals exchanged conformity to the prevailing norms, values and assumptions for stability, safety and the promise of empowerment through the concept of citizenship. On the other hand, it may be seen as serving to produce Foucaultian (1991) 'docility', or the immersion of individuals within a web of social meaning, order and control that flow from increasingly bureaucratized instruments of a state in motion: structures of law, order, service and provision that serve to discipline and punish non-conformity in favour of conformity within a modernistic way of life and living.

There was, and arguably is, little chance of escape; in internalising and enacting the meanings of work in the machinery of modernity, individuals were distributed into discrete and separate roles that served to control their daily activity through a socio-economic dependency. Going home to the uniform and separate 'space' of the family home served to legitimate both the process and the worker's part in it, as our foreman works to provide a home, food and warmth for his family. His life and the life of his family are prescribed by law, by authority and by the social structures that seek to educate his children, treat his illnesses and provide clean water and safe streets. Each of these social operations have protocols, processes and procedures that serve to inculcate (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970) him and his family with legitimate ways to act, behave and understand life within society.

In doing so, the foreman is made docile within a metadiscourse of modernity, not only because it serves to align him and his family to be dependent upon employment within the modernity of the factory system, but also because it oversees the passage of his life. Birth, education, housing, health, recreation, the law and even deviance from these structures all take place within a prescribed, controlled and monitored regime of structures and their discourses, which, woven together under the discipline of conformity to the meanings and activities of modernity, produce the fabric of modern civil life: civilisation realised. Taken together this metadiscourse becomes inescapable as those that deviate from the kinds of activities and ways of behaving prescribed by its doctrine become a challenge to the legitimacy of modernity

itself. The metadiscourse is therefore not merely systematically organisational, but reflexively, systematically moral. Criminals, vagrants, the disabled, the insane, those who do not 'fit' or conform to the prescribed and controlled functionality of a modern, ordered society, not only serve as a challenge to the social system, but violate it.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault (1991) describes how such people, such nonconformists, such violators were 'removed' from society for 'correction', and he cites Bentham's 'panopticon', a prison design that enabled gaolers to observe every moment of a prisoner's incarceration from a centralised point, as the acme of prison reforms in the modern age. No longer were prisoners thrown into cells to serve out their sentences or die as a consequence of the squalid conditions, now they were expected to enact penal life as a useful, educative, corrective process that taught them the value of hard work and prayer. Separation and the watchful eye of warders left little opportunity for prisoners to get up to 'no good' with other prisoners and "morals [were] reformed, health preserved, industry integrated, instruction diffused, all by a simple idea of architecture" (Foucault 1991). For Foucault (1991), the 'panopticon' is not merely a physical structure with which to observe, it is an apparatus of social governance that enables those appointed with the control, governance and correction of prisoners to detect and deter further deviation from the web of rules, systems and structures put in place to ensure that deviants adopt and enact acceptable forms of life and living within society.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Foucault (1991) has also used this to describe the logic of the 'surveillance state.'

However, as an apparatus of social governance the metaphor of the 'panopticon' can be extended to life within the metadiscourse that flowed from the bureaucratized instruments of social provision, which together wove together a prescription of normative and value-laden assumptions that communicated legitimate forms of behaviour and morality as a social contract. As the State expanded to meet the political, social and religious requirements of the society, it systemised, protocolled and processed people into a life and expectation of life within the system, from birth in a hospital, to education in a school, to work (be it in a factory, a coal mine or a milliners shop), to a home in a uniform house on a uniform gaslit street, all the way to burial in a municipal cemetery.

Whether life had become a docile action within the metadiscourse of modernity and its social structures or whether the metadiscourse had provided society with an idealised vision of itself that allowed it to "keep on course, to spot and locate the scars, warts, and other blemishes spoiling their present look, as well as to conceive of a remedy sure to heal and smooth them up ... going to work – taking up employment ... [became] the way to become a decent human fellow" (Bauman, 1998 p16). Gainful employment and earning one's living was what the society required from people, and therefore "giving work to all, and making all into workers was commonly seen as the recipe for all [the] ills and troubles of society" (Bauman, 1998 p16). In forwarding and supporting such assumptions, and in conforming to and legitimising them through action, the metadiscourse of modernity and the individual become linked within a reciprocal, 'reflexive' relationship (Beck

1992). For the act of working was not only an act of conformity that differentiated the worker from the lazy, the criminal, the disabled and the decadent (as Foucault (1991) recognised it would be), but it also served to define how one understood oneself, where one lived, what newspaper one read, it defined the standards and itinerary for life (Bauman 1998). Therefore life was not a prison, but an opportunity to worship at the alter of modernity, the chance to contribute to the progress of the age, a chance to escape from the dirt, disease and deprivation of the past (Sibley 1995); it was salvation in one's own lifetime.

### **Through Consumerism**

When Goldthorpe et al (1968) came to conduct their study 'The Affluent Worker' they were seeking to consider the extent to which the relative affluence that workers, and their families, had realised during the 1950s and 60s had impacted upon their attitudes and behaviours. Based on their sample of industrial workers in Luton they concluded that traditional notions of working class life were being eroded by changes in the economic circumstances of the workers themselves, the organisation and technologies of their workplaces, and in developments to the urban landscape. In doing so they also hypothesised that in the future there would be a tendency for workers to define their work as a means to an end of maximising economic benefit for familial reasons, rather than as a pivotal point of class consciousness, and that "individuals' central life interests are to be found in the cultivation and enjoyment of their private, domestic lives" (Goldthorpe, Lockwood et al. 1968). This is interesting for me as a researcher because I

was born around the time of the study's publication to parents whose working lives would have been understood by Goldthorpe as falling within the span of working class occupations. They understood their work-life balance in a manner that sought to maximise their earnings as a means toward the end of cultivating the private lives of the family, which they accomplished by actively participating in what was to become commonly known as 'the consumer society'.

Goldthorpe et al's (1968) study is also interesting because it enables me to think about how and why my parents apportioned value to areas of their life and constructed their identities in ways that differed from their own parents' generation. Beck (1992) would describe this as a 'process of individualisation' whereby an individual's "central concern [becomes] the demand for the control of one's own money, time, living space and body. In other words, people demand the right to develop their own perspective on life and to be able to act upon it" (Beck, 1992, p93). If this were so then such a process could only occur because social, political and economic circumstances enabled the phenomenon to come into being (Feyerabend 1993). It would also suggest that for my parents to go through a 'process of individualisation' they would have needed to firstly accumulate enough money and leisure time to deem these resources worthy of their control, and secondly realise some physical way of enacting and expressing this individuality as a perspective on life that they could enact. This not only suggests a relationship between my parents as affluent, 'individualising' individuals and the socio-politico-economic world they experienced in a



manner that Beck (1992) would describe as a reciprocity taking place within the boundaries of the 'reflexivity of modernity', but also their evolution as the agents and masters of their own 'life plans' and the 'lifestyles' that serve as observable, understandable artefacts of these (Giddens 1991). If this were so, then the 'life plans' of my parents resulted from their attempt to 'individualise' as a 'reflexive project', whereby alignment and realignment to the external forces of the markets (political, social, economic) served to form a self legitimising 'trajectory of development' from the past to the present and from the present to the future (Giddens 1991). Therefore, when my parents realised a stage of incremental development, such as gaining a promotion at work, they experienced a moment of 'self actualisation', which not only changed how they understood themselves (as such life plans are 'internally referential') but also enabled them, via the increase in family income, to discern and espouse new forms, tastes and repertoires, and utilise the sum of this knowledge to realign the trajectory of their life plan toward the next goal (Giddens 1991). For Bauman (1998) such life plans, and the series of self-referential identities they evolve, and evolve from, evoke "the desire of identity and horror of satisfying that desire, the attraction and repulsion that identity evokes, mix and blend to produce a compound of lasting confusion", which is "better served by the infinitely inventive and erratic market of consumer goods" (Bauman, 1998, p28). For reflecting identities themselves, consumer goods are disposable artefacts of our trajectories: today's fashion becomes tomorrow's 'tat', supersedeable by the next, the better, the article of desire, the apple of our eye.

Clearly one cannot propose Goldthorpe et al's (1968) study to be the point of reflexivity between the modern and the post-modern or the late modern, for it is merely a positioning device, 'a marker in the sand' with which to think about and describe change. But in being such it does enable me to reflect upon the relationship between the ways my parents made sense of their work, their world and the trajectory of it, and my own. If I think about my upbringing I can establish that my parents upheld and wielded an authority that sought to arbitrate and apportion meaning, value and purpose to both actions and the conceptual and moral frameworks that underpinned these. My childhood can be also be viewed as representing a prolonged period of inculcation that produced 'a durable, transposable habitus', which served to provide a framework within which to generate, legitimise and instil systems of perception, conception and appropriate forms for action. This in turn served to produce and reproduce intellectual and moral cohesion and integration within the family as a unit (Bourdieu & Passerson, 1970). Bourdieu & Passerson (1970) would consider this a form of 'symbolic violence' in that it represents the use of arbitrary power to reproduce a set of social norms, values and assumptions that serves to govern the individual from within his or her own head, rather than the panoptical form of social governance created as an artefact of the metadiscourse of modernity in action (Lyotard 1984). As such, the cars, the clothes, the TVs, the toasters, the dishwashers that were bought over the years were merely artefacts of the operation of the internalised 'habitus' my parents inculcated me into; a set of internal ideas that served to explain the nature of our existence as a family unit, a way in which we understood ourselves in relation to work, society and life in general.

But in receiving such a 'habitus' as a way to understand the world I entered into a relationship of reflexivity with both the market and ultimately society itself (Beck, 1992).

On the surface, the nature of this relationship was, and still is, a dance. The individual and the market represent the perfect partners with which to express the rhythm of life, with each referring to the other to understand itself, each synchronising its own movements. Individually each is the expression of the other, but together they embody what this means, what it is to live and to be alive. On the other hand, the nature of such a reflexive relationship is clearly more complex. To start with the 'habitus' into which I was 'enculturated' was not only self-referencing, but also served as a way of identifying, and being identified by others (Wenger, 1998), and thus what I owned was not only a way of expressing my 'self' to the world but a way of being judged by it. Therefore, if I modified my appearance or remodelled the codes of my behaviour to fit in with those people I liked, thought were 'cool' or wanted to be like, each act of adjustment was a 'tactical' move within a 'strategic' approach that sort to establish me as recognisable part of a social grouping (deCerteau 1984). Also, as I, the people who I thought of as peers, and all the other groups and sub-groups who made up 'everyone else' changed, adapted and remodelled ourselves to become 'individuals', so did the market; in its quest to align itself to us, it sought to absorb and reproduce all modes of expression and all original cultural forms (Baudrillard 1994).

For Bauman (1998) this process, the interplay between the individual's search for identity and the market's search to provide it, has led us to an era where the majority of us are no longer able to make decisions about our lives without referring to the market (Bauman, 1998). If this were so, it would be because the market and its media have not only been successful in saturating every conceivable avenue of need, desire and gratification, but in doing so it has also succeeded in making consumers believe in the metadiscourse of this as a form of 'ontological security' (Giddens, 1991). It's safe because this is the way it is, and it pleases me. I don't have to face all those difficult existential questions like 'who am I?' or 'why am I here?', for I am an individual, unique, and I am here to distinguish my uniqueness from others, which is, of course, the 'hitch', because the paradox of seeking individuality through consumption is that it cannot be individual if any number of people can attain it. Another 'hitch' is that because the individual requires newer and more sophisticated products and services to express his or her 'self' as new, vibrant and sophisticated, the 'market', through its need to provide products that are within the economic and intellectual reach of consumers, produces simplified equivalences of established forms (Baudrillard, 1994). Purchasing a qualification over the internet, the latest opera 'crossover' artist or fine wine for a 'fiver': each are simplified equivalences, representations of schools of human endeavour that require both intellectual and physical investment over a prolonged period of time. Presenting such forms as representations, or 'simulacra', not only provides instant gratification, as the only investments required are the will and means to attain them, but also the opportunity to 'simulate' the social meanings

espoused to the graduate, the opera buff and the wine enthusiast (Baudrillard, 1994). Therefore, what becomes important is the notion of the connoisseur; the ability to distinguish oneself, and to be distinguished by others as possessing taste, discrimination and refinement; the aesthetic of consumption, or the consumer as the aesthete (Bauman, 1998).

Clearly the development of such modes of expression become in turn expressions of power, as they serve to differentiate and marginalise those who have from those who have not (Bauman, 1998). But if this were so then such empowerment cannot merely be considered as an end, it must also be considered a means: an artefact of lived in socio-economic-political forces and phenomena acted out in evolving social and cultural arenas (Elliott 2001). Such means flow into, and from, a changing landscape of opportunities, circumstances and scenarios (deCerteau 1984) that will determine the level, form and nature of a consumer's power, expression and refinement at a given moment in time. Although I am neither an economist, nor am I tempted to wander too far into what for me would be the 'thin ice' of an economic analysis, the statistics show that UK weekly earnings rose by an average of 3.7% per annum over the last decade (ONS no date) and have continued to do so despite the recent economic downturn, albeit at a reduced rate (ONS 2010). UK gross consumer credit rose by some 1650% in the period 1992 to 2002 (ONS 2010), and still stood at 1430% of the 1992 figure in 2009 (ONS 2010). Average UK household disposable income rose by almost 20% in the decade from 1992 to 2002 (ONS no date), although this is reported as having shrunk by 1/5 by 2009 (Equifax 2010). Clearly, these,

amongst other factors such as the drastic reduction in 'high street' prices due to cheap imports (Guardian-Unlimited 2007), have empowered and provided consumers with the means to pursue their consumption.

## **To the Global**

In terms of the organisation and context of work it is well documented that working occupations in the UK have been changing for some time. Jobs in manufacturing dropped by 39% between 1978 and 2000, while jobs in service industries increased by 36% over the same period (ONS no date). Such trends appear to reflect a 'classical theory' of work within post-industrial Britain, which posits the worker within an environment where:

- Knowledge, the harvest of data and information processing, is promoted to become the key resource in the promotion and production of growth and productivity in all sectors of the economy.
- The decline in agriculture and manufacture will be offset by the rise of services and their delivery.
- Occupations whose operations involve high levels of knowledge and information management, whether they be managerial, technical or professional, will be viewed with increasing importance (Castells 2000).

But it is not only work that has changed within post-industrial Britain. The urban landscape has also changed, and not just physically, as typified by developments such as 'city living', 'park and ride' or 'rapid transport systems'. There have also been metaphysical changes, for our lives are not merely

framed through the physical, but are given meaning through our interaction with it (deCerteau 1984). In living with and within such changes (to the nature of our working lives, the physical spaces we inhabit and the power we are able to exhibit and enact though our relative wealth) we inhabit a metaphysical space in which we become consumers of the discourses that have brought about these very same changes; in encountering, in consuming and utilising them, we come to identify, to become, to act out and express them. Not only do we become their agents, but we become them, we become discourses in action.

Such changes to our work, to our lives and the way we understand them, can be correlated with the rise of a set of interrelated phenomena that we have come to think of as globalisation (Langhorne 2001). From a purely economic point of view, globalisation is a term that describes how organisations have realigned their supply and service chains toward regions that offer the potential for cost reduction. If we consider the table below we can visualise what an attractive proposition it has been for organisations to shift their production toward regions where they can capitalise upon the low cost of labour.

	1980	1985	1995
<b>United States</b>	9.87	13.01	17.20
<b>Canada</b>	8.67	10.94	16.03
<b>Australia</b>	8.47	8.20	14.40
<b>New Zealand</b>	5.33	4.47	10.11
<b>Europe</b>			
<b>France</b>	8.94	5.72	19.34
<b>Germany</b>	12.33	9.60	31.88
<b>Italy</b>	8.15	7.63	16.48
<b>United Kingdom</b>	7.56	6.27	13.77
<b>Austria</b>	8.88	7.58	25.33
<b>Belgium</b>	13.11	8.97	26.88
<b>Denmark</b>	10.83	8.13	24.19
<b>Finland</b>	8.24	8.16	24.78
<b>Netherlands</b>	12.06	8.75	24.18
<b>Norway</b>	11.59	10.37	24.38
<b>Spain</b>	5.89	4.66	12.70
<b>Sweden</b>	12.51	9.66	21.36
<b>Switzerland</b>	11.09	9.66	29.28
<b>Czech Republic</b>	N/A	N/A	1.30
<b>Hungary</b>	N/A	N/A	1.70
<b>Poland</b>	N/A	N/A	2.09
<b>Russian Federation</b>	N/A	N/A	0.60
<b>Asia</b>			
<b>Japan</b>	5.52	6.34	23.66
<b>Singapore</b>	1.49	2.47	7.28
<b>Hong Kong (China)</b>	1.51	1.73	4.82
<b>China</b>	0.25	0.19	0.25
<b>Taiwan (China)</b>	1.00	1.50	5.82
<b>Rep. of Korea</b>	0.96	1.23	7.40
<b>Malaysia</b>	0.73	1.08	1.59
<b>Thailand</b>	0.31	0.49	0.46
<b>Philippines</b>	0.53	0.64	0.71
<b>Indonesia</b>	0.16	0.22	0.30
<b>India</b>	0.44	0.35	0.25

Table One: Hourly Labour Costs in Manufacturing (U.S.\$), 1980-1995

(Stalker 2000)



It is interesting that the two countries that show the lowest levels of labour cost in manufacturing in 1995, India and China, have both realised such dramatic levels of economic growth over the last decade, and are predicted to continue to do so into the future (BBC\_News 2007). However it is not too difficult to imagine that an organisation that produced steel in Germany for US\$ 31.88 per hour, per person would find the proposition of reducing their labour costs by 99.21% a highly attractive proposition (see Table One. Hourly Labour Costs in Manufacturing (US \$), 1980-1995). But to do so would require more than merely relocating its manufacturing plants to the Far East, it would rest on the ability to manage a 'supply chain' of 'global' proportions.

Primarily such a process was made possible because changes in technology enabled the rapid communication of information and knowledge across international boundaries and time (Langhorne 2001). Put simply, technology enabled manufacturers (who to that point had manufactured their products on a largely local level) to rapidly transfer and communicate the knowledge, experience and skills necessary to manufacture their products to other parts of the world, and because these were parts of the world where labour and raw materials were considerably cheaper than in their native markets, they could make a tidy profit, even after 'shipping' the manufactured product half way across the globe to their local market. The products themselves also became more competitive in terms of other markets, for example within the European Union. Of course, managing such a process took more than the ability to communicate and 'shunt' information across the world in the blink of an eye; it also required the development of technologies capable of enabling

analysing and administrating complex strings of processes that were interwoven as an infrastructure to form and support the intellectual and logistical supply (Castells 2000).

Although such systems brought rewards for those organisations who were 'first to market' with their 'globalised' products, the economic effect of them doing so meant that to survive other organisations also had to become equally competitive – a process that entailed large scale replication of and alignment toward the 'global' supply chain system. However, once such changes had been made, and those organisations who failed to adapt had fallen by the wayside (Pascale 2000), new forms of competitiveness were required. Competition and survival in such a marketplace requires that organisations continuously innovate and evolve to find new forms of competitiveness (Mytelja 2000), and such innovation evolved globalisation away from the shipping of goods manufactured in cheaper (or poorer) regions of the world to the affluent markets of the West (or North) toward a phenomenon that sought to 'network' together all forms of physical, intellectual and economic resource by use of Information Technologies (Castells 2000).

The implication of such 'networking' was that organisations were able to re-evaluate their 'softer', knowledge-based operations as assets also capable of being 'globalised' (Dunning 2006). It also enabled them to position particular business units in localities that provided the best cost to skill base ratio, or outsource the work of the business unit to a third party. The implication for

workers in these organisations was that they either became 'networked' into the 'network' (Castells 2000) or their jobs were 'globalised' elsewhere. The implication for me, as a consumer, is that when I telephone my bank here in the UK my call is answered by a man in Mumbai, who, despite a 'broad' Indian accent, introduces himself as 'Darren' and tries to engage me in conversation about football while we wait for his system to reboot. Although something tells me Darren is probably not his real name, he asks security questions, accesses my account details and answers my queries in much the same way as the people who I used to speak to, who had South Yorkshire accents, even down to the football. In relocating its call centre functions to India, my bank can be seen as having utilised Information Technologies to 'network' both my call and the details of my account with a customer service operative in another part of the world. Enabling such a network served to save them up to 40% of the costs of providing such a service, whilst simultaneously 'adding value' by recruiting Indian graduates with attractive salary packages (McGivering 2002). In doing so my bank can be seen as having tapped into the intellectual capital of another country as a form of competitive advantage (Dunning 2006). Doing so throws into relief a further facet of globalisation, that once enabled by technology, the world can be viewed as a knowledge economy, where the intellectual outputs of specific countries or regions can be exploited as sources of profit generation or augmentation (Dunning 2006).

In shifting the bulk of what we might think of as their traditional assets (land, buildings, machinery, workforce) away from those countries we had

associated with German steel, British porcelain or Portuguese fabrics toward other countries and regions where they could capitalise on the ability to network together the relative cheapness of labour in one place, raw materials in another, etc., organisations became the kind of global corporations we think of as familiar today. But, although such globalised corporations might seek to lead us to believe that they have created a 'smaller world', enriched by the virtues of competitiveness, innovation and 'world class service', they have achieved these by political complicity, economic investment on a huge scale and effectively making the machinery of modernity a reality for millions of workers in the Third World (Castells 2000), and poorer countries are queuing up for the privilege. This is not surprising when one considers the economic opportunities globalisation has offered poorer countries. Take India: the outsourcing activities of India in 2007 were estimated to have generated US\$ 47.8bn (a 1000% rise over the preceding decade), which represented a staggering 5.4% of the country's gross domestic product (Kobayashi-Hillary 2007). Given that the profits generated by outsourcing in India will be but a drop in the ocean compared to net gains realised by the outsourcing activities of European and North American banks, utility companies, retailers, etc. that we, in the West (and North), use to maintain and organise our daily lives, it is not surprising to find that the principal 'movers' in the globalisation phenomenon have been political and economic in nature. The underlying sponsors of the new global order that is globalisation were governments, especially those of the largest industrial market economies, the G-7, who utilised the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation to unfold and embed three

economic policies that, when interrelated, would serve to create the framework for globalisation:

- “Deregulation of the economic activity (starting with their financial markets).
- Liberalisation of international trade and investment.
- Privatisation of publicly controlled companies (often sold to foreign investors)” (Castells, 2000, p137).

Such policies not only served to unify the economies of the world under one set of rules, practices and procedures and establish a universal network through which economic, physical and intellectual assets could be moved quickly and easily (Castells 2000), they also enabled global corporations to ‘buy’ stakes in the domestic infrastructures they would need to manipulate to achieve such a process.

Viewed within this political, technological and economic paradigm, globalisation, in its successful ‘networking’ together of the affluent markets of the North and West with the resources of the poorer East and South, can be seen as having successfully created an almost universal set of attitudes, protocols and policies that have served to self-referentially ease and justify the process and the pursuit of globalisation (Langhorne 2001). But, whether one considers this a philanthropic achievement (in that it serves to redistribute wealth by ‘kick starting’ Third World economies), or the triumph of global corporations (in being able to understand and exploit poverty as a

tangible asset), globalisation has had a major impact upon the lives of individuals in this country.

### **Living with Globalisation: A Snapshot from Nottingham**

The consequences of the globalising activities of what are now thought of as the multi-national corporations are of course manifold. For my friends and I, who began our working careers in and around Nottingham at the time such changes started to take place, they effectively meant that we were unlikely to find the kind of long term job security our parents had enjoyed.

One of my closest friends started his working career in one of the coal mines that surrounded the city. When the mine closed, because imported coal from Russia was deemed more cost effective than locally mined coal, he took a course 'in computers' at the local College of Further Education and got himself a supervisory role in the customer service department of one of the companies that sprang up after the privatisation of what we all knew as the Electricity Board. When the company announced that it was moving its call centres to India he 'jumped ship' to fit car windscreens, but after the company shifted the bulk of its contracts to agency workers he decided to retrain as a social worker. His story is very much like the stories of all my friends from this period. Having been 'enculturated' into the 'grand narrative' of working class life by our parents, that the most important thing was to secure long term job security by working for one of the large, long established companies (for my friend the National Coal Board), globalisation served to cast him adrift into the sort of post-modern future that would be more complex, more fluid, more

changeable (Lyotard 1984) and deeply fragmented from the work experiences of our parents.

I don't think that those of my social circle who experienced such change at the time really knew what was happening. We knew that materials and goods were coming from abroad, we knew that jobs were going elsewhere and we heard that members of boards were getting six figure bonuses, but we didn't think of this as the consequences thrown up from the process of innovation-based competition diffusing through the catalyst of trade liberalisation (Mytelja 2000). Rather, we discussed the end of job security ('there are no jobs for life anymore'), that the way forward, the way to 'pay the bills', to 'put food in our mouths' would be to adapt to the needs of the job market and expect to have to readapt as and when it changed again. Our lives became reflexively biographic (Beck, 1992) to a rapid succession of changes that arrived as 'hot potatoes' from the ovens of the globalising corporations.

However, this has changed, or is it merely that we have changed? The expectations of our children seem a world away from the expectations of our parents. Yes, we still seem to make sense of our worlds through consumerism and reference to the markets (Bauman, 1998) and yes, we still order and make life plans with which to achieve long and short term goals (Giddens, 1991), however the world and the place we inhabit within it have changed around us. For (Beck 2006) globalisation, in its reflexive repositioning of the means and forms of production, manufacture and the service of 'soft' goods in other parts of the world, has created a 'banal society' in which the old concepts that underpinned the kind of consumerism

that my parents enacted (for example consumerism that valued quality, longevity and functionality) have been replaced by a 'buy it cheap, throw it away and buy a new one' ethos. Globalisation has made the money we earn go further because the deregulation and liberalisation of international trade and investment necessary for the globalisation project to function (Castells 2000), linked with a strong currency (based on an economy shored up with profits made from the global activities of multinational corporations) has also enabled a cascade of ever cheaper products and services to saturate each and every area of the marketplace. Clothes, holidays, consumer durables, cars - almost everything you can think of buying has become cheaper. Such relative wealth, according to Beck (2006), has allowed us to understand ourselves and simulate identities (Baudrillard 1994) as cosmopolitans through our consumption of foreign holidays, tastes for ethnic cuisine and the designer clothes we hang from our backs; even the football matches we watch are played out by a largely international cast.

## **2.2 Globalisation – Post-modern, Late Modernity or Reflexive Globalisation?**

### **Globalisation – Post-modern or Late Modernity?**

Many social theorists would argue that the succession of 'hot potato' changes I and those around me experienced were part of a transition from the modern to the post-modern; that modernity first declined, then fell under the erosive forces that flowed from:



- The expansion of the global economy and the rise of 'globalised' corporations.
- Changing patterns of production and consumption, goods and services.
- The expansion and maturation of global forms of communication.
- The dominance of both the mass media and communication technologies in our daily life.
- The emergence of identity politics.
- The 'techno-industrialisation' of conflict and military activity.
- The emergence of regional and ethnic conflicts based on differences and cultural particularities.
- Changes in patterns of global immigration and migration.

Clearly such changes can be viewed as being key catalysts in changing the very fabric of contemporary society, culture and politics (Elliot, 2001), but they can also be understood as the forms, standards and artefacts of a globalising modernity.

Giddens (1991) supports such a thesis in suggesting modernity has globalising tendencies in that "the reorganising of time and space, disembedding mechanisms and the reflexivity of modernity all presume universalising properties that explain the expansionist, coruscating nature of modern social life in its encounters with traditionally established practices" (p21). If this is so, then globalisation can be thought of as the latest stage of modernity, or 'high modernity' (Giddens 1991), and what we think of, and

thought of, as the post-modern are events and experiences thrown up as artefacts of the unfolding process of modernity globalising. This is not so surprising if one acknowledges that it was commerce, wielding the double-edged sword of aggressive economic policy and the promises of fiscal reward, that cleared the ground on which the seeds of globalisation were scattered, tended and harvested. For commerce is predominantly underpinned by the modern mindset of 'classical management', which seeks to prescribe objectives under formal, rigid and self-replicating structures of command and control to evoke predetermined outcomes (Clegg 1990; Johnson and Gill 1993). Therefore, although the lived in consequences of globalisation, as a projection of the imagination, will and capability of modernity, entailed the throwing up of new forms, standards and artefacts that were more complex, more fluid and less certain than in any time in history, these did not necessarily indicate the post-modern. For, although our miner can be seen as having adapted to a series of radical shifts in the biography of his labour, the changes he reflexively experienced as the consequences of importing foreign coal, the migration of the services sector to South Asia and the outsourcing of professional contracts were arguably about as post-modern as the boardrooms that brought such events to pass.

Of course, modernity has always reflexively produced outcomes. The objectified subjectification of the individual within the metadiscourse of modernity, which makes the agency of man or woman subservient and docile within the walls of social structures to such an extent that his or her actions became the embodiment of the ways of thinking, acting and believing the

structures represented, is a prime example of this. But these were internally referential in that, having framed society, they protected the locale of life by identifying, policing, punishing and excluding difference as deviance (Foucault 1991). 'Late modernity' however, in its crusade to universalise the globe by the prescription of 'culturally imperial' forms, standards and languages (Said 1985) upon the domestic markets of the world as the prerequisite of bringing into being a global economy, has become 'reflexive modernity' (Beck 1992) and, as such, 'externally referential'. For the very forms, standards and languages that serve to network together capital, goods and services also reflexively network the flow of knowledge, culture, politics, people, disease, crime, religiosity, in fact the whole spectrum of human communicable experience. However, the networking activities of a globalising modernity must, by the very nature of modernity, plan, command and control its networks on the basis of perceived economic or political utility. The reflexive use of these very same networks by individuals, groups, sub-cultures, etc. serves to enable, facilitate and empower emergent forms of human organisation, which suggests we have moved beyond the paradigm of modernity.

## **Reflexive Globalisation**

It is important to acknowledge that the relatively recent rise of globalisation (over the last 20 years) appears to have gone hand-in-hand with a rise in the number of international migrants coming to the UK. Clearly the sense of cosmopolitanism (Beck 2006) that Britons are experiencing is augmented by the large number of foreign nationals that now surround them, many of whom

work in the bars, restaurants, hotels and shops in which we spend our leisure time. However, part of the banality of which Beck (2006) speaks is that in purchasing such services we, as individuals and as a society, do not need to think about why or how these people came to be in the UK, or for that matter how our actions as consumers, or the relative wealth of our society, might have influence far beyond the immediate locale.

### **Reflexive Globalisation in Action? A Snapshot of Nottingham**

My current neighbours went on holiday to Kenya. They went on safari, flew round Mount Kenya, visited a Maasai village, bought trinkets from the market, sunbathed by the pool, made friends in the hotel, discussed the cricket, ate lobster and drank too much alcohol. When they came home they met their friends, showed them their pictures and told them the anecdotes that went with them: the giraffe and the jeep, the eight foot snake, the night the man from Doncaster jumped in the pool with the woman from Pontefract. In doing so, they were able to actively display the kudos they attached to their experience. The fact that they had journeyed to Africa as travellers of the world was an incremental step in their life plan that had been achieved (Giddens 1991); they had chosen it as tangible evidence of their level of affluence (Bauman 1998) and in return they understood it as bringing them cultural capital (Bourdieu and Passeron 1970). Another way of looking at such a scenario is that they undertook a transaction within a system that sought to network together their relative prosperity with a service based in a poorer region of the world, for the holiday was the simulation of the meanings attached to the African experience (the safari, Mount Kenya, the Maasai

village). Each were safe, managed 'events' that sought to simulate the wildness, the danger and the mystique embedded in our ideas of Africa. It was the simulation of a 'simulacrum' (Baudrillard 1994) embedded within an infrastructure designed to efficiently and effectively manage the 'complete package' of their holiday, from booking to travel, from accommodation to activities.

A further way of thinking about this holiday is as an event that serves to demonstrate the global flow of culture (Appadurai 1996), enabled by and reflexive within a globalised modernity. For although my neighbour's holiday served to simulate particular facets of the African experience (skipping neatly over the poverty, conflict, corruption and disease<sup>4</sup>), it also served to simulate a simulacrum of Northern European culture in Kenya. Because an important part of making a holiday in the Third World feel enjoyable and safe is the ability to access all those references that one takes for granted such as English food, British newspapers, Sky Sports, Coronation Street, recognisable brands of cigarettes and alcohol, English speaking hotel staff, etc. And here we arrive at a point from which we might consider how such a 'global flow', acting through the conduit of globalised modernity, might engender reflexivity. Let us imagine a Kenyan man or woman on the street in Nairobi who, although aware of the country's popularity with tourists, had little to do with them until he or she found employment in the tourist industry (tourism in Kenya rose by almost 50% between 1999 and 2005 (source: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2007)). Until that point, what he or she

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<sup>4</sup> Although arguably, these are successfully simulated by the charity holiday sector, which enables people from rich countries to experience the simulacrum of providing desperately needed aid to the poor of third world countries, despite the fact that a financial contribution reflecting the sum they pay for their holiday would far out perform the contribution of their unskilled labour.

might have thought of when asked about Britain was the Queen, Buckingham Palace, the Anglican Church, pretty thatched cottages, bowler hats, etc., because, until comparatively recently, the way the world understands each and every other part of the world has tended to be through a framework of information translated, interpreted and presented as a kind of cultural 'postcard' by the media. However, the rise of a rapidly globalising tourist industry (Pro-Poor Tourism, 2004) and its need to innovatively maximise profits by making destinations such as Kenya more accessible to the affluent 'middle market' consumers of Northern Europe has brought the culturally augmented assumptions that the man or woman on the street in Kenya may hold about Britain side-by-side with the real, hard and tangible actions of Britons holidaying in Kenya. Without speculating on the spectrum of British behaviours Kenyans have to deal with at work, the cultural flow provided by people like my neighbours (as acting expressions of their own norms, values and assumptions) could be said to have evoked a reflexive response, if it has brought about a change in the way Kenyans understand the world. Therefore, if holidaying Britons repeat particular behaviours (for example drunkenness, horseplay or lewd language) then, in actively negotiating these, those who work and witness such behaviours will remodel the set of culturally disseminated representations with which they understood Britain (a received simulacra) under the light of their real, 'lived in' experience with British people.

This would suggest that a globalising form of modernity (in this case the leisure and tourist industry) is capable of provoking the conditions in which a

global flow of culture can reflexively throw up a set of emergent social phenomena as a consequence of its movement. But such emergent reflexivity does not stop there; globalisation is a two-way mirror that allows both the affluent West and North and the developing countries of the East and South to view each other simultaneously. For the technologies that have enabled the globalised corporations to command and control their enterprises, and their clients' easy access to information, services and communication, have also reflexively enabled and empowered people in poorer countries:

- Not only do they have access to the simulacra of Northern European culture on their doorstep, be it by TV, film, advertising or British tourists and their lifestyle accessories, but also the externally referencing touchstones of the global brands Pepsi, Land Rover, Nokia, etc.
- The opportunity to work within the activities of global businesses (be it directly or through agents) provides them with opportunities to earn money to support themselves and their families.
- If they can access the internet they can access information pertaining to the globalised world (read news, research areas of interest, join online communities, read 'blogs') which they can utilise personally and disseminate amongst their friends.
- They can utilise the hub that competing airlines have created to fly in steadily increasing numbers of tourists from all over the developed world.

Of course, what holds the average Kenyan man or woman back from being the kind of global citizen he or she might like to be is wealth, for although he or she might have a good job serving foreign tourists in Kenya, this is not transferable to the developed world. But if he or she were to take another look at the table of hourly labour costs in manufacturing (see Table One), he or she might see that the idea of working in somewhere like the UK would appear very attractive. However, there may also be a whole host of other factors that might influence someone in Kenya to migrate to another country.

## **2.3 The Scapes of Globalisation**

For Appadurai (1996) the new 'global economy' and the movements within it can no longer be understood in terms of economic deficits and surpluses, 'pushes and pulls' or producers and consumers. Rather, he argues, the current global economy is more complex; its operations and evolution are set within sets of fundamental 'disjunctures' that exist between cultures, between economies and between political systems. For Appadurai (1996), these disjunctures are bridged by five scapes, which allow and enable the global flow of goods, money and politics, of people and culture and curiosity, of ideas, ideals and imagination.

### **The Ethnoscape**

The Ethnoscape is the scape of refugees, tourists, immigrants, students, exiles, guest workers, etc. who together constitute a fundamental facet of the



fluid and changing nature of the world within which we live. This is not to say that relatively stable groups, communities and networks (of work, leisure, family, friendship, peer, place of birth, etc.) no longer exist, but rather that they represent a 'warp' through which everywhere is woven the 'woof' of people in motion. People (individuals, families and groups) in motion, are motivated by both the need to leave the familiarity of their homes and the 'fantasy' of moving to a different place, and what is more, these needs and fantasies now function on much larger scales than ever before. No longer does a man or women in a village consider moving to the nearest city, but of moving to a city in another country to become a cleaner or a factory worker. No longer do refugees from Iraq just flee across the boarder to Turkey, Syria, or Jordan, they might also turn up in Sweden or the United States. As such the Ethnoscape has the power to affect the politics of, and between, nation states in ways that are completely unprecedented; not the power of the multinational corporations or the G7, but a kind of people power, the power generated by the movement of people, en masse.

### **The Technoscape**

The Technoscape refers to what is now the global configuration of technology and its relationship to the growing reality that all technologies (both informational and mechanical) are increasingly fluid, rapid and persuasive in their ability to permeate all boundaries, regions and continents. Enterprises that were once national concerns are increasingly both international and multinational. For example, what was once British steel is now Corus (created after the marriage of British Steel to what was once the

Dutch 'Hoogovens'), a subsidiary of what was once India's Tata steel. Corus provides components and technologies to a host of markets that range from automotive to aerospace, energy to engineering in a global marketplace (Corus no date). This arrangement of technologies, brought into being by the coming together of various interested parties to provide and promote 'technological solutions' to other, distributed parties, has little to do with market rationality, economies of scale or political control, but is increasingly driven by a complicated relationship between the flow of money, highly skilled and unskilled labour and political possibilities. The Technoscape not only enables the movement of technologies across the globe, but also provides mediums for and momentum to the movement of those people who are empowered by specialised knowledge of particular technologies or attracted to serve the physical settings in which technologies are grounded with unskilled labour.

### **Financescapes**

Financescapes are scapes given form by the global activities of investment bankers, money markets, stock exchanges, etc. who speed finance around the world, if not at the speed of light, then in the time it takes to click a mouse. As such they provide functional relationships that serve to both bridge and disjuncture the Ethnoscape, Technoscape and other Financescapes. Bridge because they provide structures and networks through which finance, technologies and ethnicity may flow (either specifically or as attachments). Disjuncture because the relationships between the Ethnoscape, Technoscape and other Financescapes are separate, discrete

and divided; each are subject to their own sets of political, informational, organisational and cultural concerns and aspirations that serve to act as both parameters and constraints for the operation of other scapes.

### **The Mediascape**

The Mediascape refers to the distribution and capacity of the media to produce and disseminate information and images to an ever-growing audience across the globe. Entertaining or informative, traditional 'hard copy' or the latest electronic systems, local, national or international, the media, in whatever form it takes, provides, produces and reproduces sets of complex and sophisticated images, narratives and repertoires that are interwoven with embedded versions of news, politics and consumables, which are themselves fundamentally intertwined. Whether produced to serve private or state interests, people across the world experience the Mediascape through a complex and complicated, reflexive relationship in which individuals, groups and even communities are asked to position and inform their sense of 'self' and their relationship to the world around them by a referencing and dissemination of the newsprint, billboards, celluloid and electronic screens of the 'Mediascape'. These tend to communicate the messages and repertoires of the social, political and economic stakeholders through 'image centred', narrative rich accounts or 'strips of reality' that 'offer up' characters, plots, scenarios and textual forms with which the individual can select 'scripts' that inform an 'imagined' or simulated version of reality, or life.

Such 'scripts' become unpacked into complex groups of metaphors from which and with which individuals, groups or communities can seek guidance for the enactment of their lives, as they help to provide narratives of the 'other' (that which one is not or does not have) and 'protonarratives' about different kinds of life or living; fantasies that can and do become prologues and motives for the desire to acquire, flow or move toward. Not only do these 'protonarratives' serve to blur the lines between the real and the fictional, but the further away an audience is from the direct experiences of the kinds of metropolitan life it has come to see, hear, taste, wear and think, the more likely its members are to construct 'imagined' versions of these worlds that are unrealistic, aesthetic or fantasies of what it is to live such a life in such a place; this is especially so if the world they inhabit is very different from the 'world' they are imagining.

### **The Ideoscape**

The Ideoscape also comprises a series of linked images, but these are in general of a political nature, in that they tend to inform and be informed by either the ideologies of nation states or counter ideologies of those orientated toward capturing power. As such the Ideoscape comprises elements of the 'Enlightenment' worldview, a chain of images, terms and ideas that serve to underpin and frame concepts such as democracy and notions of personal freedoms, citizenship and sovereignty. However, the 'diasporic' scattering of these images, terms and ideas across the globe has had the effect of loosening the inter-connectivity that once held them together as a kind of 'master narrative'. Instead, the Ideoscape now comprises much more loosely

structured views of politics (and the ideologies that underpin and inform them), which has enabled different nation states to organise and evolve their political cultures around particular key concepts. As a result of this, the political narratives that serve as the communicative conduits for the political elites of nation states are now congested, rerouted and detoured by disjuncture operating on two levels. Firstly, a disjuncture brought into being because not all images, terms and ideas are easily translated across cultures, settings or contexts. Secondly, a disjuncture that exists because there can be no universal formula for creating and addressing political discourse; political audiences are subject to their own national, cultural and social specific contexts, systems and conventions on such matters.

### **A Web of Agency**

There are, of course, a range of ways of understanding agency, such as Giddens's (1984) theory of 'structuration' and Bourdieu's (1990) 'habitus', however none can, nor would, lay claim to be a 'grand narrative' capable of explaining capacities to act in each and every occasion, occurrence or activity. Structure, by its very nature, frames and delimits agency in ways that serve to engender it as reactive, reflexive and complexly adaptive to the interplay between structure and a set of contingent, contextual and changing variables, such as time, place, need, requirement, opportunity, etc. As such the struggle to understand agency cannot rely on attention to activity on individual or social levels alone, but must focus upon agency as a fluid and evolving activity in its own right; adaptive and opportunistic capacities thrown

up from the examination, exploration and exploitation of structure; or to put it another way, agency in action.

In terms of the investigation of international migrants and the UK that this thesis represents, structure and agency are not two themes that work well together as there is no single structure, not even globalisation itself, that can encompass the sheer variety of cultures, forms, languages, laws, ideas and ideologies that come together in the web of actions and interactions that is international migration. Appadurai's (1996) scapes provide a more fluid, evolving and reflexive way to think about structure that posits agency as equally fluid and reflexive, expanding and constructing to enable a world of possibilities. As such they will be used within this thesis to understand the opportunities and capacities (agency) used by international migrants and by extension provide a 'way in' to understanding how a process of reflexive globalisation might have engendered, facilitated and underlain the kind of international migration that the UK has experienced in recent years.

For Appadurai (1996) these scapes represent a kind of global architecture that not only provides a framework for the activities of the globalised multinational corporations or the interests and activities of the economically empowered of the West (or North), but also a web of agency through which individuals, groups and communities from across the globe can reflexively flow, move and travel. This web, spun between the scapes, exists in fluid and fluctuating states, expanding and constricting to accommodate the evolving nature of both planned and emergent change within the combined and

clustered scapes of the architecture. It provides sources of agency to individuals, groups and communities because it provides them with both opportunities and capacities to act within or in relation to the functional, interrelated and emergent structures that make up each of the scapes and their interrelationships with other scapes in the architecture. The nature of this agency is complex. Essentially it comes into being because the scapes of globalisation are reflexive; they are engineered or have evolved to act as conduits that serve to shunt and/or network together ideas, technology, finance, media and people, and therefore provide sources of utility or resources to those seeking to shunt or network themselves on a global level. But in part it is also produced by the sheer variety of cultures, forms, languages, laws, ideas and ideologies, etc. acting and interacting with and within an architecture in a constant state of change (be it planned, emergent or radical) in which we find both scapes and their relationships with others evolving and transforming, constricting existing opportunities and capacities whilst simultaneously creating new and emergent ones. As evolution tells us, when a diverse variety of characteristics meet change in its environment the result is a world of possibilities.

Because of this, agency will not be mobilised as a single form or entity for the purposes of this investigation, as doing so would be too narrow an approach to capture the sheer array of ideas, needs, purposes, dreams, etc. that provide international migrants with capacities and opportunities to act, whether it be within the act of their migration or the relationships they experience with and within the UK. Rather, the investigation will mobilise

Appadurai's (1996) scapes of globalisation to represent modes and forms of agency under the assumption that the differing capacities and opportunities posed and posited by the scapes will reflect, understand and represent the evolving and fluid relationship international migrants experience with and within a globalised world. For the agency which international migrants hold, find, and access within the phenomenon that has come to be known as globalisation cannot be understood as a singular form of action, power, operation or opportunity. It is, like the scapes of globalisation themselves, manifold, dependent and contingent upon the scapes and their evolving relationships with each other, with states, with technology, with money, with markets, with ideas and ethnicities and with people. People do not act and interact with globalisation; globalisation provides them with a myriad of different capacities and opportunities to act and interact with and within it. Globalisation and the scapes that it is comprised of is not merely structure, it is the genesis of a whole range of different kinds of agency. While it is not usually done, I have therefore opted to attach the adjective agentic to the noun agency in order to denote the section of the globalised architecture that is primarily productive of agency.

## **2.4 Immigration and the Role of the State**

Appadurai's (1996) scapes provide international migrants with a web of agency that is fluid and reflexive, expanding and constricting to enable a world of possibilities. The Ethnoscape, Technoscape, Financescapes,



Mediascape and Ideoscape are not constricted by traditional boundaries, but are fluid forms that enable and facilitate the passage of ideas and ideologies, culture and custom, finance and family through time and space. Travelling through the ether of the internet, the supply and service chains of global corporations and the array of economic and political interests, the scapes span continents, reach across regions and breach borders. As such the State no longer represents a structure in the traditional sense, but rather sets of ideas, principles, policies and procedures that represent a point of reflexivity between social and political discourses of a particular national state and the evolving nature of the scapes.

This reflexivity becomes visible when key British immigration legislation is viewed as a time-series, which sees the number of legislative acts rise to meet rises in migration, with three major acts passed prior to the 1960s, three prior to 1980 and nine from the 1980s onward.

- Early legislation, prior to 1960, rested with acts that sought to exclude and if necessary deport undesirable 'aliens' (those deemed insane, diseased, criminal or those unable to support themselves or their dependents (1905)), distinguish 'friendly' from 'enemy' aliens (resulting in the repatriation of some 120,000 refugees (1914)), and post war, deport foreigners found guilty of promoting civil or industrial unrest (in reaction to the revolution in Russia (1919)).
- The 1960s saw legislation that introduced a 'voucher' system for Commonwealth citizens to enter the UK based on qualifications and skills (1962), and later (1968) legislation that determined rights of

residency for those born or naturalised in the UK, or those with a grandparent who was born in Britain.

- The 1971 Immigration Act set out a structure for immigration controls and made powers to change or make immigration rules the domain of the Home Secretary. It introduced the need for 'work permits' for all who did not hold the right to residency and phased out mainstream migration from Commonwealth countries, except for areas of work deemed to be in short supply in the native market.
- The 1980s, which incidentally saw a rise in the numbers of asylum seekers coming to Britain, signalled an increase in the frequency of legislation relating to immigration. 1981 saw the British Nationality Act, which gave British citizenship to those qualifying for the right to reside in the UK, although children born in the UK to non-British parents lost the right to automatic citizenship. 1987 saw an act to impose fines on airlines that carried passengers without appropriate documentation, and the 1988 Immigration Act made marriage the primary criteria for immigration for family reunion and made it easier for the Government to deport foreign nationals not granted rights of residency or abode.
- The 1990s saw asylum come to the forefront of immigration policy, with the creation of processes to deal with asylum claims (1993), withdrawal of rights to claim non-contributory benefits for all groups subject to immigration control, including asylum seekers (1996), and the strengthening of powers given to immigration officers, a streamlining of the appeals process and the formation of a national

system to support asylum seekers 'on the ground' while awaiting final decisions on their applications (1999).

- The new millennium brought into being new controls on entry to the UK: a new 'citizen's pledge' (2002) saw entering the UK without a valid passport a criminal offence, scrutiny of marriages to those with 'leave to remain' in the UK, the prerogative of the Secretary of State, reduced rights of appeal for failed asylum applicants and increased responsibility for reducing illegal working placed on employers (2006) (Sales 2007).

According to Sales (2007), such legislation indicates a trajectory of defensive policies that respond to what are perceived as the risk to society posed by growing numbers of asylum seekers rather than people who are themselves at risk, while immigration for the other categories has leaned toward 'managed migration': the linking of tailoring immigration to meet the needs of society, its economy and shortages in its skill pool. However, it can also be argued that such policies represent the reflexive manoeuvring of a society seeking to 'tighten' the criteria for immigration under the growing weight of migration while administrating the relationships it holds with the growing body of international migrants who are already in the UK. International migrants utilise the web of agency provided by the scapes of globalisation to arrive in the UK, and society responds reflexively by evolving sets of criteria designed to ensure that potential immigrants serve the needs of society.

## **Immigration, Citizenship and the Nation State**

Kymlicka (2007) observes that when people talk about society, they usually mean the nation state, for societies are bounded within legalities, politics, economies, identities and conceptions of citizenship that are related to a physical space. Nation states are linked to the scapes, identified by Appadurai (1996), by the ether of the internet, satellites and global supply chains, but are bound in the concrete of a country, its history and traditions; whereas an individual may move across the globe, nation states are fixed in their latitude by all but conquest of or by another nation state.

Of course this is not completely true; nation states can have influence and be influenced by a number of factors such as trade agreements or the European Union for example, however their collaboration or compliance generally serves the interests of the state, society or at least a group of people, be they in that country or another. However, rather than enter into a lengthy discussion about the nature of the state, let it be assumed that it represents the executive arm of government, which in turn employs area specific administrative bodies to develop and implement policy (the Secretary of State for Health is head of the Department for Health). As secretaries of state are effectively cabinet ministers, who are appointed by governments and who are arguably responsible to the electorate, it can in turn be argued that the nation state is, if not representative of, then at least in some way linked to its citizens.

Clearly the business of politics is far removed from what we think of as democracy. The convergence of law, the economy, current events, civil rights, religion, social provision, public security, competing ideologies, the spectrum of identities, etc. are more complex and more fluid than the interests, ideologies and persuasions of a single Member of Parliament, who in turn represents the interests, ideologies and persuasions of tens of thousands of people. They are together the daily diet of the 'political community' (Kymlicka 2007), which along with the 'national community' (the people of that nation) and the power they hold to impose their political will upon and within particular geographical boundaries represent the 'nation state' (Sales 2007). Because of this relationship the 'nation state' is not only intrinsically linked with the 'political community' (Kymlicka 2007), but also with citizenship, as it is the interests of citizens (the 'national community') that the political community is charged with serving, and it is the citizens that are charged with electing the government.

There are of course a number of contradictions to the theory that the national and political communities are entirely reflexive and referential. One is the distance between national and international politics and people on the ground, which would explain why the conversations and discourses of people in Nottingham that stimulated my interest in undertaking this study spoke of a lack of participation or consultation in the policies that had brought rising levels of international migrants to the city (see 1.1 A Narrative of Nottingham: a snapshot of the city). Another is that although the 'political community' may hold responsibility for the needs and interests of the 'national community', it is

only accountable to that proportion of the community able to vote, i.e. citizens. Such contradictions exist because the nation state exists above and beyond individuals, single issues or the mix of ideologies that mobilise these. Rather, it seeks to balance the nature of citizenship and the nation within the maelstrom of national and international interests, events and discourses. Immigration is but a facet of the overall operations and interests of the nation state, however, in that the nation state is geographically defined, its borders not only dictate the territory where the conditions of the state are law, but also represent controls over who may enter, leave or remain in that territory.

Citizenship and the rights attached to it (freedom to reside, work and travel freely) have traditionally been attached to the 'law of the soil' (*ius soli*), where citizenship is an automatic right of birth within the geography of the nation state, or 'law of blood' (*ius sanguinis*), granted on the basis of familial relationships. Britain also has a tradition of allowing those who have lived and worked in the country for a number of years to acquire citizenship, the 'law of residence' (*ius domicili*), under 'partiality' (the model adopted in the 1960s to manage immigration from the Commonwealth), which is compatible with a 'multicultural' model of society (which not only allows newcomers to acquire citizenship, but assumes cultural difference and ethnic communities can coexist within the framework of common laws) (Sales 2007). However, the state also carries other duties and responsibilities that relate to the movement of peoples; membership of the European Union, the granting of asylum to refugees and the need to fill gaps in the workforce and attract the highly skilled to support the economy are also part of the portfolio.

Such duties and obligations have evolved reflexively over time, however in terms of immigration the nation state can be seen to act on them through three dimensions:

- Those it will allow to enter the nation state and those it will deny, based upon the rights of its citizens, international agreements and shortages in labour and knowledge markets.
- The pluses and minuses of international migration in terms of economic growth and the impacts on the 'national community'.
- The conception that immigration will fluctuate, increasing in times of high economic activity (when labour shortages need to be filled) and decreasing in times of recession (when jobs become scarce).

Acting through these dimensions establishes the nation state as arbiter of immigration, but whilst doing so immigrants find that it is also arbiter of the rights they can expect to have recourse to in this country. This is because the nation state determines levels of:

- 'Inclusion and exclusion'

Formal rights, embedded within the immigration policy, serve to apportion different rights to different categories of immigration (be it a spouse of a UK citizen or an EU citizen). In apportioning such formal rights the nation state not only determines who will be included in society (and the extent to which this inclusion will extend) but intensifies exclusion for groups who do not fall into these categories.

- 'Gains and deficits'

Informal rights are gained or lost on the basis of informal processes that should remain in the domain of the personal (such as the categorisation of gender).

- 'Expansion and contraction'

The right of the nation state to extend or retract rights through legislation (Morris 2002).

### **Those to be included**

According to Sale (2007) immigration policy has always been essentially concerned with inclusion and exclusion: the differentiation of people who hold a legal right to enter a particular nation state, or meet a set of specific and specified criteria, from those who do not. The UK government's five-year strategy for immigration and asylum (published in 2005) sets out clear guidelines for who it intends to include:

- European Union (EU) and other European Economic Area (EEA) nationals with 'free movement rights' that derive from EU treaties may come, live and work in the UK as long as they do not pose an 'unreasonable burden' to the UK. EU citizens from the new Central and Eastern European member states are also entitled to work in the UK, but are required to register beforehand and will be entitled to 'in-work benefits' only.
- People who come to the UK as visitors, either for business purposes or as tourists.



- People who come to the UK to work. Previously, entering the UK to work had been based on a need to fill gaps in the UK labour market (especially in relation to the service and health sectors), however the introduction of a new 'points system' will enable the 'managed' migration of 'highly skilled' workers (who will be able to come to the UK without a job offer), 'skilled' workers (who will be able to come to the UK with a job offer in a 'shortage' area) and 'low skilled' workers (for which the current 'quota system' will be phased out in favour of a system that will prioritise migrants from the new EU countries).
- People who come to the UK to study, although those wishing to do so must provide evidence of being able to support themselves financially and gain admission to a recognised educational institution.
- Those genuinely fleeing persecution. Widespread abuse of the asylum process by 'economic migrants' has led to a more rigorous processing of applications for refugee status; some 'source countries' have been designated as 'safe' (and therefore applications from people originating in these countries will be dismissed if proof of persecution cannot be provided). It has also been made a criminal offence to arrive in the UK without travel documents without good reason (to deter falsification of nationality). A speeding up of the asylum application process has enabled a fast-tracking of failed asylum seekers back to their countries of origin.
- Immediate family members of British citizens or those settled in the UK, including husbands, wives, children under 18 and parents and

grandparents over the age of 65 with no carers to support them in their native country (Home-Office 2005).

Leaving aside those people who visit the UK for business and leisure purposes, this list largely reflects the groupings reported by official and administrative statistics (these will be reported in Chapter Three of this study (3.1 International Migration: The Statistics)). It also suggests that the UK government has a tendency to view the main body of migration as a temporary phenomenon (Sales 2002), made up of transitory workers, students, tourists and businesspeople whose stay in the UK relates directly to either a demand for skills (from workers) or the supply of UK education, culture or commerce (to students, tourists and businesspeople).

This 'supply and demand' way of understanding international migration, which assumes that if people have arrived to supply or demand resources one day, then they will depart to supply and demand the resources of somewhere else another day, is deemed both authentic and persuasive because UK politics and the political arena are closely linked to the transactional mindset of economics and the economy (Taylor 2007). However, such 'free market economics' not only serves to include and exclude people on the basis of their citizenship or their ability to mobilise sufficient economic or skill based agency to move freely across international boundaries, it also 'objectifies' people with, and without, imposed and apportioned value as individuals. This is discernable when one considers that

the Home Office's (2005) five-year strategy for immigration and asylum can also be seen as a 'tiered' structure.

- An upper tier affords high levels of freedom to those bringing money into the UK: tourists who will stay for a limited amount of time and businesspeople that may stay longer, but be of independent means (a category that will also include the economic elite).
- Below this is a second tier, comprising two levels, that apportions freedoms on the basis of EU citizenship. The upper level affords freedoms of travel and access to welfare benefits for those EU and EEA nationals who hold 'free movement rights' deriving from EU treaties (and mirror the rights of UK citizens within the EU). The lower level affords a freedom of travel to EU nationals from the new Central and Eastern European member states, but does not enable them access to the full spectrum of welfare extended to those in the upper level.
- A third tier of freedoms is extended to those migrants who hold some form of skill or familial relationship with the UK economy or a UK citizen (workers, students and immediate family members of UK citizens).
- A fourth and final tier of freedoms is granted to those who enter the UK to claim asylum from 'genuine' persecution in their native countries.

The Home Office claims that the strategy represents a 'managed' approach to immigration and asylum (Home Office, 2005), however the freedoms

granted to EU and EEA nationals in both the upper and lower levels of the tier suggest that the strategy apportions citizens of these nations more freedoms, or rights, to travel, settle and to act than people born outside the 'Euro-zone'. This is conversant with the set of inter-governmental agreements, including both the 1992 Maastricht Treaty (which served to strengthen and protect the rights and interests of EU nationals) and the 1999 Amsterdam Treaty (which provided EU nationals with rights of free movement within the EU) (European-Commission No date), which seek to ensure EU citizens have access to employment, have their professional qualifications recognised<sup>5</sup> and, if they are employed, have rights of residency, social security and welfare benefits within the territory of the EU (European Commission, 2005). The lower level of this EU tier relates to nationals of those countries that joined the EU as part of its recent enlargements in 2004 (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – the A8) and 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) (European-Commission No date). Nationals from these countries are able to move across and reside within the EU area, but their right to work and access nation-specific social security and welfare benefits is restricted. A8 nationals face restrictions subject to 'transitional arrangements' (that cannot exceed 2011), which serve to restrict their ability to work in other EU member states. Those EU countries that do allow A8 EU nationals to work within their borders are entitled to ask them to apply for a work permit (although employers in these countries are obliged to give them priority over non-EU nationals (European-Commission 2005)).

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<sup>5</sup> Although in practice this is difficult if they are country specific or of a different standard.

The UK enables A8 nationals to access its job market (on the basis of them registering for work) and also allows them 'in-work' benefits. Romanian and Bulgarian nationals however, who are subject to transition arrangements until 2012 (in principle), are only able to access the 'job-markets' of other EU member states at and to levels determined by that member state (European-Commission No date). In terms of the UK, Bulgarians and Romanians may apply for work permits, but these will be granted on the basis of skills that meet a shortfall in the current UK labour market (HOBIA No date).

These agreements, which recognise the rights of EU citizens and the obligations of member states, serve to apportion EU nationals with agency, or capacity to act (albeit relative) within the territory of the EU, and therefore within the UK. They do this alongside a set of intergovernmental agreements that have come to be known as 'Fortress Europe' – a set of physical and legal controls that police entry to the European Union by non-EU nationals and protect the right to such agency as a legal right (Sales 2007). However, in doing so, Fortress Europe has meant that for the vast majority, the only legitimate routes into Europe for non-EU citizens will be as fee-paying international students, immediate family members of UK citizens or as either highly skilled or skilled workers (the third tier) or asylum seekers (the fourth tier).

## **2.5 Reflexive Globalisation, The State and their Relevance to this Study**

Chapter One discussed how international migration had impacted upon local areas, local authorities and local people in the street. This chapter has attempted to consider the kind of society that international migrants have migrated toward and in which they live their lives. In considering life from modernity, through consumerism to the global, it has considered the kinds of social and personal changes that have taken place alongside and in relation to the emergence and evolution of what we have come to think of as globalisation. Globalisation not only brought about significant changes to the world of work and the levels of security that workers could attach to the work they undertook, but also furthered consumerism by empowering consumers with more choice, more variety and more value. It made the world in which people earn and spend money appear a more fluid, more complex and more changeable one, and did so by organising supply and service chains to take advantage of cheap materials, labour, local taxes, etc.

However, although globalisation has been successful in bringing the products and produce of the world to the doorsteps of Britain, and in doing so has cultured a society prepared to throw out the old in search of a never ending chain of cheap alternatives, it has done little to counter the idea that this process is anything but an economic transaction. The British appear to have come to believe that they have the right to buy goods and produce produced in poorer countries, or that they can travel the world to seek out experiences

where their money will buy them luxury, adventure or exoticism, and that these practices will have no further consequences. These kinds of behaviour are of course not new, but form a coherent link with the products and produce of the Imperial era, suggesting globalisation has merely mapped into the existing habits of the Empire. Furthermore, the particular ignorance the British held of the lives and lifestyles of the peoples of the Empire appears to be mirrored in the 'particular ignorance' they have of the kinds of motives, rights and circumstances of international migrants (see 1.2 From Snapshots toward a Bigger Picture), suggesting that both their consumption and the relationship they hold with the world are banal (Beck 2006).

The concept of reflexive globalisation suggests that such consumption is not without consequence, but rather that the act of globalisation itself serves to stimulate if not equal and opposite reactions, then reflexive ones. The opportunities provided to large multinational corporations by the IMF, World Bank and WTO to network together the resources of poorer parts of the world for profit in the richer regions of the North and the West is met reflexively by individuals, families or larger groupings, who are able to utilise the scapes of globalisation to imagine, network and realise themselves reflexively toward the richer parts of the world, where they may expect to find more opportunities to be paid better for their labour, to live in a relatively safe and stable society or to educate their children.

The web of agency provided by Appadurai's (1996) scapes of globalisation provides a way to understand how reflexive globalisation may facilitate,

empower and support the journeys of international migrants. However, it is the nation state, acting reflexively to negotiate the evolving nature of international migration within the boundaries of the duties, obligations and aspirations it holds on behalf of society, that ultimately determines a migrant's ability to enter the UK and remain in UK territory. In determining such, the nation state acts as 'gatekeeper of immigration', acting as arbiter of who will be included and who excluded from society, its territorial boundaries and the activities that go on there. Inclusion does not mean the same for all, but is rather a tiered system that apportions different levels and forms of agency (the power to act) to different categories of international migrants.

Clearly the relationship between the scapes of globalisation and the role of the State can provide this thesis with a valuable theoretical framework with which to conceptualise the nature of international migration into the UK; it may also help in the mobilisation of the mandate (see 1.2 A Mandate for this Study) into a more specific research question. However, before considering either it is necessary that the thesis assay the range of existing research that relates to international migrants in the UK.



## **Chapter Three**

### **International Migration and the UK:**

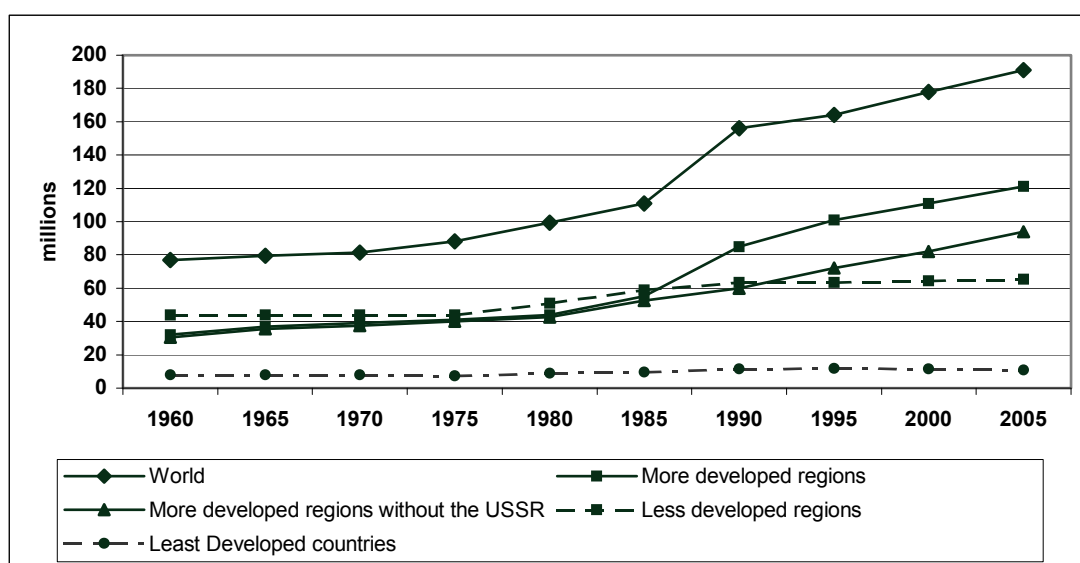
### **Immigration, Integration and Cohesion**

Chapter One of this study set the scene for this investigation by discussing the kind of impact that relatively recent rises in international migration have had on UK local areas, and used 'snapshots' of my own experience to capture a flavour of the kind of conversations, discourses and feelings that international migrants have provoked amongst the people of the city in which I have spent the majority of my adult life, Nottingham. Chapter Two discussed 'Times, People and Places' – the evolving nature of UK society and its relationship with globalisation and the Landscapes of Globalisation that may have facilitated and enabled international migrants to have made their journeys to the UK, and drew to a conclusion by considering the role the UK State plays in migration.

This chapter will seek to add context to the previous chapters by providing the thesis with an essay of a range of statistical, scholarly and policy research that relates to international migration and migrants in the UK.

### 3.1 International Migration: The Statistics

People have always migrated to other countries for reasons that range from the life threatening (to escape conflict, famine, disease or injustice) to the life enhancing (to study, to live with a spouse, to earn more money or just to fulfil a desire to live somewhere else). However, although there may be clear historical precedents for international migration (the movement of peoples across boundaries and regions to live in countries outside their country of origin or citizenship (ILO, 2006)), there is also evidence to suggest that recent years have seen significant changes in the nature and numbers of migration and migratory flows.



**Table Two: Trends in the number of international migrants and major development groups 1960-2005 (source: UNDESA, 2006 pp2)**

Table Two (above), compiled by the United Nations Department for Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), serves to quantify the trends in international migration between 1960 and 2005. It reveals that bar the very

poorest countries, both the developed and developing worlds have experienced significant rises in international migration over the 45 year period to 2005, with the world figure for migration rising some 110 million to 190 million. Clearly this is a significant change, however this is not the complete story. To qualify the table and to understand the nature or character of these rises it is necessary to add some context. In 1960 the world population was estimated at just over 3 billion; by 2005 this had doubled to 6.5 billion. What this effectively means is that although the number of people living outside their country of origin or citizenship has risen dramatically between 1960 and 2005, relatively speaking, the number of international migrants as a proportion of the global population has changed little. In 1960 international migrants represented 2.5% of the world's population; this figure fell to 2.2% during the 1970s and 1980s but rose to 3% by 2005, largely because of the reclassification of 27 million people as international migrants after the disintegration of the Soviet Bloc (UNDESA, 2007).

What is perhaps more interesting within Table Two are the changes that have occurred within the patterns of international migration over this 45 year period. In 1960, 57% of the total International Migrant Stock (IMS) (43 million people) lived in developing countries, surpassing the 43% (32 million) who lived in the developed world. By 1975 the proportions had reached near parity, but from that time on there has been more or less a reversal, with 2005 showing 43% of the IMS living in developing countries while 57% now live in developed countries (a rise of nearly 90 million people). This indicates something of a 'sea change' in the general pattern of migration over the last

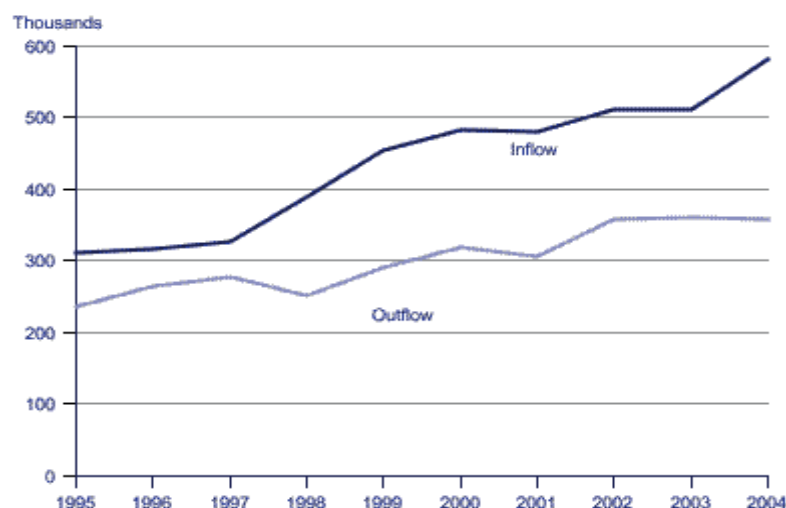
45 years; flows appear to have shifted toward the more developed, wealthier regions - regions where one might expect to enjoy a higher standard of living or work for higher reward.

According to the International Labour Organisation (2006) international migration is predominantly underpinned by the prospect of gaining access to more affluent job-markets. Its estimates relating to 2000 indicate that 86 million international migrants (49% of the IMS in that year) were economically active, and that the US\$250 billion they sent home that year represented a greater amount of capital investment than all official developmental assistance and direct financial investment of that same year put together (ILO, 2006). Of course there are other reasons for migration: refugees, for example, made up a significant grouping within the 2005 figures, accounting for an estimated 13.5 million people (7% of the IMS at that time) (UNDESA, 2006). But when one considers the regions that international migrants had flowed into by 2005 the economic argument appears, if not universal, then at least credible for a significant proportion of the IMS.

The most popular destination for migrants was Europe, which played host to 33% of the IMS (64 million), although the USA was the largest individual host country with 38.4 million international migrants (20.2% of the IMS) within its borders. Other developed countries also played their part with countries like the Russian Federation playing host to 12.1 million international migrants (6.4% of the 2005 IMS), the Ukraine 6.8 million (3.6%), Canada 6.1 million (3.2%), Australia 4.1 million (2.2%), and Japan 2 million (1.1%). The UK also

proved a popular destination, playing host to 2.8% of the 2005 IMS (representing some 5.4 million people) (UNDESA, 2006).

## International Migration and the UK Context



**Table Three: International migration into and out of the UK, 1995 to 2004 (source NSO, 2005)**

Table Three, compiled by the Office for National Statistics, shows international migration into and out of the UK from 1995 to 2004. The table clearly indicates that during this period the UK experienced increasing levels of immigration (foreign nationals entering Britain) and emigration (British citizens leaving the UK). In terms of those British citizens emigrating from the UK in this period, it is known that they were predominantly of the 25 to 44 year old age group, although there was also an increasing incidence of those in the 45 to State Pension age group. In terms of where they were going to, the majority (around 65%) were leaving to live in Australia, New Zealand and other European Union countries (NSO, 2005). In terms of people immigrating

into the UK (in 2003), it is known that they were predominantly younger than the emigrating British (45% falling into either the 15 to 24 or 25 to 44 year old age groups) and that most (84%) had come to the UK either to work or to study.

This was the picture until 2004, however post 2004 saw the UK experiencing rapid rises in immigration from within the European Union, with the year 2003 to 2004 alone showing a rise of 400% from 14,000 to 74,000 (NSO, 2005). The major factor underpinning this rise was the expansion of the European Union in May 2004, which saw citizens of eight ex-Soviet Bloc countries – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia (coined as the ‘Accession 8’) – being granted leave to register to work in the UK. Although there is no clear statistical evidence relating to how long migrants from these countries have stayed or the numbers still here, it is known that there was a cumulative total of 666,000 National Insurance numbers created to enable them to work in the UK from May 2004 to June 2007 (HOBIA, 2007)<sup>vi</sup>.

Given such trends it is not surprising that the numbers of people living and working in the UK who originate from, or are the citizens of, other countries has also risen significantly. However, before rushing into any detailed questions about these people, it is important to pause to consider the problems of measuring such rapid changes in international migration. The last census in 2001 found that the number of people living in the UK who had

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<sup>vi</sup> This differs from the 720,000 National Insurance numbers quoted by the iCoCo report (2007) (see Chapter One – Setting the Scene) because iCoCo included numbers issued prior to May 2004 and Post June 2007

been born in other countries had risen to 4.8 million, 8% of the UK population in that year, representing a ratio of 1 in every 12 people (NSO, 2005). Although the census's findings are subject to a degree of fallibility, in that they failed to gain responses from 2% of households in England and Wales (NSO, 2006) – a figure that might be expected to correspond to over a million people in that year (NSO, 2001) – its remit to provide “a survey of all people and households in the country” (NSO, 2007) does, on the whole, provide a reasonably detailed ‘snapshot’ of the UK population at that time. The problem starts when moving forward from the census, for although reasonably comprehensive within its parameters, it is an instrument designed to track demographic trends from decade to decade, not those occurring in the years in between, and ten years is proving an awfully long time in terms of international migration statistics. The reasons for such high level ‘inter-census’ activity have already been touched upon (rising levels of international migration and the impact of the Ascension 8 citizens), and such activity has increased the pressure to produce meaningful and accurate statistics because of the need to plan public provision on both national and local levels.

However, the Office for National Statistics has conceded that international migration is proving one of the most difficult components of population change to measure with any degree of accuracy, largely due to the lack of a single and comprehensive source of data with which to work, but equally because of the difficulties of collecting the data and determining how to

categorise those people they actually manage to get into their data sets (ONS, 2007). The basic problems are that:

- There is no systematic universal register of people entering and leaving the country.
- Current population and migration statistics are based upon those people who move from another country and are resident in the UK for 12 months or longer ('long-term international migrants'), which fails to account for 'short-term international migrants' (people staying in the UK for a period between 3 and 12 months).
- There is limited data available about short-term international migrants (such as seasonal workers) and even less statistical data.
- Administrative data (such as NHS records, etc.) serve to provide a source of data on place of residency, but not on the overall length of stay, making it of little use for classification purposes.
- The only reliable source of information on international migrants, data originating from the International Passenger Survey (which interviews people at ports of entry to the UK), is relatively small in its sample size, and cannot account for people changing their plans once they have entered the country (NSO, 2006).

Given such problems the NSO has sought to bring about a series of improvements to current data gathering on 'inter-census' migration and population change. Unfortunately, the NSO's plan is to implement these improvements over the next two to three years (NSO, 2006), and although a preliminary report has sought to 'estimate' the numbers of 'short-term



international migrants' between 2003 and 2005 (ONS, 2007) its findings represent only a brush stroke on a wider canvas that is, as yet, largely blank.

'Grasping the smoke' of international migration statistics is beyond the scope and intention of this work, and rather than attempting this, the study must acknowledge that the instrumentation in place to monitor the movement of people into and out of the UK is neither robust nor sensitive enough to report the kind of rapid changes that have occurred over recent years, and that statisticians somewhere are seeking to address this. Although this might not be helpful in the attempt to unpack the lives of international migrants in the UK, data gathered for the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (a survey of 60,000 households across the UK) for The Department for Work and Pensions in the year of the last census in 2001 (arguably the last reasonably accurate data on the numbers of international migrants living in the UK (Haque, 2002)) can provide the investigation with a number of insights relative to this period.

The survey defines migrants as people born in countries other than the UK, and although we must be careful to acknowledge that the LFS failed to representatively sample communal establishments (therefore missing people like asylum seekers if they were living in asylum centres for example), its findings can be viewed as helpful in unpacking some of the statistical findings of the 2001 census. These findings include:

- That of the 4.74 million migrants (those born in other countries) in the UK at the time of the 2001 census, some 63% originated from three areas:

the EU (1.1 million), the Indian Subcontinent (0.96 million) and Africa (0.91 million), with the remaining 37% originating from a range of areas across the globe (see Table Four):

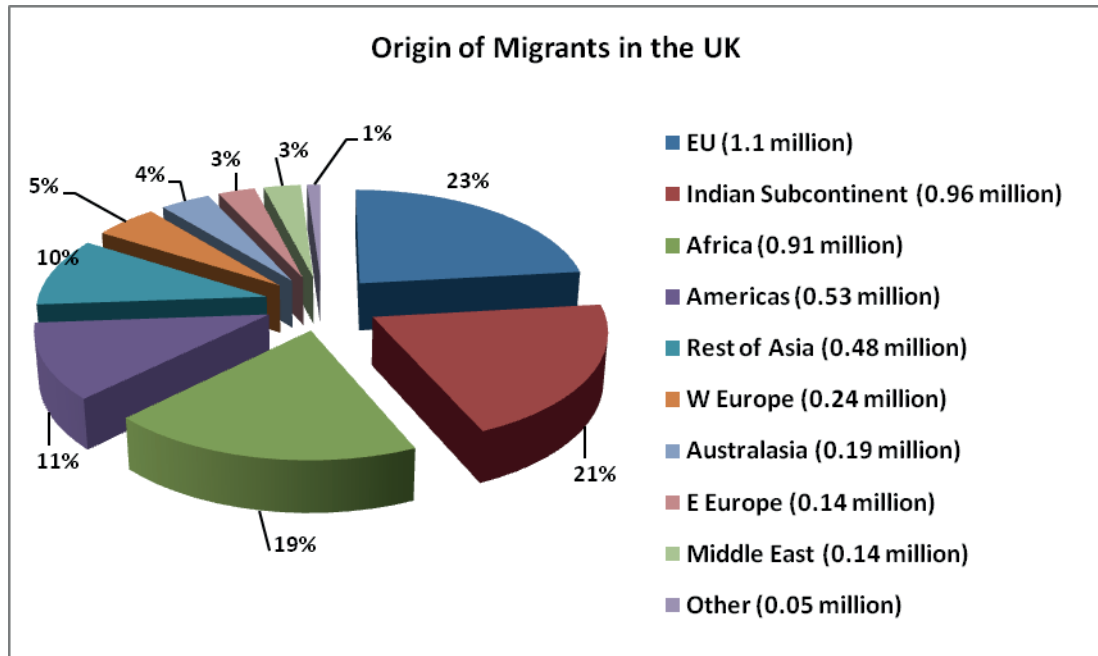


Table Four: Origin of migrants resident in the UK at the time of the 2001 census (ONS, 2007)

- That 49% of migrants at that time (a little over 2.25 million) held UK nationality.
- That 60% of all migrants at that time lived in the South of England, with London experiencing particularly high levels of migrant residency (42% of the total stock). In London at this time, 1 in 4 people had been born in countries other than the UK.
- That roughly 78% of all migrants at this time were of working age (between 16 and 65 years old).
- That migrants at this time were likely to be both highly qualified (with 19% holding a degree compared to 15% amongst UK born people) and least qualified (with 19% holding no qualifications, as opposed to 16% amongst

UK born people), although a much greater percentage (32%) held qualifications that are not recognised in the UK, as they had been gained in their countries of origin.

- That migrants at that time were more likely to be renting accommodation (40% compared with 26% of the UK born population), and less likely to have been buying their home with a mortgage (37% compared to 49% of people born in the UK).
- That those migrants who were of working age at that time were less likely to be in employment than somebody born in the UK (64% compared to 75%), although economic inactivity was much greater in female migrants than in males. It is also true that employment varied considerably between different migrant groups (e.g. migrants from Australasia enjoyed an 82% rate of employment compared to migrants from the Indian Subcontinent, who experienced only 52% employment).
- That 82% of all migrants in employment at that time were working in the service sector, with a much smaller amount (13% of these) working in manufacturing. However a significant group (14%) of those migrants in employment were self-employed.
- That despite being distributed reasonably equally across occupations, migrants at that time were proportionally more likely to be working in professional and managerial type jobs than UK born workers.
- And that migrants in employment at that time earned on average 19% more than UK born people in employment, with migrants earning an average £403 per week compared to the £338 per week earned by UK born people in employment (Haque, 2002).

Such findings indicate that foreign-born migrants represented a significant percentage of the UK population at the time of the last census. They also indicate that they were likely to be of working age and be employed in service industries, where they were likely to earn wages higher than the national average, arguably because of their concentration in and around the capital.<sup>vii</sup> Other than these similarities the findings indicate them to be a diverse group, comprising people who held both the highest and lowest levels of academic achievement, who were about as likely to rent (40%) as to have a mortgage for their homes (37%), and who, despite coming from the four corners of the Earth, would be nearly a 50/50 bet as to whether they held UK nationality.

Clearly the LFS indicates that these people cannot be considered as a single 'homogenous group', but rather 'many different groups and individuals, with different histories, backgrounds and characteristics' (Haque, 2002, p5). If this were so, if the 4.8 million people present in the year of the 2001 census cannot be usefully thought of as a homogenous grouping of foreigners, then who are they? To answer this question requires a consideration of the spectrum of circumstances that has brought such large numbers of people to the UK by, and since, 2001. According to the Home Office Border and Immigration Agency these will include:

- Citizens of the European Union wishing to work in or live in the UK.
- People who wish to study here, including academic visitors.
- The civil partners and dependants of UK citizens.

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<sup>vii</sup> Average earnings in London in 2001 were 34% higher than the national average. ASHE (2001). "2001 Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings. Analysis by place of work by Parliamentary Constituency ". Retrieved 10/12/2007, 2007, from [http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme\\_labour/ASHE\\_2001/2001\\_work\\_pc.pdf](http://www.statistics.gov.uk/downloads/theme_labour/ASHE_2001/2001_work_pc.pdf).

- Those engaged in working holidays.
- People who possess skills deemed to be valuable to the UK economy or public service infrastructure (UK Visas, 2007).
- Asylum seekers and refugees.
- People with no legal right to be in the UK - illegal immigrants (HOBIA, no date).

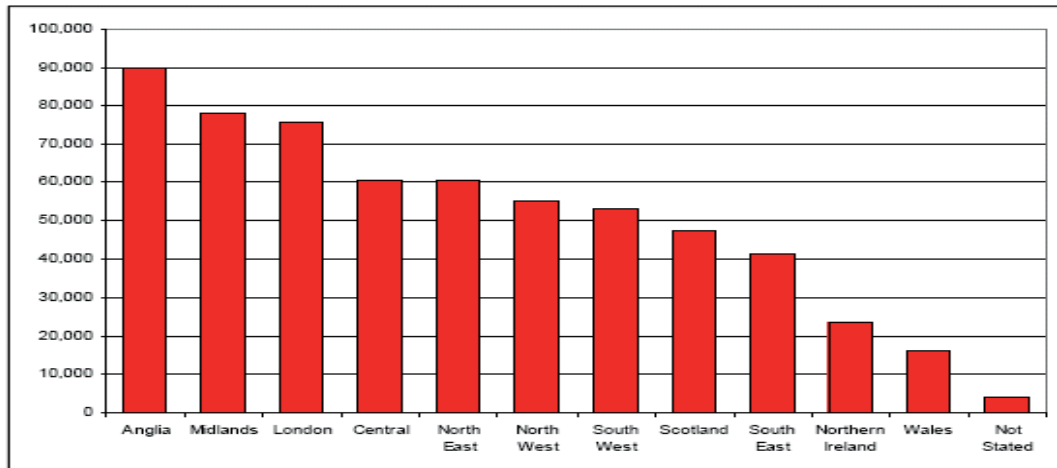
The list above suggests that people come to the UK from all over the world for a number of reasons. The variety of reasons for which people travel to the UK serves to question the idea that international migrants are a single homogenised mass who arrive to take advantage of jobs and advanced forms of public provision (see 1.2 From Snapshots toward a Bigger Picture). For it would seem obvious that whether people come for a short period of time to study or to build a life with their wife or husband, their lives, like the reasons they come for and the methods by which they travel, will be different, diverse and distinctive.

## **The European Union**

As mentioned previously, May 2004 saw the expansion of the European Union, and although existing member states had the right to regulate access to their labour markets, Britain, along with Sweden and the Irish Republic, chose to open them to citizens of the Accession 8 countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia). The Accession Monitoring Report (HMBIA, DWP et al, 2007) was a joint report commissioned by a number of Government Agencies that sought to assess

the impact that A8 nationals had on the UK from May 2004 to March 2007. Its findings included:

- That 630,000 A8 nationals had registered on the Government run Worker Registration Scheme (WRS).
- That the vast majority of these (65%) were from Poland (approximately 390,000 registrations), with Lithuanian and Slovakian registrations totalling around 60,000 each (10%) and Czech and Latvian nationals each amounting to something like 5% of the total registrations (the other A8 nations having significantly less).
- That the numbers of A8 workers registering on the WRS who declared themselves to be living with dependants rose steadily from 6.8% in 2004, to 8% in 2005, 13.1% in 2006 and 15.8% in the first quarter of 2007.
- That since 2004, 68% of WRS workers have been consistent in finding employment in the same sorts of work: 26% undertaking process roles, 18% employed in the hotel, domestic and catering sectors, 14% working in factories, 7% finding manual and agricultural labour and 3% undertaking care work.
- That A8 nationals registered on the WRS were dispersed throughout the UK regions. The Anglian region has played host to the greatest number of registered workers (15%), with the Midlands and London having both hosted 13%, although the proportional percentage in London dropped to 11% in the first quarter of 2007.



**Table Five: Geographical distribution of employers of registered workers, May 2004 to March 2007 (source HMBIA et al., 2007)**

- That although A8 WRS registered workers made over 13,000 applications for income related state benefits up until March 2007, the majority of these were not approved, leaving only 2,648 applications (0.4% of the WRS total) to continue for further processing. In terms of Child Benefit, over 57,000 applications (representing 9.2% of the WRS total) were approved up until March 2007, and in terms of Tax Credits 8.5% of the WRS total (over 30,000) had their applications approved (HMBIA, DWP et al, 2007).

The report uses these findings as evidence that A8 nationals, by continuing to ‘fill the gaps’ in the UK labour market (especially in the service sectors), are contributing to the success of the economy overall, and while doing so are making very limited demands upon the nation’s welfare system.

## International Students

Another group of international migrants are students. According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2007), the UK played host to 223,000 international students in 2003; by 2005 this figure had risen to 318,000 (OECD, 2007). According to the UK Council for International Affairs this had risen to a figure of 341,800 in Higher Education alone by 2008 (UKCISA, 2010), with the OECD (2010) estimating the number of foreign or international born 'non-resident' students in the UK as 351,000 by 2007 (OECD, 2010). The ESRC's Society Today (Silverman, no date) argues that these kinds of discrepancies add further confusion to an already problematic field (UK immigration statistics) and this is further complicated because students are rarely thought of as migrants (King and Ruiz-Gelices, 2003). However, as Table Six (below) indicates, the origin of the UK's 318,000 intake of international students in 2005 not only represents a significant migratory flow, but a diverse one:

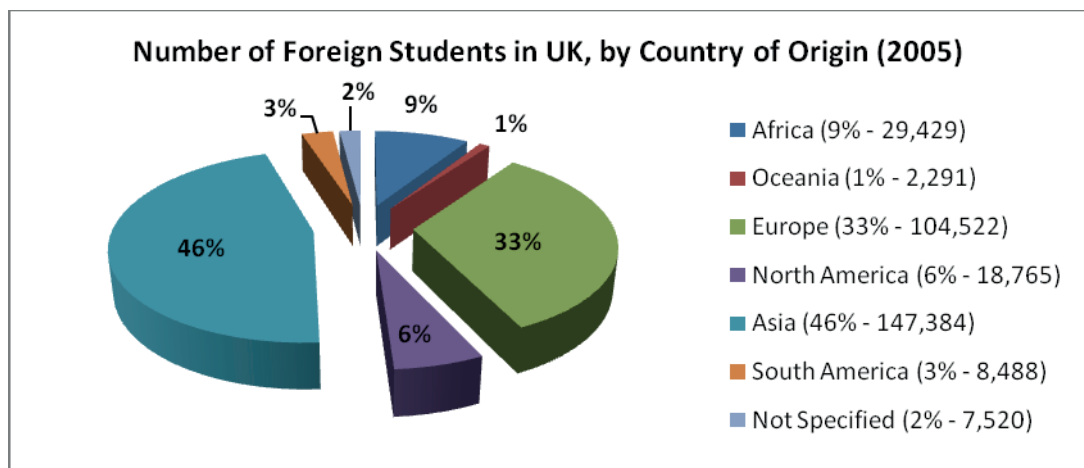


Table Six: Number of Foreign Students in UK Education by Origin (2005) (Source: HO, 2005)

Such figures reveal that the UK's educational institutions have been playing host to an astonishing number of international students, whose presence in



the UK represents the growing globalisation of education (Stalker, 2000) and the increasingly cosmopolitan nature of student populations (Tremblay, 2003), while bringing significant economic benefits to both UK educational institutions and the UK economy. In fact the combined revenue from both EU and non-EU students present in UK universities for fees alone came in at roughly £1.68 billion in the academic year 2004 to 2005 (Vickers and Bekhradnia, 2007). If we then consider that each of these 318,000 students had to pay for somewhere to live, to eat, travel and pursue leisure activities (at about £181 per week (Vickers and Bekhradnia, 2007)) then potentially we are looking at a further £9 billion per year injection into the UK economy.

### Husbands, Wives and Dependants

Another interesting finding of the study conducted for The Department of Work and Pensions in 2001 was that 49%, approximately two and a quarter million people born in other countries, now hold UK nationality (Haque, 2002), although the circumstances under which they have become UK nationals differ.

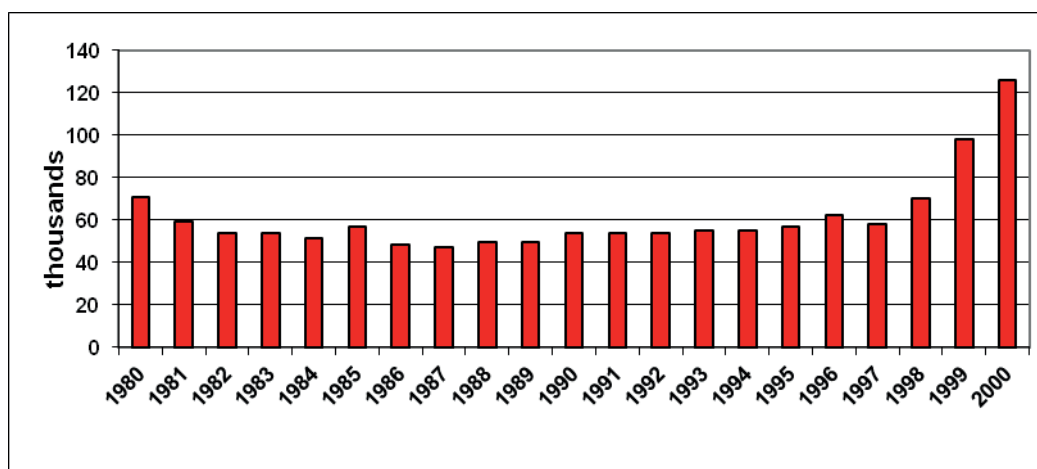
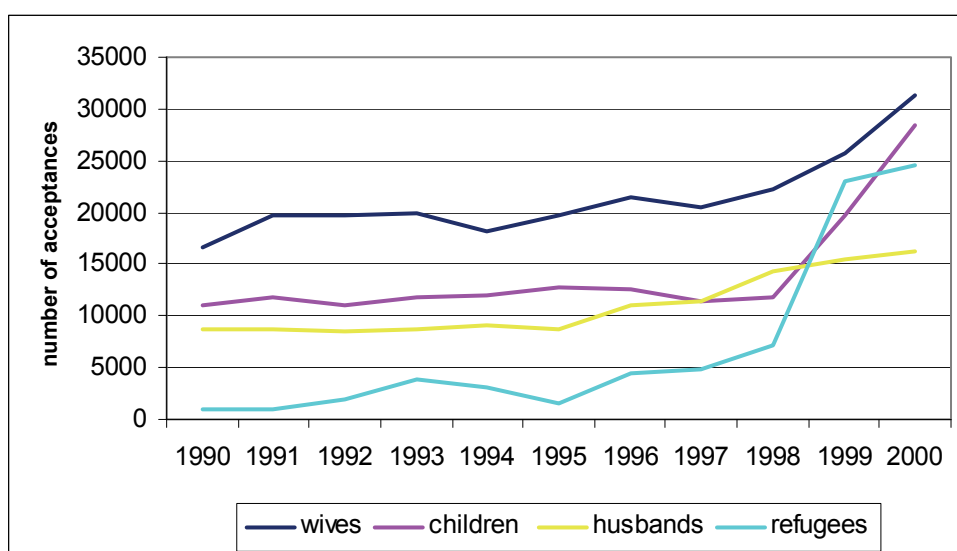


Table Seven: Total acceptances for settlement 1980 to 2000 (Source Dudley & Harvey, 2001, pp1)

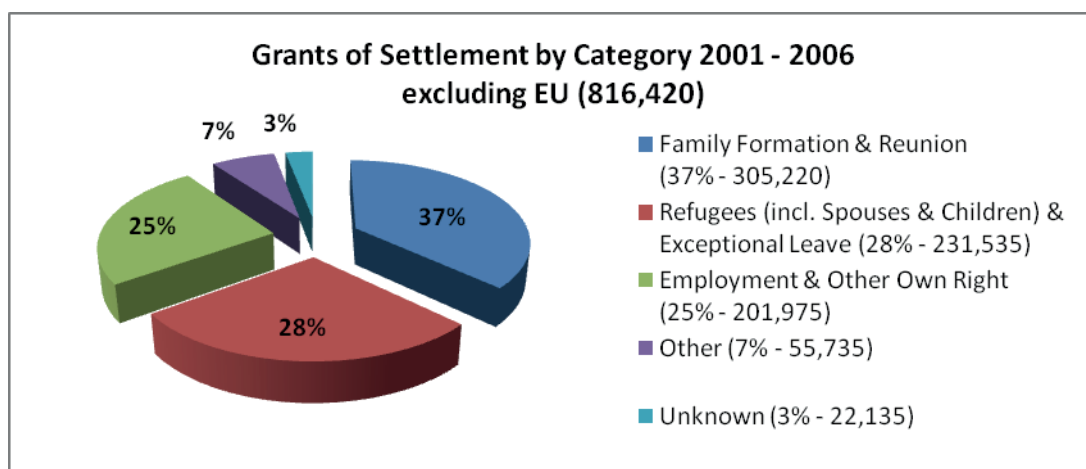
Table Seven (above), taken from the Control of Immigration Statistics: United Kingdom, 2000 (Dudley and Harvey, 2001), plots the number of ‘acceptances for settlement’ (indefinite leave to remain in the UK) between 1980 and 2000, which places it around the same time as both the Haque study (2001) and the 2001 census. It shows that ‘acceptances for settlement’ had remained more or less constant at around 60,000 a year since 1980, but this had risen sharply toward the end of the 1990s, with a doubling of this figure to 125,000 in 2000. As Table Eight (below) indicates, this was largely due to rises in ‘asylum related’ settlements and the numbers of spouses and children being granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK.



**Table Eight: Acceptances for settlement of spouses, children and refugees, 1990 to 2000**  
(Source: Dudley and Harvey, 2001)

Of the 125,000 ‘acceptances for settlement’ (in 2006), 85,000 (68%) were spouses and children (with 23,000 from Africa and 20,000 from the Indian Subcontinent) and 25,000 (20%) were refugees (with roughly 13,000 from the Indian Subcontinent and approximately 7,000 from Asia) (Dudley and Harvey, 2001). Since 2000 there have been a further 820,000 ‘Grants of

Settlement' (data from the Control of Immigration Statistics, 2001 to 2006) that can be broken down into the following categories (see Table Nine):



**Table Nine: Grants of settlement by category, 2001 to 2006 excluding EU (source: HO, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007)**

Table Nine indicates that migratory husbands, wives, children and refugees have continued to be significant groups in the inter-census years. Of those migrating for family formation and reunion there were significantly more wives (138,450) than husbands (82,225), with children also making up a significant grouping (43,955).

Some nationalities appeared to have significant numbers of both husbands and wives migrating to the UK. For example, 2005 and 2006 saw nearly 17,000 wives and over 10,000 husbands coming from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan and nearly 1,300 husbands and over 1,900 wives coming from Turkey (suggesting the possibility of traditional marriage arrangements crossing international boundaries). Although both examples indicate that wives from these countries are more likely to migrate into the UK than husbands, the proportions of brides to grooms from these countries is more

closely linked than those coming from other nations. For example, of the 64/36 split of wife to husband migrants in 2005 and 2006, we can see large disparities between the numbers of brides to grooms from Thailand (with 2,860 wives to 125 husbands), China (with 2,465 wives to 380 husbands), Sri Lanka (with 2,220 wives to 435 husbands) and Russia (with 1,415 wives to 75 husbands) (Home Office, 2002; Home Office, 2003; Home Office, 2004; Home Office, 2005; Home Office, 2006; Home Office, 2007). Of course, the attempt to map or explain such flows in any detail is beyond the scope of this study, but international introductions and 'mail-order brides' are certainly a reality of the 'internet age'. A quick 'Google' search for the term 'foreign brides' in the UK Internet pages brought up two sponsored links<sup>viii</sup>:

***"Meet Foreign Brides  
[www.InternationalCupid.com](http://www.InternationalCupid.com) Find your Dream Foreign Woman.  
1000s of singles online now***

***Your Pretty Foreign Bride  
AnastasiaDate.co.uk Meet your Pretty Foreign Bride Now Most  
beautiful Thing You Have Seen"***

The search also brings up hundreds of similar sites that purport to create the opportunity for people to reach out across the world and find friendship, romance and love, although cynically they might also be viewed as managing the movement of young attractive women from poorer regions of the world to men in the stronger economies of the West and the North, for a commission. According to the traffic and analytics site Alexa, the majority of these sites

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<sup>viii</sup> Google search conducted 06/05/2010

are accessed by people who are more likely<sup>ix</sup> male, less likely to have children, more likely to be aged 35 and over and less likely to have been educated at university (source Alexa, 2010).

In terms of the international wives and husbands themselves, one would expect a proportion of them to have children, if not from the current marriage then from a previous one, and therefore one might expect to see children migrating along the same flows as the brides and grooms. However, this fails to account for movements of children, which far outstrips the numbers of mothers. For example, 2005 and 2006 saw disproportionate numbers of children coming from Nigeria (2,700 opposed to 1380 wives), Zimbabwe (2,260 opposed to 805), Somalia (3,610 opposed to 380 wives) and the Philippines (5,530 opposed to 1,725 wives). Although the raw figures do not explain the circumstances of these movements, they do indicate significant inter-census flow of children migrating to the UK to be reunited with parents or relatives who have already been granted indefinite leave to remain in this country.

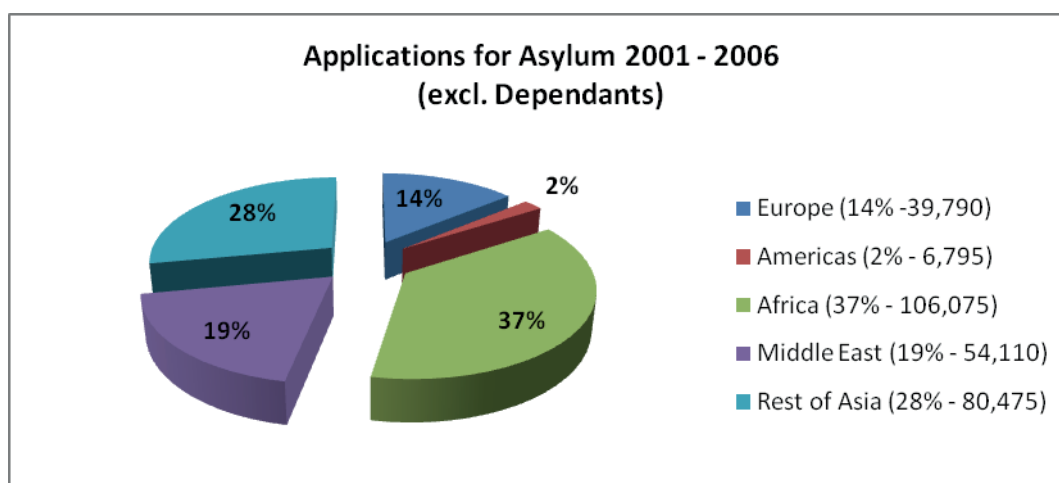
## **Asylum Seekers**

Another significant grouping in the 816,420 post-census 'grants of settlement' was those seeking asylum and their families. In the post-census period to 2007, over 120,000 refugees were granted settlement in the UK, although when one adds the number of spouses and dependants (roughly 111,000) the number rises to over 230,000 (Home Office, 2006; Home Office, 2007).

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<sup>ix</sup> Relative to the general internet population

Underlying these figures are 288,000 applications for asylum in the UK (a number that fails to account for the numbers of their spouses and dependants), therefore suggesting that 168,000 asylum seekers and their families were refused in this period. Table Ten (below) indicates where they came from:



**Table Ten: Application for asylum 2001 to 2006 excluding dependants (Source: Home Office, 2006; Home Office, 2007).**

Of these figures the largest groups of asylum applicants originated from:

- Europe
  - Turkey with 11,340 applications.
  - Serbia and Montenegro with 6,830 applications.
- The Americas
  - Jamaica with 3,810 applications.
- Africa
  - Somalia with 24,270 applications.
  - Zimbabwe with 17,920 applications.
  - Democratic Republic of the Congo with 8,270 applications.
  - Eritrea with 8,220 applications.

- Nigeria with 5,880 applications.
- Sudan with 4,870 applications.
- The Middle East
  - Iraq with 24,360 applications.
  - Iran with 17,940 applications.
- and the rest of Asia
  - Afghanistan with 23,820 applications.
  - China with 15,600 applications.
  - Pakistan with 11,050 applications.
  - Sri Lanka with 10,640 applications.
  - India with 9,080 applications.

(Data from the Home Office, 2007)

The majority of these applications (207,300 or 72%) were made by individuals who had already entered the UK, as opposed to the 80,632 (28%) who made their application for asylum at the port of their entry to the UK. But before we look at the figures for asylum applications in the post-census period it is important to acknowledge that the statistics include the processing of a backlog of applications that accrued prior to 2001, which serve to distort the overall figures in the 2001 to 2006 period. Accounting for this, we can see that in this post-census period:

- The Home Office received 287,845 applications for asylum.
- 13,480 applications for asylum were withdrawn by applicants.
- 285,000 applications for asylum were refused.

- 295,500 appeals were made to the Immigration Appellate Authority and Asylum and Immigration Tribunal.
- 58,400 of these appeals were allowed.
- 11,700 further appeals were made for judicial review.
- 120 of these further appeals were successful in overturning the original decision.
- There were 75,685 removals and voluntary departures from the UK.

These figures not only tell us that the search for asylum has produced a significant flow of asylum seekers into the UK in the post-census years, they also indicate that receiving a final decision on their applications for asylum might entail a complicated series of interviews, applications and appeals over a prolonged period of time. Whilst this is going on, asylum seekers and their dependants are eligible for support under sections 4, 95 and 98 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which seeks to ensure they have access to housing, healthcare, a subsistence allowance, schooling for children, etc. However, the figures also reveal a significant amount of people, plus their families, caught within the process, awaiting either the outcome of their appeal or removal from the UK, or waiting to leave voluntarily:

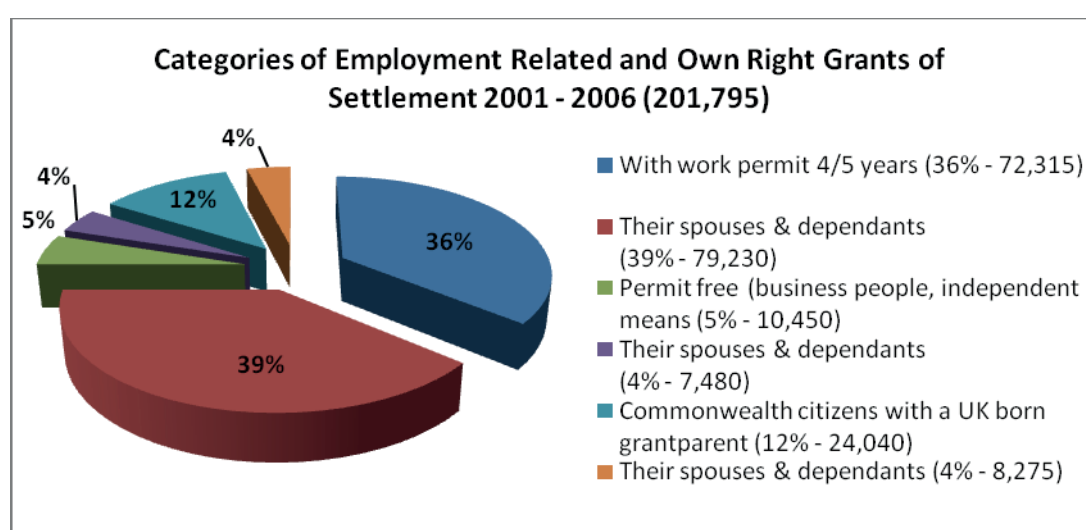
- Of the **287, 845** applications for asylum there have been:
  - **13,480** applications withdrawn by applicants.
  - **121,805** grants of settlement.
  - **75,685** removals and voluntary departures.
  - **6,640** cases awaiting initial decision at the end of 2006.



- Leaving **70,475** awaiting the appeals process, removal or voluntary departure (Home Office, 2007).

## Employment Related and Own Right Grants of Settlement

The final significant grouping is those who received ‘grants of settlement’, a government decision that provides individuals with the right to permanently remain in the UK (see Table Seven: Total acceptances for settlement 1980 to 2000) on the basis of continued employment or a hereditary link to the UK. The data below (see Table Eleven: Categories of employment related and other own right grants of settlement 2001 to 2006) indicates which groups received such grants in the 2001 to 2006 period. Broadly speaking, these fall into a number of categories: individuals (and their families) who have worked in the UK with a work permit for 4 to 5 years, ‘permit free’ residents and their families (e.g. businessmen or people of independent means) and Commonwealth citizens (and their families) who have a UK born grandparent.



**Table Eleven: Categories of employment related and other Own Right Grants of settlement, 2001 to 2006 (source: HO, 2006, 2007)**

As Table Eleven (above) indicates, the majority of people granted settlement within this employment related and own right category (75%) were those who had been employed with a UK work permit for 4 to 5 years and their families (171,454). Businesspeople, people of independent means and their families received far fewer grants of settlement (9% - 17,930) while citizens of the Commonwealth who could claim a UK born grandparent and their families received 16% of the grants of settlement (32,314).

### **Other Groups**

The groups not included in these statistics are those who are most and least empowered. Political and economic elites, 'club class' professionals and the highly skilled migrate to the UK, as they do across the world, to serve the interests of governments, social structures and global commerce, as well as their own personal interests. At the other end of the spectrum are people who are present in the UK without authorisation (illegally). Clearly, by their very definition, one might assume that illegal immigrants will go to great lengths to remain unidentified, as identification might lead to detention and deportation, therefore suggesting that, as illegal immigrants are largely hidden from those wishing to count them, the task of estimating their numbers is a notoriously difficult one. The Home Office has used the 'residual method' to attempt this. This involves taking the number of 'foreign born' people known to be living in the UK at a given time and then subtracting from this figure an estimate of the number of 'foreign born' people in the country legally; the residual therefore represents an estimate of the number unauthorised to be in the country. Despite seeming a fairly tenuous method in the first place, as data

that tells us how many foreign born residents there are in the UK simply does not exist (see 3.1 International Migration and the UK Context), such a residual estimate would produce findings about as meaningful as licking one's finger and sticking it in the air. So, once again, we have to return to the last reasonably accurate data on population, the 2001 census, which estimated the 'unauthorised migrant population' in the UK as 430,000 (including failed asylum seekers) (Woodbridge, 2005), although due to the shortage of accurate 'inter-census' data, no post-census residual estimates have been made.

### **3.2 International Migration, Integration and Cohesion: From the Statistics to Scholarly and Policy Research**

Although the statistical data is subject to caveats, it provides evidence of significant activity within each tier of the Home's Office's immigration and asylum policy (see 2.4 Immigration and the Role of the State) since the last reasonably accurate measure of the UK population, the 2001 census. The table below (see Table Twelve: Summary Table of Statistics), which can make no claim to pinpoint the actual numbers of international migrants, summarises this.

	<b>Period</b>	<b>Estimate</b>
Foreign Born population	2001 census	4,800,000
EU Accession 8 citizens registered for work	2004-2007	630,000
International Students	2003-2005	223,000 - 330,000 per annum
Family Formation or Reunion	2001-2006	305,220
Refugees (including spouses and children)	2001-2006	231,535
Asylum Seekers awaiting Decisions	2001-2006	77,115
Employment and Own Right Settlement	2001-2006	201,795

**Table Twelve: Summary of Statistics presented in this chapter.**

In the rawest of terms the table indicates that there may have been a further 1.5 million plus international migrants in the UK by 2007 (subject to issues of churn – people leaving the country and being replaced by others – and the general caveats associated with collecting accurate data for this group), therefore suggesting an overall foreign born population of up to 6.5 million. It also shows that international migrants can be understood as falling into one

of a number of categories, which reflect the terms under which they gained entry to the UK (as EU citizens, etc.) under the immigration and asylum policy (see 2.4 Those to be included).

### **International Migration: A Temporary Phenomenon?**

Table Twelve (Summary of Statistics) also provides a tool with which to differentiate long-term from short-term residency amongst international migration. Sales (2007) observed that the State tended to understand international migration as a temporary, transactional phenomenon based upon the meeting of demands for skills and shortages in local labour markets (Taylor, 2007). However, the categories in the table suggest that many international migrants will experience long terms relationships with the UK, through work, through study or through family.

Working EU National A8 citizens will be expected to hold contracts of employment with their employers that will bind them to their work, which in turn will to a greater or lesser degree bind them to homes, children and lives lived in the UK. International students might be expected to return home after their period of study, however their numbers will be replaced by other students (churn). Immediate family members of UK citizens can be expected to make their homes in the UK, as will refugees and those who have chosen settlement in the UK based on ongoing employment or by birthright. Only failed asylum seekers (those whose application for asylum has been declined) might be thought of as short term residents, as the government's

immigration and asylum policy makes clear that they will be repatriated (see 2.4 Those to be included).

## **Immigration and Asylum Seekers**

If the government tends to understand the presence of significant numbers of international migrants in the UK as a temporary phenomenon (Sales, 2002) (see 2.4 Those to be included), then the obvious exception to this are those who have left their homes, families and everything they own to seek asylum here in Britain. Sales (2002) suggests the policies and protocols of 'Fortress Europe' have meant that for many (those unable to utilise the third tier to 'legitimately' enter Europe as a highly skilled or skilled worker, student or immediate family member of an EU national) claiming 'asylum' has become the only means with which to enter the EU and therefore Britain. However, whether an individual is a genuine asylum seeker fleeing persecution or someone 'playing the asylum card' to enter the UK, each will end up becoming dependent within a set of physical and legal controls put in place to administrate their lives (in terms of housing, health, schooling for children, etc.) while the process of determining whether or not they are to be granted refugee status unfolds (Sales, 2002; Phillimore and Goodson, 2009). This practice has positioned significant numbers of asylum seekers in a direct forced relationship of dependency with the State, the magnitude of which can be determined within the statistics (see 3.1 Asylum Seekers), which reveal that although some 121,805 asylum seekers were granted refugee status or grants of settlement within the given period, a further 287,845 were still 'in the system' awaiting an initial decision, appeal or removal from the UK.

The sheer numbers of people going through this initial, forced dependency on state provision, which reflects a duty and obligation of UK public bodies to provide an infrastructure of care and protection to all (be they British, EU citizens, asylum seekers or refugees) under Human Rights conventions (Phillimore and Goodson, 2008), has been influential in shaping the media and political debates that have surrounded asylum seekers and refugees. This has sought to differentiate 'deserving' refugees from 'economic migrants' who are seen as 'undeserving' because they are viewed as merely coming to the UK to capitalise on its advanced forms of public provision (Sales, 2002; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008): terms that hark back to the Poor Laws of English and Welsh history. Home Office research conducted by Robinson and Segrott (2002) into the decision making of asylum seekers suggests this claim is unfounded, as it found that their arrival was not motivated by an opportunity to access public provision, but rather that the UK represented a country that was democratic, safe, economically prosperous and peaceful. However, it is perhaps this link (with the State and with public provision) that might provide an explanation as to why, despite representing relatively small numbers when compared to the numbers who entered the UK via tier two and tier three of the immigration policy, they have attracted much of the academic and policy research around international migrants to date, not least because public bodies have left an 'audit trail' of the policy research they undertook to understand how best to reorganise their provision to meet the needs of newly arrived asylum seekers.

Writing in the “Journal of Public Health”, Bardsley and Storkey (2000) estimated the number of refugees and asylum seekers living in London in 2000 to be between 240,000 and 280,000. Responding to the relatively high costs of providing services to such a large number in the capital, the Government began a process of dispersal under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which sought to ‘disperse’ refugees and asylum seekers away from the capital toward the UK provinces. Flowing from this action is a plethora of policy and research work that documents how social provision was reorganised on local levels to meet the influx of asylum seekers and refugees, which it tends to view as a group to be quantified, measured and systemised within the administrative and practical bureaucracies of existing provision. As such, the literature represents something of a paper trail of ‘needs assessments’ and policy documents that consider the relationship between a target group and a particular form of public provision. However, it would appear that meeting such a requirement has not required any in-depth consultation with the target group.

Rather, we find artefacts of asylum seekers and refugees within the literature; we can find them experiencing increased likelihoods of assault or harassment within the communities in which they tend to live, which they share with people who are likely to be unemployed, in receipt of state benefits or in the lowest paid jobs (Anie, Daniel et al, 2005). We can find that although refugees and asylum seekers were in the most part healthy (Johnson, 2003) health services were not organised to cope with the sheer array of languages, cultures and numbers (Ghebrehewet, Regan et al, 2002;



Johnson, 2003). We find that refugee and asylum seeker children have stretched schools (Hek, 2005), and childcare provision has had to deal with children who might hold a range of psychological issues arising from their past (Kohli, 2006; Michelson and Scale, 2009). We also find that older refugees and asylum seekers have impacted upon those services responsible for the delivery of adult social care (Lawler and Harlow, 2005).

Such research not only supports the idea that refugees and asylum seekers are posited within a close relationship with those public bodies responsible for the provision of health, housing, education, etc., but also suggests that the government's decision to disperse them away from London toward the UK provinces post 1999 has placed them, if not at the heart of established communities, then certainly 'smack in the middle' of them. Research conducted after the dispersal suggested that reactions to refugees and asylum seekers from the communities in which they had been settled tended to be negative (Burnett and Peel, 2001; Watts, 2004). However, it is important to acknowledge that the timing of dispersal roughly coincided with the race riots that broke out in Oldham, Burney and Bradford in early 2001. Both shaken and stirred by the riots, politicians, commentators and people in the street looked to understand how the riots had come about. Kundnani (2001), writing for the "Institute of Race Relations", spoke of communities fragmented by a 'forced segregation' in housing, in education and in the job market. Reports for The Home Office (Cattle, 2001; Denham, 2001) found that it was not just Asian communities that felt segregated: conditions of poverty and deprivation and weak community leadership linked with an

almost universal perception that services targeting specific communities were divisive and unfair had engendered feelings of segregation and fragmentation in larger local communities. To address these issues the Home Office reports recommended that steps be taken to:

- Increase knowledge and understanding amongst communities.
- Engender a greater sense of citizenship based on common principles and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious differences.
- Facilitate greater cohesion of communities and more integration of those individuals and groups currently subject to real or perceived segregation.

The integration and community cohesion agendas that flowed from these reports impacted on communities across the UK, whether they were fragmented or not, and in doing so they met the refugees and asylum seekers, who by token of coming from different countries with different cultures and different languages were obvious candidates for assimilation.

## **Integration**

Of course integration and cohesion, whether within UK society at large or its local communities, are not merely relevant to refugees and asylum seekers, but all international migrants who have come, and will come, to the UK.

For Berry (2006) the integration of international migrants will be part of a much wider process of 'acculturation', a phenomenon that involves the cultural changes that take place when individuals, groups or even

communities from other cultures come into first hand and continuous contact with a host culture. Acculturation entails movements toward, against or away from various social stimuli in ways that reflect more general concepts such as adaptation, simulation or rejection of a new culture. Acculturation toward a host culture is in fact a reflexive process in that it occurs in synchronicity with a partial, temporary or incremental 'deculturation' away from a native culture. For Bhugra (2004) this takes place on 'overt' and 'covert' levels, in that patterns of behaviour thrown up by the process of acculturation are either related to traits and behaviours that are attached to people in general ('overt') or reflect a group of more relative and subjective 'covert' criteria such as cultural knowledge, psychological state or attitudes and values that relate to the way life is understood. If this is so it would suggest that 'acculturation' will be the relationship that exists between communally held requirements for life and living (such as the need to eat, find shelter, communicate or be healthy) and a culturally evolved notion of the norms, values and assumptions about how such social operations exist and work.

This would suggest that once they have arrived, international migrants will be faced with bridging a gap that exists between the norms, values and assumptions that underpin their native culture and those that underpin and understand life in the UK. Clearly one would expect all cultures to have a number of 'overt' similarities (such as the sanctity of life or respect for public order) and that others will have varying degrees of 'covert' similarities (that might range from the consumption of alcohol to the making of orderly queues for buses). However, although such similarities might help an individual

understand 'what's going on' by presenting them with the familiar, they will only go part of the way toward bridging the gap. Acculturation might rely on conscious and unconscious decisions to accept and assimilate cultural meanings, normative behaviours or assumptions about fitting ways to live life, but integration will be dependent upon a number of factors that will range from the ability to understand and negotiate social structures, the agency allotted to individuals by the State and the ability to acquire both spoken and written language, right the way through to social and intellectual capital.

Writing for the Home Office, Ager and Strang (2004) suggested a number of Indicators of Integration that could be used to understand this process:

- Means and markers – successful relationships with social structures such as education, health or housing.
- Social connections – social capital and social links with own community and with other communities.
- Facilitators – to include criteria such as language, cultural knowledge, safety and stability.
- Foundation – indicators related to rights and expectations of the State and other people.

However, although these might be important as indicators, they are as such artefacts: things that happen because individuals, groups or communities choose to act, or experienced the ability to act, within a given situation or set of circumstances. Of greater concern is how to bring these things into being; how to facilitate a process of acculturation, and following this, how to sustain and develop it.

## **Education, Training and Employment**

It would seem sensible that a primary facilitator of integration for international migrants would be their ability to secure paid employment, not only because doing so would provide them with a sense of economic independence, but also because opportunities to participate within the 'world of work' will support a more general process of integration within society (Phillimore and Goodson, 2008). However, the ability to secure paid employment in the UK is not a fair and equal endeavour. New arrivals are significantly more likely to secure work if they are native English speakers (with Australians and New Zealanders enjoying over 90% employment) or from the European Union (with French, Polish and Spanish migrants enjoying over 70% employment). At the other end of the scale only around 10% of Somalis and just over 30% of Angolans, Iranians and Ethiopians are likely to be in work, and even Pakistani new arrivals, who may be expected to draw on the agency of well established communities, only enjoy something over 40% employment (Pearce, Beer et al, 2008).

Clearly unpacking such disparities will require more than an assessment at the surface level. English speakers and Europeans are more likely to have migrated to the UK via tiers in the immigration policy that bind their residence to employment (as they have limited access to benefits that support them when not in work). Angolans, Iranians and Ethiopians on the other hand would be more likely to have entered the UK as refugees (through the fourth tier of the immigration policy – see 2.4 Those to be included) and would be

therefore less likely to be native (or even fluent) English speakers or have work experience transferable to the UK job market.

According to Hasque (2002), writing for the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) in 2002, the principal factors influencing international migrants' ability to access the UK labour market are:

- Education – which has a positive effect on employment opportunities.
- Qualifications awarded by UK educational institutions – which are valued more highly than foreign qualifications by UK employers.
- Language – fluency in English significantly increases the chances of being employed.
- Years since migration – more time spent in the UK implies greater levels of integration and therefore a greater understanding of how 'things work' in the UK.

This was corroborated by Bloch (2002) (also writing for the DWP in the same year) who found that it was these criteria, or the failure to meet them, that served to hinder refugees from gaining employment, and by extension obstruct their chances of integration and cohesion into society. Schellekens (2001), reporting to the Department of Education and Employment in 2001, drew on research to suggest that those in the UK who spoke English as a second language were more likely to suffer higher levels of poverty and deprivation. The report linked together education, language and the time spent in the UK to recommend that second language speakers be given

access to an intensive language provision that would enable their progression into employment or mainstream education and training.

The government met this requirement by introducing wide scale funding of ESOL courses (English for Speakers of Other Languages) that offered speakers of other languages the opportunities to undertake supported language learning, which would in turn support their integration. ESOL provision promised courses that would cover:

- Speaking and listening.
- Reading and writing.
- Vocabulary.
- Punctuation and grammar.

to enable students to get more out of their lives in the UK. The benefits of this would include the ability to:

- Talk to doctors or teachers.
- Understand the laws and customs of the UK.
- Undertake a recognised qualification.
- Help children with their homework.
- Gain the skills necessary to pass the 'Life in the UK test' and become a British citizen" (Directgov, 2007).

This two pronged approach to ESOL provision – the interweaving of literacy, numeracy and language with social, cultural and normative information – indicates that ESOL provision was not merely designed to serve language needs alone, but to meet the kinds of educational, linguistic, accreditation

and cultural knowledge needed to meet the criteria necessary to enter the labour market (outlined by Haque, 2002). In doing so ESOL provision can be seen as providing a set of stimuli that seeks to enable the process of 'acculturation' (Berry, 2006). However, it can also be seen as the attempt to 'enculturate' students into the kinds of norms, values, assumptions and social meanings that underpin life in the UK (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970). Seen this way ESOL provision is not merely a set of courses designed to teach immigrants English language, but a strategic plan that seeks to enable (or teach) students (or immigrants) to engage with (learn and internalise) a whole host of contexts, conventions, duties, legalities, obligations, schemas, etc. that will provide (educate) them with fitting (acceptable) ways in which to understand and behave in the UK. However, in doing so it can also provide them with agency that can be brought to bear when negotiating everyday situations in mainstream UK society.

Unfortunately, despite a plethora of research, policy and strategic work that has included the estimation of numbers of potential students in particular geographical spaces (Briggs, Gray et al, 2003; Scottish-Executive, 2005), the matching of different types of provision to particular target groups (DFES, 2000; Briggs, Gray et al, 2003; Griffiths, 2003; NRDC, 2005; Scottish-Executive, 2005), the qualification of pedagogic approaches, recommending syllabuses (NRDC, 2003; NRDC, 2005; Baynham, Roberts et al, 2007; Guilloteaux and Dornyei, 2008; Stoyhoff, 2009), approaches to the teaching of English, classes made up of students with no single common native languages (NRDC, 2005; Baynham, Roberts et al, 2007; Guilloteaux and



Dornyei, 2008; Reeves, 2009), opportunities for enhancing the learning experience of international migrants (NRDC, 2004; Worthman, 2008) and assessment (Stoyhoff, 2009), there is still very much a gap in material that addresses engagement with education and training from the perspective of international migrants themselves (Schellekens, 2001; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008).

### **International Migrants and Employment**

If we acknowledge that the majority of international migrants either wish to work (ILO, 2006), need to work to support an independent life here (Home Office, 2005; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008) or have immigrated through the third tier of immigration policy to engage in highly skilled, skilled or sectoral-shortfall related work, then knowing something about how they experience and understand employment and the world of work would be important to policy makers and educators alike, not only because employment serves as a marker of their integration (Bloch, 2002; Ager and Strang, 2004), but because it would also describe the kinds of economic enabled opportunities available to international migrants, and on which they are basing their lives here in the UK. According to Phillimore and Goodson (2009), employment brings a whole raft of benefits to international migrants, which includes opportunities to interact with native workers, learn and practise English language, secure economic independence and, through these processes, increase self-esteem. However, if there is a gap in research relating to how international migrants engage, experience and understand education and training, it is not entirely surprising to find that this gap also exists in how

international migrants engage, experience and understand work, employment and the UK job market.

Research carried out by Bloch (2002) (prior to the migration that followed the A8 EU expansion in 2004) suggested that refugees (asylum seekers awaiting a decision on their 'status' as refugees are not entitled to take paid employment) experienced a number of barriers to employment that tended to flow from a lack of competence in spoken and written English. This not only determined the likelihood of a refugee getting a job, but also influenced the kind of work the job would entail, with refugees being less likely to secure work at a professional level, even if they had experience in their native country (Bloch, 2002). In terms of the wider international migrant population in this period (not just refugees), the Home Office (2002) found that foreign born workers were less likely to be successful in securing a job compared to those born in the UK, although those from 'white' ethnic backgrounds had better chances than those from 'ethnic minority' backgrounds. These findings were reiterated by Archer, Hollingworth et al (2005), who reported that barriers to employment were not just about a lack of proficiency in terms of language, limited experience or a poor understanding of how the 'system' worked, but also institutional discrimination, prejudiced attitudes and unconscious bias toward foreigners. However, the Home Office's (2002) report found there to be no 'hard and fast rules'; how immigrants experienced the UK job market at this time varied substantially depending upon their age, their education, their fluency in English and influences acting upon the local job market.

The migration that followed the EU expansion of 2004 (see 3.2 The European Union) saw something of a sea change in this relationship, with citizens from A8 countries migrating in large numbers to take up employment opportunities in all parts of Britain. A survey of local authorities in the 2004 to 2006 period found A8 EU nationals to be working across all sectors of the job market, although most had secured work in the administration, business services, hospitality and catering and agricultural sectors. However, despite such 'across the board' increases (ALP, 2006) little qualitative work seems to have been carried out that 'unpacks' the experiences of these people. The research available indicates that they were more likely to have taken low skilled, low paid employment (Anderson, Ruhs et al, 2006; JRF, 2006; Markova and Black, 2007) and that many were subject to exploitation from employers, with significant instances of immigrant workers working with no written contracts, experiencing problems getting paid for work done and unauthorised deductions (TUC, 2007). Many worked as agency workers (Anderson, Ruhs et al, 2006; TUC, 2007), who were more likely to work hours significantly longer than native workers (Markova and Black, 2007) often for less than the minimum wage (Markova and Black, 2007; TUC, 2007). They were also unlikely to experience any significant level of upward mobility in terms of progression within their work or the job market on the whole (Markova and Black, 2007). Clearly the acceptance of such conditions by these workers was viewed favourably by many UK employers, who realised the benefits of a 'flexible workforce' (the opportunity for enhanced profits) (Anderson, Ruhs et al, 2006), without the responsibilities of employers, as these rested with the third party agencies that posted them

(TUC, 2007). This finding was corroborated by the House of Lords Select Committee for Economic Affairs (2008) which found that immigration has best served the needs of individual employers, who have capitalised on the availability, flexibility and willingness the international migrant workforce has provided, and international migrants themselves, who have been able to capitalise on higher wages than they would be able to earn in their 'home countries'. There is little significant evidence of it having made any contribution to the UK economy as a whole, namely because the government has failed to commission research into the effects of international migration on GDP per capita (which would measure effects on the UK population), preferring instead to understand impacts by GDP alone, which measures the total economic output created by both immigrants and existing residents, but which is misleading and irrelevant because the total size of the economy is not an indicator of prosperity of living standards or opportunities. In fact, research into the period 1998 to 2005 concluded that international migration had slightly decreased GDP per capita (by 0.8%) in this period (House of Lords Select Committee on Economic Affairs, 2008).

### **The Issue of Cohesion**

Governmental reports commissioned to disentangle the kinds of issues and circumstances that brought about the riots of Oldham, Burney and Bradford in 2001 (Cantle, 2001; Cantle, 2004; Cantle, 2005) reported that 'multiculturalism' (the idea that people espoused to different cultures can live side-by-side in an environment of mutual respect and tolerance) has produced fragmented communities in which people of different cultures

experience 'parallel lives', with few opportunities to integrate and a limited understanding of cultural meanings, values and identities other than those of their own culture. The reports claimed that the remedy for such fragmentation is the development of 'cohesive communities', communities brought together by:

- Shared futures – articulating what binds communities together rather than what differences divide them.
- A new model of rights and responsibilities – making clear a sense of citizenship and the obligations that underpin membership of a community.
- A new emphasis on mutual respect and civility – recognising the need to strengthen social bonds.
- Visible social justice – a commitment to equality, transparency and fairness (Commission for Integration and Cohesion, 2007).

Community Cohesion has been criticised as an agenda that will serve to erase decades of separate cultural development in favour of a policy that will force ethnic minorities to develop a greater acceptance of core British values (Kundnani, 2002). In terms of international migrants, it can be seen as an extension of the 'managed migration' of the Home Office's (2005) immigration and asylum policy in that it articulates a set of criteria (which in turn becomes a set of obligations) that seeks to 'manage settlement' (Cantle, 2004) of people from other countries. International migrants will be expected not to live lives that are fragmented away from mainstream British culture, but to attach and integrate themselves to the core values of the local area and

the nation by learning to communicate in English and by understanding the British way of life (McGhee, 2006). For refugees and other groups wishing to become citizens (immediate family members of UK citizens for example) for whom the terms of their 'leave to remain' in the UK are the prerogative of the State (Sales, 2007), the 'clear sense of citizenship' stressed by the cohesion agenda has manifested itself through a set of bureaucratic processes that requires them to demonstrate an understanding of the UK, the obligations and duties that will be attached to 'citizenship' (Osler, 2009) and a commitment to Britain (McGhee, 2006).

However, for those groups for whom UK citizenship is not an issue, those whose stay in the UK is temporary (e.g. fee-paying students) or those whose residency is subject to European treaties, such knowledge and commitment is not obligatory, as their continued residence will depend on other criteria (namely their ability to manage the economic agreement they hold with the State). But whether such people understand themselves and their obligations to and within the UK as British, European or 'global' citizens (Cremin and Warwick, 2008), they, along with other international migrants, have become a visible component of local communities, and by extension a facet of the community cohesion agenda.

Robinson and Reeve (2006) found that new immigrants tended to find accommodation or be 'settled' in poor quality inner-city housing, often characterised by deprivation and social exclusion. For migrant workers reliant on their own resources, this was often due to an attempt to save money on

rent (Robinson, Reeve et al, 2007; Spencer, Ruhs et al, 2007), while for asylum seekers and refugees, who hold the right to access social housing (Robinson, Reeve et al, 2007), this was often the result of local authorities (charged with providing social housing to these groups) suffering a shortage of properties in better areas (Zetter and Pearl, 2000). International migrants who settled in neighbourhoods with established ethnic minority populations appear to have benefited from the ability to 'tap in' to a wide range of physical and social resources that have helped them to find employment, feel included within a diverse community and negotiate British society. Those settling in neighbourhoods with a limited history of ethnic minority occupancy on the other hand are more likely to experience harassment, abuse and even violence (Robinson and Reeve, 2006). Such tensions exist because existing communities, both White British and Black Caribbean alike, have perceived new immigrants as competition for employment, housing and local services (Cantle, 2004; Hudson, Phillips et al, 2007).

Zetter, Griffiths et al (2006) found that levels of conflict and consensus between immigrant groups and the existing communities were dependent upon perceived threats such as 'Islamophobia' or larger political situations like the war in Iraq (Zetter, Griffiths et al, 2006), while Daly (2006), researching the experiences of refugees, found that long term residents were more likely to possess a 'particular ignorance' of the rights of immigrants, their entitlements and their reasons for being in the UK. Such ignorance may have been facilitated by a lack of engagement, firstly because the international migrants in these areas (be they refugees or A8 EU nationals) were more

likely to find work (considered a facilitator of integration by Ager and Strang (2004)) doing low skill and low paid jobs (Markova and Black, 2007) where they were more likely to be working alongside fellow international migrants, and secondly because they tended to spend the majority of their recreational time with other international migrants, whether from their own nation or from other countries (Spencer, Ruhs et al, 2007). This indicates that new immigrants are less likely to enter into friendships with British people, and as a consequence British people are less likely to overcome their 'particular ignorance' of them and their circumstances.

Such findings, in the main, relate to Eastern European EU workers, refugees and asylum seekers, and tell us very little about the lives of other kinds of international migrants such as students or immediate family members of UK citizens. They do, however, suggest that the communities that many international migrants find themselves living within are far from cohesive or inclusive. For Zetter, Griffiths, et al (2006) the key to social cohesion lies within the levels of social stability that individuals and groups experience within the local areas in which they live, which in turn flows from their ability to realise independent lives by a mix of paid employment and access to the structures of social provision (health, education, community safety, etc.). If this is so then it suggests that integration and social cohesion will rely on the 'social capital' an international migrant is able to bring to bear to negotiate and navigate the structures of society that inevitably underpin social cohesion. This would be conversant with the means and markers, social connections, facilitators and foundations of integration proposed by Ager and



Strang (2004). However, as the existing research suggests, strategies that seek to empower international migrants within communities that are already subject to social deprivation are unlikely to create greater opportunities for them to integrate or be more cohesive within the community, not merely because different people from different backgrounds experience and understand how to socially connect in different ways (Daley, 2009), but also because policies that seek to bring about positive change for anything other than the whole community would be viewed as unfair and divisive (McGhee, 2006).

Community Cohesion is a policy project that will play out for many years to come, and there will be many issues that will bring influence to bear on the process and the levels of success achieved. These will include a strong desire for communities to retain those traditional values and cultures (those they were encouraged to maintain and celebrate under 'multiculturalism') that were identified as bringing about segregated and parallel lives in local areas (Temple and Moran, 2005), and that extremist politicking will seek to influence agendas (McGhee, 2006). According to Temple and Moran (2005) community cohesion will rest upon the ability of people from different communities to come together to share the same spaces and the same facilities; it will also rest upon the ability of all groups in all communities being able to articulate and have their concerns and issues heard. Doing such would have to include something that both policy and research have been relatively silent about: the voices, opinions and experiences of international migrants (Robinson and Reeve, 2006; Phillimore and Goodson, 2008).

### **3.3 Myths, the Reality and their Relevance to this Investigation**

Although it must be acknowledged that the statistics presented in this chapter are incomplete, in that they are either modelled estimates subject to the caveats of the data gathering methods utilised to monitor international migration and immigration post the 2001 census (see 3.1 International Migration and the UK Context) or 'dynamic' data that describes the administrative functions of the State in action (that therefore represents a 'snapshot' that relates to a particular moment in time), the statistics do reveal a very different picture from those posed, posited and promoted at the beginning of this thesis.

Of course, in themselves such statistics cannot be seen to provide the depth of detail that would overturn the 'particular ignorance' of the rights, motives and circumstances of international migrants in the UK described within the narrative of Nottingham (1.1 A Narrative of Nottingham: a snapshot of the city) or counter the discursive anxieties of the right wing press (see 1.2 From Snapshots toward a Bigger Picture), but they do demonstrate a number of broader themes and more complex patterns with which to distinguish and discern a plurality of reasons for which people have travelled to the UK.

- Firstly, the statistics demonstrate that rises do not reflect a rise in the proportion of the world population migrating to countries other than their countries of origin or citizenship, as this has remained largely

static since the 1960s, but rather mirror a doubling of the overall global population in the same period.

- Secondly, they indicate that although significant numbers of people have arrived in the UK in recent years, they are far from a single homogenised mass intent on devouring benefits or saturating social housing, healthcare provision or even job markets. Rather they are people who have come from all parts of the world to fulfil individual aspirations and ambitions or act on or counter personal and particular circumstances.
- The vast majority of these, 84% in the 1995 to 2004 period, have come to the UK to work or to study, and the rapid rise of Accession 8 European citizens registering on the Workers Registration Scheme that followed the 2004 expansion of Europe indicates that this general trend, employment and economic self sufficiency have been far more common than attempts to secure a relationship of benefit dependency with the UK.
- If Accession 8 migrants are representative of the kinds of work undertaken by international migrants we can expect them to be working in low skilled, low paid manual work in food processing, manufacturing, agricultural and service sectors.
- The statistics indicate that migration for other reasons – family formation or reunion, application for asylum in the UK and employment and ‘own’ rights to reside in the UK – do together represent a significant proportion of the total migrant stock, however these are far overshadowed by the numbers of people who have come to work and

study. It is also important to remember that the majority of these will have some immediate familial or familiar relationship to the UK, either in terms of heritage, marriage or contract of employment to a UK company. Asylum applicants are perhaps the obvious exception to this, in that the very nature of refugees suggests that they have fled their homes, their occupations and their countries under threat of violence or danger to their lives, and therefore may be expected to have no such links to, or within, the UK.

- However, it is important to note that of those who claimed asylum in the years 2001 to 2006 only 42.3% were granted refugee status and leave to remain in the UK.

Taken together the statistics of this chapter suggest that international migration is not as clear-cut as the media representations or the man or woman on the street might suggest (see Chapter One - Setting the Scene). Rather, they suggest that a disparity exists between public and media perceptions and the reality. The statistics would suggest that the idea of international migrants coming to the UK to take advantage of public services and benefits is a myth, and most wish to work and are prepared to do low skilled, low paid work to support their lives here in the UK.

The statistics of the first part of this chapter (see 3.1 International Migration: The Statistics) suggest that levels of international migration has risen significantly in recent years; the second part of this chapter (see 3.2 International Migration, Integration and Cohesion: From the Statistics to

Scholarly Policy Research) has sought to understand something of the lives of international migrants 'beneath' the statistics. It indicates that international migrants can be seen to fall into one of a number of categories that are determined by the terms under which they entered the UK: EU nationals, international students, spouses and immediate family members of UK citizens, refugees and asylum seekers and those with employment or 'own' rights of settlement. These categories not only reflect the UK immigration and asylum policy, but as an extension of the rights to reside, work, access social structures (e.g. health or education) apportioned to them by the State, give form to the kinds of relationships international migrants will have with and within the UK.

The research suggests that, facing increases in the number of international migrants, national and local government have sought to consider the impact of new arrivals on public services, society and local communities. However, such undertakings appear to have been largely achieved by bureaucratic, 'top down' assessments of potential need that estimate numbers and hypothesise potential impacts on services, rather than consultation with international migrants themselves.

Recent events have served to shape policy thinking in relation to international migrants. Reports flowing from the Northern race riots of 2001 have recommended that integration into society and cohesion with and within the communities in which international migrants live is preferable to multicultural models of residency, which were viewed to have divided communities and

led to the leading of parallel lives. A key facilitator of integration is work, as it can provide a raft of acculturating economic and social agency with which to understand and navigate society and its social structures. For those who find access to (those from non-English speaking countries or EU nationals) or progression within (those not fluent in English or without qualifications gained from a UK educational institution) education is a key facilitator, as it provides opportunities to build and refine language skills and learn about life in the UK.

Clearly international migrants experience their lives with and within the UK as a reflexive relationship with the State, society and its social structures. The nature of this relationship is reflexive because it represents the shadow-play that occurs when international migrants and the tier relative rights and freedoms meet, are informed by and in turn inform, the operations of those public and private bodies that are charged with serving their needs (in terms of health, education, policing, etc.) or capitalising on them as economic opportunities. Clearly the quantitative data of Chapter Three told us little of the nature of these relationships from an immigrant perspective, and neither did the qualitative policy and scholarly research of this chapter. However, these are of vital importance if educators and policymakers are to understand the kind of lives and experiences that are being lived out by those people who make up the statistics.

## **Chapter Four**

### **Methodology, Methods and Mobilisation**

The previous chapters have sought to 'set a scene' for this thesis by:

- Considering international migration from a local level (Chapter One).
- Undertaking an assay of the statistical, evaluative, policy and research work relating to international migrants and the UK (Chapter Three).
- Discussing the kind of society that international migrants have migrated toward and considering the reflexivity that exists between UK society, globalisation and international migrants (Chapter Two).
- Developing a set of research questions that relate to these (Chapter One).

This chapter will move forward to discuss the methodological options available to address the research questions posed by this investigation in Chapter One (1.3 The Research Question):

- *What are the experiences of recent immigrants to the UK?*
- *How does the relationship they have with the State mediate that experience?*
- *What kind of relationships do recent immigrants to the UK have with UK social structures?*

The final part of this chapter will identify the methods and discuss how these were mobilised to gather data for this study.

## 4.1 Methodological Options

According to Yates (2004) research in the social sciences represents a range of methods that can be utilised in the collection, exploration and reporting of information about practices, processes and ideas in the social world. It can be characterised as:

- An organised and deliberate attempt to collect new information or to utilise existing knowledge for new purposes (Verma and Mallick, 1999).
- A means by which to generate, test and validate knowledge via systematic processes of investigation.
- A set of practices, processes and procedures designed to produce outcomes that contribute to, shape and guide academic and/or practical disciplines (Brew, 2001).

To do this social researchers can draw upon one of three methodologies:

- 'Scientific and Positivist Methodologies', which are underpinned by a particular philosophical stance (positivism) that assumes that social science is capable of conducting 'objective', impartial observations of social reality. Proponents of positivism understand social research as a search for universal laws, underlying regularities and law-like generalisations with which to predict and control social phenomena (Cohen, Manion et al, 2000) in manners that reflect research in the natural sciences (Usher, 1996).



- 'Naturalistic and Interpretive Methodologies', which assume that positivist (or empirical) approaches to social research are inappropriate (Usher, 1996) because the social world is intrinsically related to the standpoints of individuals, who will therefore represent a central part of the actions to be investigated. Researchers who favour these approaches argue that social science research is the attempt to understand the 'subjective' world of human experience (Cohen, Manion et al, 2000), and therefore requires interpretation, understanding and illumination of the contexts and meanings within which social phenomena occur (Usher, 1996).
- 'Methodologies from Critical Theory', which view both positivist and interpretive paradigms as incomplete accounts of social behaviour because they neglect to address the political and ideological nature of the domain being researched. Proponents of these approaches argue that much behaviour (including research itself) is "the outcome of particular, illegitimate, domatory and repressive factors" that operate against the general interest. As such, Critical Theorists seek "to uncover the interests at work in particular situations" and interrogate their legitimacy by identifying the extent to which they can be viewed as supporting equality and democracy (Cohen et al, 2000, p28).

## Considering the Approach: The Objective – Subjective Dimension

Each of these three methodologies is underpinned by four sets of explicit and/or implicit assumptions concerned with how researchers understand the nature of the social world, and how it might be investigated.

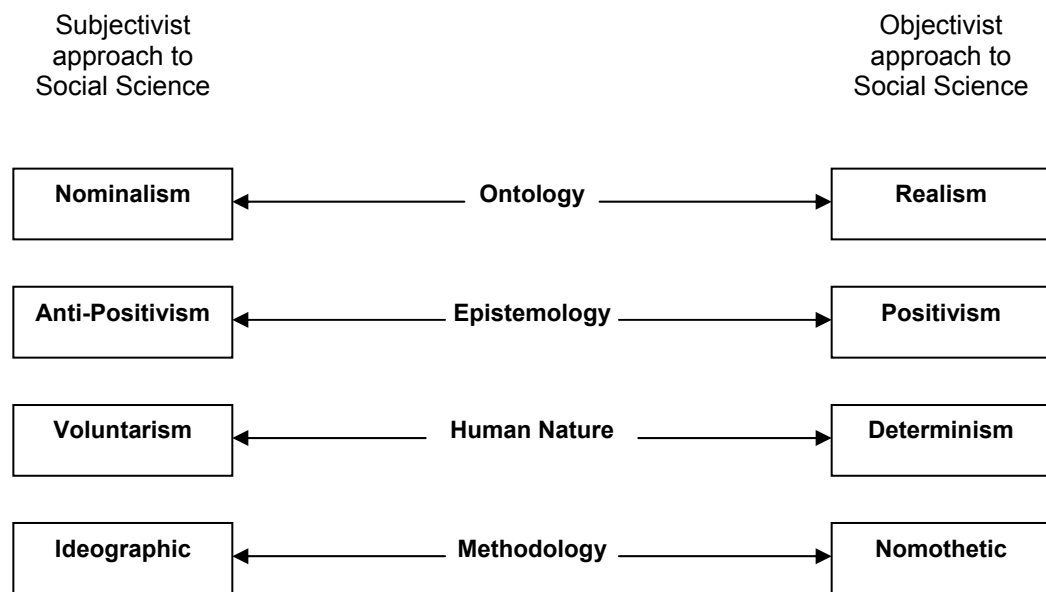


Table Thirteen: The Objective – Subjective dimension (Burrell and Morgan, 1979)

‘Ontological’ assumptions are concerned with whether the reality or essence of a phenomenon under investigation is of an objective, ‘out there’ nature or whether it is subjective: the product of individual cognition.

- A ‘nominalist’ position revolves around the assumption that the social world is made up of nothing more than names, concepts and labels which serve to describe, make sense of and structure reality.
- ‘Realism’ on the other hand postulates the social world to be made up of hard, tangible and immutable structures, which exist as concrete empirical

entities independently of whether individuals perceive these or not (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

'Epistemological' assumptions are concerned with how individuals understand the nature of knowledge: whether it is something that can be acquired or is something requiring personal experience.

- 'Positivism' "characterises epistemologies which seek to explain and predict what happens in the social world by searching for regularities and causal relationships between its constituent elements... the growth of knowledge is essentially a cumulative process in which new insights are added to the existing stock of knowledge and false hypothesis elimination" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p2-5).
- 'Anti-positivism' can take various forms, but fundamentally is against the search for laws or underlying regularities in the social world, which it sees as essentially relativistic and only capable of being 'understood' by "occupying the frame of reference of the participant in action" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p2-5).

'Assumptions within Human Nature' tend to be ones that revolve around whether human beings and their experiences can be regarded as products of the environment or as conditioned by their external circumstances. As such, a debate exists around whether human activities are completely determined by the situation or environment (the 'determinist' view) or whether, at the

other extreme, they are completely autonomous and free willed (the 'voluntaristic' view) (Burrell and Morgan, 1979).

Each of these assumptions holds important consequences for the way social scientists investigate and obtain 'knowledge' about the social world. As such "different ontologies, epistemologies and models of human nature are likely to incline social scientists toward different methodologies" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p2-5).

- 'Ideographic' approaches are based on the view that one can only understand the social world by first-hand knowledge of the subject under investigation. It thus places considerable stress upon getting close to subjects, and exploring in detail both backgrounds and life histories.
- 'Nomothetic' approaches emphasise the importance of basing research upon systematic protocols and techniques. It is epitomised in the approach and methods employed in the natural sciences, which focus upon the process of testing hypotheses in accordance with the canons of scientific rigour. It is preoccupied with the construction of scientific tests and the use of quantitative techniques for the analysis of data (Burrell and Morgan, 1979, p2-5).

Where this brings this investigation to is the proposition that any attempt to undertake research in social settings is an activity underpinned by a reflexive relationship between the explicit and implicit assumptions of researchers and those social phenomena they seek to investigate. In short, research is a

cocktail whose ingredients include the subject to be investigated, how researchers understand this process, what they are seeking to find, achieve or determine, and what they identify as legitimate ways of bringing about this end. In terms of this study, the organised and deliberate attempt to collect new information about the relationships between international migrants and the UK, such a cocktail will be mixed from:

- The material covered in Chapters One to Five of this thesis.
- The desire to add to scholarly knowledge and counter 'particular ignorance' of motives, circumstances and experiences of international migrants.
- The need to meet the requirements by investigating the 'back region' of the social phenomenon (Goffman, 1990) that is the lives of international migrants in the UK.
- The selection of a methodology that is fitting as a means to meet these ends.

In short, this represents how the mandate for the study meets the methodological approaches available to undertake such an enterprise.

If it can be agreed that putting people in a glass case and recording what happens when they are subjected to, or denied, various stimuli would not provide this study with any meaningful data with which to assess and understand international migrants in the UK, then in general the investigation, as social science, is left with two broad approaches: quantitative and

qualitative. Quantitative approaches to social science draw their assumptions from the 'objectivist' side of the 'objective – subjective dimension' (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) as they are underpinned by a 'positivist' paradigm that is espoused to 'realist', 'positivist' and 'determinist' assumptions enabled through 'nomothetic' approaches to research practice, which seek to replicate the systematic protocols, techniques and hypothesis testing of the natural sciences. Qualitative approaches to social science on the other hand are more closely related to the assumptions of the 'subjectivist' side of the 'objective – subjective dimension', as they are more likely to be underpinned by an 'interpretive' paradigm that is espoused to 'nominalist', 'anti-positivist' and 'voluntaristic' assumptions that find form through 'ideographic' methodologies, which assume that the social world is best understood via first hand knowledge of the subject under investigation.

Put simply, quantitative methods underpinned by the objectivist paradigm have a tendency to try to explain human behaviour within the social world, while qualitative methods underpinned by assumptions from the subjectivist paradigm seek to understand it (Bryman, 2004). Oakley (1999) talks of a 'clashing' of paradigms: a debate that not only distinguishes two alternative ways of understanding the social world and research within it, but also pivots between two opposing 'matrices of belief'. However, espousal to one paradigm or the other is not 'clear cut'; researchers may have to account for issues and obligations that overrule their commitment to the tenants of a particular paradigm, such as contractual obligations, the expectations of an intended audience or practical restrictions. A researcher may in fact be

espoused to another paradigm completely, such as 'action research' (Oakley, 1999), a methodology from Critical Theory, or believe the triangulation of his or her investigation between quantitative and qualitative research methods to be the best approach to adopt. In fact, as Silverman (1997, p14) observes, "there are no principled grounds to be either qualitative or quantitative in approach. It all depends upon what you are trying to do. Indeed often one will want to combine both approaches."

Where this leads this investigation to is the proposition that what is really important in terms of methods and methodologies is that they serve to support what the study is seeking to investigate, or in other words, that they enable the research to 'do what it says on the tin'. A 'positivist', quantitative approach to this investigation would effectively mean that I believed that knowledge relating to the 'back region' of the lives of international migrants in the UK could be gleaned by the collection and analysis of 'quantitative' data. Such an approach to the investigation would offer a number of attractions:

- The rigor of the scientific methods (with hypothesis testing and statistical analysis techniques).
- The promise of discovering underlying regularities or universal laws that can be used to explain behaviour in other populations.
- The production of 'hard', tangible 'facts' so useful for those interested in the planning of 'evidence based' approaches to social provision (social policy makers).

However there are a number of issues that promise to hinder such an approach. Firstly is the host of difficulties that exist around accessing a representative sample for a group that even the Office for National Statistics have found 'hard to reach' (see 3.1 International Migration and the UK Context). Secondly, the 'objectivist' assumptions relating to the empirical attempt to predict behaviours within environments determined by the immutable social structures people experience do not appear persuasive or legitimate for the study of individuals who have travelled to the UK from all over the globe, for a variety of reasons (see 3.1 International Migration: The Statistics). Clearly one would expect much about their lives to be free willed and autonomous, for which an investigation would require access to their first-hand, and subjective, knowledge of the ideas, concepts and agency that framed and facilitated their journeys and their experiences in the UK. But as quantitative research works by the statistical analysis of numerical data, it cannot analyse words or feelings, it cannot 'give space' to people to express or tell their stories, and as such it cannot be used to investigate the 'back region' of international migrants and their relationships with the UK.

## **Considering Methods from the Interpretative Paradigm: Qualitative Interviews**

Because of such issues, the interpretative paradigm might offer a better way in which to approach investigating the 'lived-in' experiences of international migrants. Espoused to 'ideographic' assumptions pertaining to a methodological approach, the 'interpretative' paradigm would offer



conceptual legitimacy to the research question of this investigation: the need to consider the relationships that exist between international migrants, the UK and its social structures from a migrants' perspective. Accepting the assumptions of the interpretative paradigm is to acknowledge its 'fitness for the purpose' of this study. However the paradigm is reflexive; once a researcher has considered it methodologically fit for the purpose of their research, he or she must ensure that it is reflexively 'fit for the purpose' of the interpretive paradigm by ensuring that the investigation adheres to each of the paradigm's four dimensions. Adherence to these assumptions would posit this study as assuming:

- That the social worlds inhabited by international migrants will be made up and understood by the names, labels, and concepts that the migrants ascribe to them (a nominalist assumption).
- That those individuals who will be included in the investigation hold autonomous and free willed relationships with the social world they inhabit (a voluntaristic assumption).
- That to understand these things will require that I attempt to get close to those 'frames of reference' in action occupied by international migrants living in this country (an anti-positivist assumption).
- That therefore the best manner in which to gather data for this investigation will be to collect it directly from my sample, 'first-hand' (an ideographic assumption).

Such assumptions frame the research, as they serve to make explicit the fitness of interpretative, qualitative methods for the purpose of investigating the 'back region' of the phenomenon to be studied: international migrants in the UK. Having concluded such, it is now possible to determine the 'data gathering instrument' that will give form to these assumptions.

Social researchers working in the interpretative paradigm utilise a range of methods to gather 'qualitative' data (including ethnography and participant observation, the analysis of texts and documents, language based approaches including conversational and discourse analyses and focus groups); 'qualitative interviewing' however might offer a more purposive approach with which to unearth and capture 'first-hand' data relating to the 'lived-in' experiences of international migrants who have made their lives here in the UK. Qualitative interviewing refers to a wide range of interviewing techniques that includes:

- Structured interviews

These are interviews whereby the interviewer comes to the interview with a schedule of specific questions to which the interviewee is asked to respond with specific answers (often the range of these is also provided). In doing so the researcher is able to ask each interviewee the same questions in the same context, therefore allowing the researcher to aggregate the responses when it comes to analysing the data.

- Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviewing also entails the use of a series of predetermined questions, but tends to be more general in nature, therefore allowing the interviewees more scope in their responses. Interviewers may also be given scope to 'follow up' responses deemed to be of interest.

- Unstructured interviews

As one might assume from their title, unstructured interviews are far less formal affairs. Interviewers might use an 'interview guide' to enable interviewees to respond to particular themes considered important to the research, but in general the interview is a far more fluid event that allows the interviewee to respond freely.

- Focused interviews

These are interviews that use 'open-ended' questioning to 'focus in' on a particular event or situation that an interviewee knows about or has had personal experience of.

- Oral and life history interviews

These interviews, which can take the form of either semi-structured or structured interviews, seek to 'focus in' on the life events, situations or experiences of interviewees, either as an investigation of a specific research aim, or as the gathering of biographic material (Bryman, 2004).

In many respects qualitative interviewing appears to offer the kind of data gathering 'instrumentation' that would enable this investigation to 'do what it says on the tin': to gather data on what it is like to come to and live in Britain as an international migrant, from those people who have done, and are doing, exactly that. However, structured and semi-structured interviews, in their use of predetermined questioning and limited opportunity for respondents to determine their responses, would fail to provide the kind of 'space' that would enable international migrants to 'talk about' and reflect upon their 'lived in' experiences in detail.

The remaining qualitative interviewing approaches, however, appear far more purposive in terms of the kind of data this investigation seeks to gather. An 'unstructured' informal interview would allow interviewees to speak freely and reflect on their experiences and ideas in an 'open ended' way; an 'interview guide' could also be utilised to 'focus in' on particular issues such as events (how they came to the UK, for example) or opinions (what they thought the differences were between the UK and their native countries, for example). However, these could be refined within a 'life history' interview approach that enabled the researcher to gather 'thick' and 'descriptive' (Geertz, 1973) 'talk' about loves, lives, locations and 'lived in' experiences.

### **Life History Interviews**

Life history interviews are similar to oral history interviews, but the aim is to capture data that relates to an interviewee's 'life history' rather than specific

instances of it. According to Bryman (2004) their popularity has increased alongside the growth of interest in the agency of social life and is often linked to the collection of 'narratives'. Goodson and Sikes (2001) suggest life history interviewing offer researchers a number of strengths:

- It explicitly recognises that people's lives are not compartmentalised into different areas; the person that an individual is when at home is not different from the person he or she is at work, despite differences in location, routines, dress and role. Events and occurrences that happen in one area of a person's life will have potential implications for and impacts on other areas of his or her life.
- It acknowledges the existence of an interactive and reflexive relationship between a person's life, experiences and social and historical contexts and his or her perceptions of these.
- It serves to evidence how people negotiate their identities and create and make sense of the roles and rules that make up the social worlds they experience and inhabit.

In terms of international migrants and the research question this study seeks to investigate, such an approach would appear to be invaluable, as it would acknowledge that by their very definition international migrants are not merely people who happen to have come to the UK from another country, but rather fluid mosaics of roles, experiences, meanings, values, circumstances, motives and aspirations. It also acknowledges that in making their journeys international migrants may have experienced radical changes to the kinds of

roles, ways of behaving and ways of making sense of life that they enjoyed in their native countries. As such, life history interviewing will enable this study to acknowledge that international migrants are not merely negotiators of 'the here and now', but are living histories whose chapters flow forward as a body of experience and knowledge created by the blending together of lessons and meanings of the past with the circumstances of the present and aspirations for the future.

Bryman (2004) observes that life history interviews tend to be either unstructured or semi-structured to enable interviewees to recount details from what may include their whole life, and are also associated with narratives. A commonly used approach for this kind of interviewing is what is termed 'grounded conversation', which entails interviewers engaging respondents in a conversation-like experience in which the interviewer places emphasis on particular issues for the purpose of eliciting information relating to these from the respondent (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

However, according to Miller (2000) it is important to appraise the notion that respondents are able to reliably and accurately recall events that are likely to be dispersed over significant periods of time. Questions certainly need to be asked about whether respondents are able to provide a complete and total version of their lives regardless of the skill of the interviewer or the number of interviews he or she conducts with an informant. Narrative approaches offer an alternative to the idea that respondents can 'passively' recount complete and accurate versions of their lives, as they encourage them to 'actively'

construct the story of their lives in ways which communicate not only key events, but also contexts, opinions, feelings, etc. (Miller, 2000).

However, before considering the relative merits of a narrative approach to life history interviewing, it is important to first consider certain criteria that underpin all data collection: instrumentation, validity and reliability.

### **Considering Methods: Validity and Reliability**

Validity in the case of social research refers to whether the evidence that the research offers can be said to bear the weight of the interpretation that is put on it (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996). In other words, could an 'in-depth' qualitative investigation of international migrants hope to provide the kind of data that would accurately portray and describe their real life, lived-in events, experiences and circumstances? Reliability, on the other hand, refers to consistency and replicability of findings over time, data gathering instruments and groups of respondents (Cohen, Manion et al, 2000); whether or not similar data could be gathered from a similar group in a similar context. In response to such a question – how could qualitative research be valid and reliable? – let us start with reliability. As touched upon earlier, one of the tenets of the empirical approach to social research is its ability to search for underlying regularities, patterns of behaviour and laws with which to make predictions and generalisations about other or larger populations.

However the data assayed in Chapter Three (International Migration and the UK: Immigration, Integration and Cohesion) indicates that the flows of international migration that the UK has been experiencing (and is continuing to experience) are a truly global experience; people are coming from 'all over the place' for a number of distinct and discrete reasons (work, study, family reunion, asylum). Therefore, given the diversity of both migratory flows and underlying migratory motivators, it would be unreasonable to expect that undertaking such a study could hope to produce findings that were in any way replicable in further studies. In fact, because the assumptions of the interpretive paradigm are 'fitter for the purpose' of the investigation and its aims, then the tenets of 'reliability' are not something to which the study will aspire. For the uniqueness, the subjective idiosyncrasies promised by a qualitative, interpretative investigation will not be seen as its weakness, but as its strength (Cohen, Manion et al, 2000).

Validity on the other hand is something that researchers working in the interpretative paradigm might feel more at home with; it is concerned with the integrity of research constructs, designs and practice (Bryman, 2004) and relates to whether or not an investigation can be said to be measuring what it is attempting to measure, and if these measurements can be seen to be accurate (Sarantakos, 1998). Validity can be assessed on a number of levels, for example 'internal validity' refers to whether a study can be said to accurately describe the phenomena being investigated (Cohen, Manion et al, 2000); 'external validity' refers to whether the findings can be generalised to other groups in other settings (Bryman, 2004); 'construct validity' is related to



whether the research is influenced by the researcher's own conceptual 'constructs'; 'ecological validity' relates to the extent to which the research is conducted within a place or setting that will be seen as natural or normal by those being investigated; 'content validity' raises questions relating to whether the research can be seen to be fairly and comprehensively covering the domain it aims to consider, etc. (Cohen, Manion et al, 2000). However, although there may be 'mileage' in such categories, validity for qualitative approaches to social science investigations might be better served by other criteria within the general headings of 'trustworthiness' and 'authenticity'.

The criteria for trustworthiness are:

- 'Credibility', which relates to the degree to which a researcher underpins an investigation with an account of the social reality under investigation that can be understood as feasible or credible (Bryman, 2004).
- 'Transferability', which refers to whether an intensive study of a small group can be said to provide the kind of 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) and rich, detailed accounts that might make the transferral of findings to other settings possible.
- 'Dependability', which is concerned with making the research process transparent via an 'audit trail' of records, transcripts, field notes and reflections on research practice.
- 'Confirmability', which relates to objectivity: the level to which a researcher can be seen to have attempted to restrict his or her personal values and/or theoretical constructs influencing the conduct of the investigation.

The criteria for authenticity are:

- 'Fairness' – whether the research can be said to fairly represent the different feelings, opinions and standpoints of people within the social setting it is gathered in.
- 'Ontological authenticity' – whether the research can be considered to achieve a better understanding of the social setting in which it is to be conducted.
- 'Educative authenticity' – whether the research can be considered as achieving an educative utility in allowing people to understand the feelings, opinions and standpoints of others.
- 'Catalytic authenticity' – whether the research can be considered as providing an impetus to bring about changes to the circumstances of those people being investigated.
- 'Tactical authenticity' – whether the research can be seen as providing or enabling a framework with which to bring about change (Bryman, 2004).

### **Considering Methods: Subjectivity**

If the research is to claim that the data it will gather is trustworthy and authentic, then it is important that the instrument can be seen to have been designed to achieve this. However, although it might be convenient to slip from the assumptions of the interpretative paradigm into the clothes of qualitative methods under the presupposition that using a series of unstructured, life history interviews will enable the capture of authentic and credible accounts of the self-referencing 'ménage a trois' that exists between

individuals (as social actors/participants), their frames of reference (culminations of their lived-in experiences and understanding pertaining to these), and their actions and interactions with and within the social world and its structures, it is important to acknowledge that a further 'ménage a trois' exists between my 'self' (as researcher), the ways in which I know what I know (my assumptions about social research), and the actions and interactions I will take, make and experience whilst engaging with this research and its operations.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) explain the nature of this relationship by suggesting that research practice will be influenced by:

- The existence of multiple realities, both holistic and constructed, that mutually exist and coexist.
- An inescapable and inseparable relationship between knowledge, who comes to know that knowledge, how they come to know it, and what they understand by it.
- All research being bound by constraints that are both time-specific and context-specific.
- The fact that distinguishing cause from effect is impossible due to self-referentiation within a state of constant change.
- That all inquiry is laden with values and bound by assumptions (Lincoln and Guba, 1985).

Given this, it is not surprising that there are some very definite interconnections within the criteria headed by the term 'trustworthiness' (credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability). For example, the way in which I think about the social reality of international migrants (the level to which the research can be said to be built upon constructs that are credible or feasible) will both inform and impact upon the levels to which those constructs, and the norms, values and assumptions that underpin them, are allowed to play a part in the investigation (confirmability). This is because it is not only my constructs about a particular social reality that will determine the 'credibility' of the investigation I am about to undertake, it is also the way in which these constructs will be tested within the research process. For in its attempt to collect, utilise, test and add to knowledge, research itself becomes a social reality in its own right, and as such must be seen to be enacted in a credible and feasible manner.

Arguing that the research will be 'objective' and 'confirmable' is an effective way of supporting such claims to credibility; but in doing so, such 'objectivity' (the confirmation that a researcher will not allow their value-laden constructs to influence the conduct of their research) will inform and impact the manner in which data is gathered and reported (dependability), and in turn inform and impact upon the investigation's 'transferability' (the level to which the research findings might be transferred to other settings). Considering 'trustworthiness' in this light leads to the proposition that although qualitative methods might overtly proclaim the value of subjectivity, there is a hidden danger that constructs, conduct and therefore findings may be affected by

what would be a paradoxical concept, the 'objectivising of subjectivity'. The tenets of 'authenticity' on the other hand indicate that social research must not only possess integrity in terms of its methods, but also integrity in terms of its aims; it must be seen to provide utility. And, as a researcher, such observations serve to position me at the very heart of the research, for they not only force me to reflect upon my own relationship with the study I intended to undertake, but also place my investigation within, and in relation to, a body of existing research and a community of researchers.

## **4.2 The Data Gathering Instrument: Considerations**

Thus far it has been identified that the qualitative interviews appear to best 'fit' for the purpose of getting 'up-close' to those international migrants in the UK. For Dingwall (1997) interviews are events where 'respondents' are asked to talk about their 'competence' relating to the particular role within which the interview has cast them. He also suggests that:

- Satisfactory performance of this role will rest essentially on the interviewer asking the respondent to talk about 'something'.
- The key feature of interviews is that interviewers frame them by defining the 'something' that respondents are going to talk about, and decide what will count as relevant.

- That interviews, even 'unstructured' ones, involve a process of 'turn taking' where the interviewer proposes questions or topics and the respondent attempts to answer or talk about these.
- Although this sequence of 'turn-taking' might be flexible, although the wording of the questions might be 'loose' and although the interview might be 'dressed up' to replicate a friendly conversation, an interview is not a conversation, but rather a deliberate, planned opportunity to talk about 'something' the interviewer is interested in.
- Respondents may or may not be interested in the questions or topic raised by the interviewer.

This suggests that to go about collecting what I expect to be a 'celebration of subjective meaning' and 'lived in' experience using qualitative interviews I will need to do more than just turn up with a tape recorder and expect people I have identified as international migrants to tell me all about what is it like to come to and live in the UK. I will need to think carefully about, and plan for, the interviews, not only in terms of how such events (interviews) might be managed to bring 'respondents' to talk about those issues that I as the 'interviewer' would like them to talk about, but also in terms of what sort of issues might influence them doing so. For each interview will not only be an 'event', it will also be a 'point of reflexivity' into which many diverse and distinct influences will flow. Therefore, if the qualitative interviews I intend to utilise (and by extension the research itself) are to be events that can be seen as 'fit for the purpose' of collecting meaningful data from international migrants, then they will need to be events designed by considering, auditing

and accounting for those influences and effects that flow into the interview as 'points of reflexivity'. They will need to be 'trustworthy' and 'authentic' in being:

- Representative of the 'social reality' experienced and understood by international migrants (credible).
- Capable of producing accounts of what it is like to live in the UK as an international migrant that are rich enough in description to enable the investigation to illuminate other settings (transferable).
- Transparent in the practices and processes I utilise in the attempt to achieve this (dependable).
- Able to ensure that my theoretical constructs and personal values will not influence the conduct of the interviews (confirmable).
- Able to capture a fair representation of the feelings, opinions and standpoints that international migrants experience and express (fair).
- Able to achieve a better understanding of what it is like to live in the UK as an international migrant (ontologically authentic).
- Able to achieve educational utility in enabling a better understanding of the different kinds of feelings, opinions and standpoints of international migrants (educative).
- Capable of providing an impetus for change to the circumstances of international migrants (catalytic).
- Capable of providing a framework with which to bring this change about (tactical).

To address these requirements will entail considering how the investigation might step toward the lives and lived-in experiences of international migrants. An issue that immediately springs to mind is that as they will have been born in other countries, it might be expected that their lives here will involve an interaction, or transaction, with British society and the cultural norms, values and assumptions that underpin it. Incorporation and participation into that society will not only involve access and inclusion with the social contract that unpins an individual's relationship with society (citizenship) (Rousseau, 2004), but will also require 'enculturation' into social and cultural knowledge and forms of polity that underpin effective participation within society (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1970).

If it is assumed that many of the people whose experiences, stories and 'rich pictures' I would like to gather for the purposes of this research are subject to, and lack access to, such issues of citizenship and enculturation, then it may not be surprising that there is little research about them to date. For being outside such forms of agency it might also be expected that their voices will be 'outside' or 'other' than those narratives, discourses and stories gathered from people who might lay claim to such forms of agency by birthright. In understanding the potential sample of this research as being to a greater or lesser degree outside the established access routes to the agency of both citizenship and the enculturation into cultural polity and its frameworks, then one might also expect the lives of those sampled to be largely 'silenced', in that 'what they have to say' is sufficiently distanced from the political process that they neither 'hear' the political discourse, nor are



'heard' by those who are powerful within it (LeCompte, 1993). For LeCompte (1993), researching 'silenced lives' is underpinned by the fundamental need for such stories to both 'be told' and be conveyed to a wider audience, which will include those with greater amounts of power. However researchers must also concede that 'silenced' individuals may not be aware of the 'silence' imposed upon them (LeCompte, 1993), and that such silence might not only come from the unheard voices of the powerless (an 'unspoken-unheard' scenario) but also those powerless people who fail to speak because they are unable to see or understand there is something to be seen or understood (an 'unseen-undisclosed' scenario).

Chapter Three (International Migrants and the UK: Immigration, Inclusion, Integration and Cohesion) suggested that the 'silence' experienced by some international migrants will be very different from others. Citizens of the European Union for example, who have access to paid employment, can vote in local and European elections and earn enough to enjoy the ability to make autonomous decisions about where to live or shop, may experience more opportunities to be 'heard' than asylum seekers or illegal immigrants, who may have less access to legitimate forms of power, or communication, in this country. This suggests that differing relationships with the State will bring into being different levels of 'silence' or ability to be heard, but it also suggests that the narratives that are spoken by these people may run 'counter to' the official narratives produced from the discourses of the State and its organised operations (Peters and Lankshear, 1996).

### **4.3 The Data Gathering Instrument: Narrative Research**

When one captures silent lives, when one commits narratives of those who are largely unheard to the page, they gain substantiality over narratives that are merely spoken, remembered or heard by the silenced themselves (Josselson, 1996). They become a visible, tangible and explicit echo of the way an individual understands something, relates an experience, or recounts a memory in and at a given moment in time. They reveal the ambiguities, complexities and contradictions of life, and in doing so enable us to see, hear and perhaps feel the kind of contextual drivers and nuanced knowledge that frame individual, lived-in realities (Bathmaker, 2010). For Chase (1995) all narratives share a common function; they serve to make sense of experience by the construction and communication of meaning. Therefore seeking to capture and utilise them as data and evidence represents the attempt to overcome the tendency of social science to 'stifle' a contributor's 'story' and his or her interpretation of this, instead bringing it into the very heart of the research process to serve as a rich vein of human experience from which to understand the phenomenon under investigation. As such, Chase (1995) suggests in-depth interviews should be occasions in which researchers ask participants to recount 'life-stories': narratives relating to some life experience that hold a deep and abiding interest for the individual being interviewed. Doing so acknowledges that such stories embody what social scientists seek: thought-rich, feeling-rich and experiential data 'thick' enough to illuminate the

relationship between the social action of the narrator and the social world he or she shares with others.

However, undertaking in-depth narrative research of international migrants will have its own set of issues, especially if they can be seen as leading lives that are to a greater or lesser extent 'silent'. McLaughlin and Tierney (1993) suggest that researchers may be 'blind' to structural constraints within which proposed informants live, or believe themselves to live, which is a understandable consequence of being an 'outsider'. As this contradicts the aim of research in the interpretative paradigm, which is to design a study to collect and understand the constructs of those who are to be studied (McLaughlin and Tierney, 1993) or to understand the frame of reference of the participant in action (Burrell and Morgan, 1979), then it is important that the research gains 'sight' of these concepts.

Clearly it would be difficult to produce or experience such 'sight' in a single interview or an episode of conversation; it will require the acquisition of knowledge and understanding over time. If this is addressed through a series of in-depth interviews with international migrants then it will also help the research meet the criteria of 'trustworthiness' and 'authenticity' (Bryman, 2004) as it will serve to cross-reference and contextualise the feelings, ideas and experiences with which an international migrant makes sense and meaning of his or her life over time, rather than on a single isolated occasion. This in turn suggests that the authenticity of narratives does not rely on their mere collection, but on a building-up and aggregation of narratives over time

to engender an experience of 'life in the round' – the range of feelings, moods, situations, circumstances and languages (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Such an approach would be an extremely powerful research tool for this investigation, as it would position international migrants at the very centre of their own life experiences and world-views and let them communicate them in ways they understand and feel comfortable with (Webster and Mertova, 2007).

However, it is also important to remember that such accounts will be volunteered by those international migrants who agree to take part in the investigation. Therefore it will be important how these accounts are presented and later published; literal transcriptions of the kind of pauses, interpolations and tangents the majority of us use while communicating might not help the telling of the story and they may also serve to belittle or make the contributor appear 'stupid' (Sikes, 2010).

## **Ethical Considerations**

For Josselson (1996) the act of 'doing' narrative research is an ethically complex undertaking that brings with it a set of responsibilities for researchers. These will include:

- Recognition of their responsibility to directly communicate or construct versions of narratives that are consistent with the meanings and intentions of the narrator.

- Understanding the intrusiveness of asking someone to relate personal opinions, ideas and experiences and have these written down.
- Recognising that codified words are only part of an individual's total narrative, in that they reduce a human event and human emotions to words on a page.
- Respecting the confidentiality of a narrator by disguising or making anonymous his/her voice to those who may be able to identify him/her.
- Acknowledging that the collection of data from people over time can mean that the researcher enters into a personal relationship with contributors.
- Accepting that researchers may find themselves accountable to their contributors once accounts of their contributions and the 'meanings made' from these are published.

However conducting research with those whose lives are 'silenced' (LeCompte, 1993) as this study expects to do will bring into being a set of further issues that are perhaps more focused toward sensitivity and security than the ethical considerations that apply to research in the mainstream.

These will include:

- That enabling those who lead silenced lives to 'speak for themselves' through the research process is in itself an ethical position as it represents a choice to redress oppression. However in doing such researchers may face accusations of 'trivialising' this oppression by casting the voices of the oppressed in 'relativistic' roles that bear no

relation to external contexts or fail to describe the structures or processes that serve to silence such lives (LeCompte, 1993).

- That by their very nature, silent lives are likely to be, or to include, 'hard to reach' groups (people who are difficult to involve in research). The 'hard to reach' will include groups to which a researcher may have no formal access point (such as an ultra orthodox religious group), but it will also include those who wish to be 'hard to reach' for reasons of personal safety (such as illegal immigrants). These hidden groups are likely to include people who on the one hand are extremely underrepresented in research, yet on the other hand extremely vulnerable; therefore accessing such people will carry great responsibility.
- That the act of conceptualising international migrants as a social group that is 'silenced' carries with it responsibility. Young (1990) observes that many people who contribute, reproduce and maintain oppression simply do not understand themselves to be agents of the process. In the same way, research of groups that already carry with them the burdens of myths, misunderstandings and ignorance must ensure it handles data in ways that ensure these are not perpetuated or added to.

Such ethical issues are pertinent to this investigation because they suggest that the process of researching the experiences of international migrants in the UK will carry with it a set of responsibilities that will require high levels of sensitivity to their particular circumstances, personal security and ways in

which the life history interviews they will gift to the study will be represented, analysed and discussed.

## **Analytical Considerations**

According to Riessman (1993) locating narratives of personal experience within data is not difficult because they are part and parcel of our everyday lives; they are conversations embroidered with finesse, with detail and with nuance that describe who said what, to whom and what their response was, and are as ubiquitous as an act of communication in itself, and the interviews of social research are no exception to this. The work of the narrative researcher is to capture these narratives for the sole purpose of subjecting them to the analytical framework posed by the research question. However, in doing so, it is necessary to recognise that he or she will not capture direct experiences, for these will belong to the respondent alone, but words, recollections and emotive memories that are at best 'ambiguous representations' of experiences. For Riessman (1993) such 'representations of experience' will pose a set of issues for this research that will operate on a number of levels:

- Attending to experience – data gathered from 'conversation like' interviews will be detailed and diverse; researchers 'attend to experience' by understanding particular events, episodes or descriptions to be meaningful and of value to the research and others not.

- Telling about experience – narratives are ‘told’ because researchers re-present and reorder events, episodes and descriptions that have already been considered meaningful by researchers to ‘tell’ the story in a way that will make sense to readers.
- Transcribing experience – akin to photography, transcription of narrative is an interpretative practice that involves the researcher displaying texts in particular ways to ground the narratives in the arguments of the research, just as a photographer uses grain, finish and cropping to get the best from a picture.
- Analysing experience – in analysing the transcript the researcher defines ‘critical moments’ that refer to the research question, identifying similarities across such moments and bringing into being aggregated summations. Although this process can be seen as a kind of ‘betrayal’ of the original narrative stories, they are a productive and necessary part of the research process.
- Reading experience – because written texts are ‘plurivocal’, open to interpretation, and both writers and readers are agents of the written and the read, both the written report and the reading of it will be open to interpretation: representations of a set of representations.

Riessman’s (1993) levels of representation provide this study with a useful model to inform the analysis and reporting of the data gathered for this investigation, but this will be complemented and contextualised by what Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach et al (1998) identify as the four dimensions of narrative research, attention to:



- 'Width' – the 'quality' of both the data the researcher manages to unearth and capture and the interpretation or analysis of this.
- 'Coherence' – the extent to which the narrative can be seen to 'fit' together, both 'internally' with itself, and 'externally' with the existing research and theorisation.
- 'Insightfulness' – the extent to which the presentation of the narrative and its analysis can be seen to bring about insights and comprehension of the interviewee and their circumstances (and possibly those of the reader).
- Line ('Parsimony') – the ability to present narrative accounts that possess elegant, aesthetic appeal while remaining true to both content and analytical framework.

Adhering to the criteria of 'width', 'coherence', 'insight' and 'line' acknowledges that this study, as a narrative investigation, will stand upon the presentational standard, form and style of the data gathered as a narrative. However it will be important to account for Zeller's (1995) caution, that those seeking to meet such dimensions will need to guard against 'self-absorption of authorship'; the pressure to present elegant narratives that serve the dimensions of width, analysis and internal and external coherence, but which might also serve to manipulate the narrative, and even pervert it toward the world of fiction.

## 4.4 Mobilisation of Methods

According to Webster and Mertova (2007), mobilising narrative research methods will entail attention to and use of a process, negotiations and risks. The process comprises tools – data gathering instruments capable of making the research relevant within its remit, and to its mandate; criteria – the establishment of trustworthiness and authenticity within an audit trail of practice and practical outputs; and structure – a record of the time, place and events in which the research takes place. Negotiations refer to the kinds of relationships into which the researcher will enter when gathering data from the sample and can involve both ‘caring relationships’, in which a researcher and respondents enter a relationship underpinned by friendly cooperation, collaboration and community, and ‘empowering relationships’, which involve a chain of authority that needs to be respected and adhered to. Risks are things that can have negative impacts on the research and can include ‘intersubjectivity’ – the failure to distinguish and maintain appropriate levels of reflection and analysis, both between researcher and researched, and between researcher and material gathered; ‘smoothing’ – the tendency of researchers to invoke positive results regardless of the material within the data gathered; and ‘external constraints’ – things that are beyond the control of the researcher, e.g. participants being ill, moving to a different part of the country or no longer wishing to participate.

Previous sections of this chapter have considered methodological options and considerations to determine and refine the data-gathering instrument for

this investigation. This section will draw upon Webster and Mertova's (2007) framework of issues and considerations from earlier sections of this chapter to relate how the data-gathering instrument of this study was mobilised in the undertaking of this research. As such it represents the attempt to communicate and chronicle something of the plans, processes, negotiations, operations, risks and reasoning that underpinned and gave form to this investigation in the motion of its undertaking.

### **Decisions and Initial Negotiations**

Clearly the people this investigation needed to gain access to were international migrants; however as I speak no languages other than English and expected international migrants to originate from countries all over the globe (Chapter Three – International Migration and the UK: Immigration, Inclusion, Integration and Cohesion) then it would be sensible to sample people who had sufficient linguistic fluency to communicate with me. Because education has been identified as a principal component of this study in its capacity to facilitate integration (see Chapter Three), linking these two components appeared to represent fertile ground on which to base the investigation. Schools would not provide an adult sample, and the data assayed for this thesis (see Chapter Three) primarily refers to adults. Higher education would promise to provide the study with an adult sample of international migrants, but it was deemed likely that a sample drawn from HE would be skewed toward international students, omitting other groupings. Further Education on the other hand promised the opportunity to study a

range of international migrants: those studying as fee-paying students, those studying ESOL (see Chapter Three) and those enrolled on other courses.

Chapter One of this thesis set Nottingham as the scene for this investigation, not only because it represents the physical space in which this study was conceived and a place of which I have an intimate knowledge, but also because it is the kind of locale to which the Local Government Association's Report (iCoCo, 2007) into the scale and impact of migration on local areas refers (see Chapter One). As such I, as the researcher, contacted a number of colleges of Further Education in Nottingham asking if any would be interested in allowing this study to take its sample from their student body. After a flurry of emails and phone calls in which I was passed from the pillar of one department to the post of another, I was finally directed to the international office of a prominent college in the city.

Louise, the International Officer was immediately enthusiastic about the investigation, as she drew parallels between the experiences of new internal migrants and those of her and her family, who came to the Britain fleeing the purges (mass killings) of a brutal regime in the 1970s. Following a meeting between us Louise forwarded my research proposal to the vice principal of the college, who subsequently authorised the work, introduced me to the manager of the college's ESOL unit to discuss sampling his students, and also advised me that the International Office would be able to put me in touch with international students should I wish to include them in the proposed sample.

Having potentially negotiated access to a sample of international migrants, I was left with some immediate decisions about who I should try to include within the study and how best narrative data might be collected from such a group. As the statistical data suggested that international migrants could not be meaningfully considered a homogenised group (see 3.3 Myths, the Reality and Their Relevance to this thesis), it was decided that I should seek a 'purposive' sample that targeted people who fell into the different groups reported by ONS data: EU nationals, fee-paying international students, spouses of UK citizens and refugees and asylum seekers (see 3.1 International Migration and the UK context).

It was also decided that as a 'rich pictured' narrative, 'thick' with descriptions of subjective experiences, opinions and circumstances (see 4.3 The Data Gathering Instrument: Narrative Research) would be difficult to collect in a single interview, a series of interviews would take place with each participant. Given the time constraints of this study, it was decided that three interviews should be undertaken with each participant, the dates of which were to be dispersed over a rough period of a year.

Acknowledging an ethical duty to protect the anonymity of the respondents, some of whom might be expected to suffer varying degrees of vulnerability, a decision was made to anonymise the name of the college and change the names of all people who appear in this thesis.

## **Further Negotiations**

After meeting Derek, the ESOL manager, it was agreed that I could approach his groups for volunteers to take part in the study. As such, I attended a number of classes in which I gave a short talk about the aims and objectives of the study, explaining that I wished to understand life in the UK from an international migrant's perspective, that I was looking for volunteers to take part, and what volunteering to participate would entail. I then left the class, leaving behind me a piece of paper asking those who wished to volunteer to write down their contact details and the category they felt most applied to themselves (EU national, asylum seeker, etc.) should they wish to participate in the study.

The pieces of paper and a list of volunteers provided by Louise, the International Officer, provided a group of over 40 people from which to draw the sample for the study. I selected 5 volunteers for each category on the basis of scope (to which a study of this nature could aspire) and availability of volunteers, selecting randomly where more than 5 had volunteered to take part.

The volunteers were contacted by either email or phone (depending on the details they provided) and agreements were made to meet for the first interview. As it was planned that the interviews would be informal events where the volunteers would be given 'space' to talk about and around their experiences, feelings, circumstances, motives, etc. (the kind of issues one would expect to find in what Goffman (1990) would call the 'back region' of

their lives as international migrants in the UK), the volunteers were invited to choose the venue in which they would feel most comfortable to be interviewed. The exception to this was a 16 year old who was interviewed in the International Office of the College under the supervision of the International Officer. The majority chose the college refectory, two chose the International Office, two an empty classroom and two chose to be interviewed 'off-campus' at a 'coffee shop'.

Prior to the first interview, which took place in either May or June of 2006, each volunteer was informed about the research and given the choice to participate. To make such a choice they were told:

- What the research involved (an investigation into the lives and relationships international migrants experienced in the UK).
- What their participation would entail (giving three interviews over the course of roughly a year).
- That their decision to participate in the study would be completely voluntary and that they could withdraw from it whenever they wished.
- That the contribution they made would be anonymised.
- That once recorded, the interview would be transcribed.
- That once transcribed and anonymised the original recording of their interview would be destroyed.
- That all or some part of their anonymised interviews could end up in a published work or in a work to which the public may have access.

- That their participation would require their signed consent (in accordance with guidelines for education research published by BERA (2004)).

What became clear from meeting the volunteers was they were each enthusiastic about taking part in the investigation. Some were keen to tell their stories, some wanted to have their experiences 'put on the record' in some way, while others thought that taking part would enable them to spend some time practising their English with a native English speaker on a one to one basis.

## **The Interviews**

The first interviews, which took place after the signing of a consent form, took place in either May or June of 2006 and were recorded by means of a 'mini disc' recording device. They lasted for between 20 and 30 minutes and flowed in a friendly, 'conversation like' manner through a number of 'life history' themes which the participants were asked to talk about. These included why and how they came to the UK, what course they were studying and what they thought of it in relation to educational experiences in their country of origin, and some general questions about what was good, what was challenging and what was different about their lives in the UK.

The second set of interviews took place in November and early December of



2006. Although the first interviews were friendly, the second set could be thought of in terms of what Webster and Mertova (2007) would call a 'caring relationship' brought about by familiarity and friendliness. Many of the participants had experienced some form of change, be it in the courses they were studying or their personal lives. Three had left Nottingham and one other the college, many others had changed timetables. Despite this, 18 of a maximum 20 interviews were conducted. Fewer of these interviews were conducted at the college, with five interviews conducted in the college canteen, two in the classroom and two in the international office, while eight were conducted in 'coffee shops' and one in a participant's business premises. Themes for these interviews included talking about any change that had occurred since the previous interviews, the relationship between education and work and aspirations for the future, and the level to which speaking English helped when understanding culture or dealing with systems or structures.

The third and final interviews, conducted in March and April 2007, were also familiar and friendly. Data was collected from 19 of the potential 20 participants, and included telephone interviews with the two participants who were missed in the previous round due to relocation (one had moved to the south coast and the other had returned to his native Brazil). More changes had come to pass and only 8 of the original 20 participants were continuing or planning to continue their studies at the college. The settings were split between the college, although only two chose a formal setting (one in a classroom and one the International Office), with eight choosing to be

interviewed in the college canteen and other locations. Of the remaining seven, one was interviewed at home, one at his/her business premises, four in a 'coffee shop' and one in a bar.

The following tables (Tables Fourteen to Seventeen) reveal an audit of interviews for each individual who volunteered to participate in the study. Arranged by category, they show a changed name, gender, age, nationality and the dates on which the participant was interviewed for each round of interviews. An x indicates that an individual did not participate in that round of interviews.

<b>Group One - International Students</b>						
	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Interview One</b>	<b>Interview Two</b>	<b>Interview Three</b>
Abbey	Female	21	South Africa	10/05/2006	22/11/2006	16/03/2007
Badir	Male	20	UAE	16/05/2006	x	24/03/2007
Caleem	Male	21	Pakistan	24/05/2006	16/11/2006	08/03/2007
Die	Female	16	China	09/06/2006	10/11/2006	29/03/2007
Esra	Female	30	Thailand	15/06/2006	17/11/2006	28/03/2007

**Table Fourteen: Interview Summary Table – International Students**

<b>Group Two – Spouses of UK Citizens</b>						
	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Interview One</b>	<b>Interview Two</b>	<b>Interview Three</b>
Fadhl	Male	40s	Yemen	30/05/2006	29/10/2006	13/04/2007
Gee	Female	31	Hong Kong	08/06/2006	08/11/2006	12/03/2007
Hansa	Female	36	Thailand	21/06/2006	21/11/2006	26/03/2007
Irene	Female	41	Russia	29/06/2006	13/12/2006	19/03/2007
Jelena	Female	45-50 estimate	Russia	29/06/2006	13/12/2006	19/03/2007

**Table Fifteen: Interview Summary Table – Spouses of UK Citizens**

<b>Group Three – EU Citizens</b>						
	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Interview One</b>	<b>Interview Two</b>	<b>Interview Three</b>
Kleber	Male	26	Brazil/Italy	30/05/2006	x	03/03/2007
Lech	Male	28	Poland	14/06/2006	20/11/2006	27/03/2007
Marta	Female	25-30 estimate	Poland	19/06/2006	19/11/2006	05/03/2007
Norbert	Male	28	Poland	19/06/2006	12/10/2006	12/03/2007
Orhan	Male	42	Germany	21/06/2007	15/11/2006	27/03/2007

**Table Sixteen: Interview Summary Table – EU Citizens**

<b>Group Four – Asylum Seekers</b>						
	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Nationality</b>	<b>Interview One</b>	<b>Interview Two</b>	<b>Interview Three</b>
Padik	Male	38	Iraq	07/06/2006	21/11/06	x
Rashid	Male	20	Afghanistan	08/06/2006	22/11/2006	27/03/2007
Serhat	Male	32	Iraq (Kurdistan)	09/06/2006	12/10/2006	06/03/2007
Telan	Male	26	Iran	21/06/2006	14/10/2006	23/03/2007
Wila	Male	30-35 estimate	Eritrea	28/06/2006	125/10/2006	02/04/2007

**Table Seventeen: Interview Summary Table – Asylum Seekers**

### **A Brief Reflection on the Interviews**

If I can claim some level of success in retaining the majority of the sample throughout the period of data collection, I attribute this to a number of contributing factors:

- Firstly, as each of the international migrants had volunteered to take part in the study, I treated the interviewees as participants in the study, not as informants or respondents.
- Secondly, I made myself available to participants by email, text message and mobile telephone and let participants know that I was willing to make myself available to do the interviews at times and places that were most convenient for them.

- Thirdly, I listened to what they had to say and took time to get to know them, their interests and issues, very often spending time ‘talking’ after the interview had finished.
- Fourthly, I was able to cross reference an interview with information the participant had provided in previous interviews, which provided a sense of continuity and acknowledged that I was genuinely interested in the participants and their lives.
- Fifthly, the interviews gave the participants something in return; for some it was the ability to reflect on their lives, for some the ability to talk to a native English speaker, while others enjoyed having their stories and opinions heard and accounted for.
- Finally, it was the safeness of the space; more likely than not this was not an interview room or an empty classroom, but a canteen or a coffee shop, a place where they could feel relaxed and anonymous, yet still feel a part of things.

### **Transcription, Analysis and Presentation of Narratives**

Once the interviews were complete the 57 interviews were transcribed in full from the ‘mini discs’ on which they were recorded. These are available on Microsoft Word files in Appendix One – Interviews in the Electronic Appendices (CD) at the end of this thesis. Each set of transcriptions (a set being those relating to a particular individual) were then subjected to a thematic analysis that sought to mobilise the three questions identified in

Chapter One (1.3 The Research Question) and at the beginning of this chapter:

### **Research Question One**

*What are the experiences of recent immigrants to the UK?*

### **Research Question Two**

*How does the relationship they have with the State mediate that experience?*

### **Research Question Three**

*What kind of relationships do recent immigrants to the UK have with UK social structures?*

Following the framework provided by Riessman's (1993) levels of representation for narrative investigations (see Analytical Considerations, 4.3 The Data Gathering Instrument: Narrative Research):

- The transcribed interviews were appraised for evidence relating to each of the research questions ('attending').
- Drawing together the interviews for each participant, 'attended' events, episodes, descriptions, opinions, etc. were then reordered to 'tell' the story as the individual's own narrative.
- These narratives, one for each of the 20 participants, were again 'transcribed' to form individual narratives. These are available on Microsoft Word files in Appendix Two – Narratives in the Electronic Appendices (CD) at the end of this thesis.

'Attending', 'telling' and 'transcribing' the interviews in this way recognises that 'width' (the building up of knowledge, context and meaning-rich pictures over time), 'coherence' (the extent to which the narrative can be seen to 'fit' together), 'insightfulness' (the extent to which the presentation of the narrative and its analysis can be seen to bring about insights and comprehension of the interviewee and his or her circumstances), and 'line' (the presentation of narrative accounts that possess elegant, aesthetic appeal while remaining true to both content and analytical framework) will be best achieved by the bringing together of 'transcripts' that will give 'voice' to the views, opinions and experiences of each of the participants (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach et al, 1998).

The term 'voice' has been applied to these narratives because the research has sought to keep each narrative account 'true' to the individual in terms of the language they used and how they used it. In doing so, I have sought to maintain a sense of their individuality within the research. This is what narrative researchers often call 'verisimilitude' (Holliday 2002), meaning narratives that ring true to the informant and to those who read them.

Finally, two narratives were selected from amongst the five that related to each category of international migrants: EU nationals, fee-paying international students, spouses of UK citizens and refugees and asylum seekers. The decision to do this was taken in line with the limitations of the thesis's finite word count, as presenting and analysing each of the voices would serve to prohibitively restrict other, equally important parts of the work

(e.g. discussion of findings or their implications for practice). This posed a number of difficulties related to how to select voices that were typical or representative of such small groups. The nature of these difficulties stemmed from whether data that was essentially informational, in providing a rich picture of uniqueness and individuality, could be used to represent, or generalise from, data gathered from other participants that was equally unique and individual (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The narratives were gathered together with methods from the interpretative paradigm, so the criteria for quantitative generalisability were simply not relevant here (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); however the selection problem still stood.

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) suggest that the issue of representativeness can be approached by locating the characteristics that appear in the narratives and selecting the ones that can be seen to bear or hold the range of these. Freebody (2003) supports this approach, but points out that although researchers may seek to select a case (in this study, a narrative) that is representative of others, they can never really be sure that the narrative selected truly represents the range of circumstances, experiences, ideas, etc. held within the body of the other narratives. What is more important, he claims, is that a narrative selected to represent other narratives can be seen to contain sufficient instances of the key circumstances, experiences, views, opinions, etc. communicated by the range of narratives it seeks to represent. Only through achieving this can a selected narrative be seen to demonstrate a robustness to the generalisations the narrative purports to hold across the range. According to



Freebody (2003) this type of generalisability does not create a position whereby a selected narrative can be viewed as representing all narratives, but rather, that they are representative of the body of narratives and the methods with which they were assembled.

However, mobilising such an approach throws a further issue into relief, whether a narrative can be viewed as representative of itself, let alone a range of other narratives. Schostak (2002) would argue that as text, the narratives represent vehicles that give voice to the participants' individual experiences and views, explanations and understanding related to these. But it can also be argued that such voices are in fact subjective accounts that offer distorted representations of the social world the participants inhabit rather than accurate accounts of these (Holliday, 2002). This is because narratives, whether spoken or written, are manufactured by a process of retrospective meaning making, whereby narrators interpret, shape and order their past experiences (even if recently past) in relation to their intended audiences (even if that audience is the narrators themselves) (Chase, 2006). Of course this is not only true of the data contributed by the participants in this investigation; all of us narrate accounts of events and experiences that communicate and explain these in the light in which we understand them.

Clearly such an issue might be said to cast doubt on the representativeness of a narrative selected to represent other narratives. However it must be remembered that narratives are a normal and essential part of everyday communication. Although they are enabled and constrained by social

circumstances and the range of resources people can draw upon to tell them, narratives are verbal actions, socially situated performances that enable us to tell, to listen, to record and discuss (Chase, 2006). Therefore, although we must accept that the narratives provided by the participants in this study are representations of the social realities they seek to explain and express (Holliday, 2002), we must also accept that narratives are a lingua franca of communication, and that as voices they speak with authority on a subject in which the participants are expert, their own experiences (Luttrell, 2010). They are also likely to be pragmatically bound with the individual and subjective beliefs, values and personal histories with which participants make sense of their worlds (Woods, 2006).

This level of authority and expert knowledge (about events, experiences, relationships, etc.) and personal views and opinions (relating to their interactions with the social worlds they occupy) is just what the investigation sought to gather from those who participated in this study. Voiced as narratives the data represents a celebration of subjectivity, a rich picture of lived in experience, not just a style in which to present data (Woods, 2006). They also provide a set of participants whose lives are largely silent to those in positions of power and authority, an opportunity to have a voice in a public arena (Schostak and Schostak, 2007; Thomson, 2011). If a narrative is a representation of the individual in verbal or written action, a voice that makes one visible in the public arena, which is simultaneously valid, authentic and credible as the narrative of a particular individual, then it is just the kind of representation that this investigation sought to unearth.

It is of course important to acknowledge that as the researcher, I 'attended' to the events, episodes, descriptions and opinions described by the participants of this study, shaping them into flowing narratives that gave voice to individual stories in a manner that attempted to be clear and understandable (Riessman, 1993, Holliday, 2002). Doing so was important because the majority of the participants (19 of the 20) spoke English as a second language, so shaping their narratives served to reduce the distractive influences of interrupted speech, mispronunciations and the general struggle to communicate in a foreign language. It also served to protect the narrative power of the voices, which could so easily be lost or diluted by poor or confused use of grammatical conventions (Thomson, 2011) which would in turn result in the risk that the audience (readers) would fail to understand what it was that the participants were attempting to communicate (Chase, 2006). Woods (2006) however, would argue that any selection of a voice to represent others could be complemented by the use of multiple voices, which would make space for more experiences to be expressed and enable a fuller, more complex view of the issues under investigation to be achieved. In response to such an argument, two narrative voices were selected to represent each of the four groups of international migrants.

When it came to the selection of voices, as Freebody (2003) cautioned, no single narrative presented itself as holding the full range of views, opinions, aspirations and experiences that were expressed within the whole body of the data provided by the participants of this study. However, a number of

issues helped me to enhance confidence that the narrative voices selected were suitably representative of other narratives:

- Firstly, through the act of transcribing each of the interviews and then using the data from these to co-construct the narrative voices of each participant I had an intimate knowledge of the narratives, both individually and as a body of material.
- Secondly, as the study focused on four migratory groups (EU nationals, spouses of UK citizens, fee-paying international students and refugees and asylum seekers) it was not necessary to find a single or set of narratives that represented all narratives, rather I would be seeking to find 4 different groupings.
- Thirdly, taking Woods's (2006) advice to use more than one narrative to represent each grouping (2 narratives were used to represent a group of 5 participants) effectively meant that the combined narratives were more likely to include the range of views, issues, experiences, etc. present in each grouping.

In summary, although much care was taken to ensure that the narrative voices selected to represent each group were representative of the kinds of issues, opinions, motives and aspirations experienced by that group, an intimate knowledge of the data, the establishment of 4 different groups and representation via multiple narrative voices made the process much easier and made the representativeness of the data more robust.

## 4.5 Presentation and Discussion of Narrative Voices

The following two chapters (Chapters Five and Six) are devoted to presenting and discussing the eight narrative voices chosen to represent the international migrants who took part in this study.

Chapter Five will present two voices from the international student group and two voices from the spouses of UK citizens group. Each set (of two narrative voices) will be followed by a discussion that considers them in relation to the research questions of this investigation, under a set of interrogative themes (migration to the UK, relationships with education, the State and UK society and its cultures, and forms and levels of agency). In summary the chapter will contain two international student voices, followed by a discussion, then two spouses of UK citizen voices, followed by a discussion.

Chapter six will repeat this process for the EU nationals group and asylum seekers group.

Quotations presented within the narrative voices (first section) are shown in ***bold italics*** and are referenced to the interview transcripts from which they were drawn by 'Round' (indicating which of the three rounds of interviewing an extract comes from), 'Group' (which of the four interviewee groups a participant is categorised under), 'name' (of the participant) and finally by page number. Quotations contained within the discussions (second section) refer to the narrative voices; these are also presented in ***bold italics***. Full

transcripts of all the interviews on which the narrative voices are based can be found in the Electronic Appendices (EA) which are held on a Compact Disc at the end of this work.

## Chapter Five

# Narrative Voices - International Students and Spouses of UK Citizens

## 5.1 International Students

The voices of Abbey and Die were chosen to represent the five participants of this investigation who were identified as international students. Each of the five held a student visa and was enrolled on a full time course at a college of Further Education.

### Abbey

Abbey is 21. She came to the UK to study from South Africa and lives with her sister and her sister's husband in Radcliffe on Trent, a village some six or seven miles south east of Nottingham. She is studying towards a degree because she would like to live in another country: *“eventually I want to settle ... maybe in Australia or in America, so I need a degree that's going to be recognised in those countries ... and the UK offers that”* (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 1, Abbey p1). She thinks that a degree from a UK university would carry far more weight than a South African one in terms of opportunities to work and reside in those kinds of countries. Getting a UK degree would also

allow her to get a good job in South Africa if she were to go back. She could sit in an interview and say to a prospective employer, ***“I deserve to get this job because I went to England, I studied and I achieved something”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Abbey p10). She wouldn't be able to do that with a degree from a South African university, and if she were to get an interview for a company in Australia, America or even here in the UK she couldn't say, “I have such and such South African qualification or such and such working experience in a South African company” because South African qualifications and work experience just aren't recognised, at least not in the kinds of countries she would like to work in. People in America and Australia just see South Africa as some kind of Third World country.

But it's not just about the standard of qualifications. Coming to study in the UK: ***“I liked the fact that it was safe, that I could walk around at night and nothing would happen to me, whereas in South Africa ... you get in your car and you're afraid somebody's going to hijack you, it's just completely unsafe and ... although ... where I grew up was ... a very safe haven ... if I was to go to university... that would be just very dangerous ... (here) the whole danger thing, it's just been taken away”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 1, Abbey p1). She is also lucky to have her sister here; she looks after her and makes sure she is on the right track in terms of her studies and her life in general really, and that's great because she doesn't have to feel lonely living here.

Abbey can see that it would be very easy for her to feel very lonely here in the UK because English culture is just so different from South Africa. ***“I think in general the culture in South Africa, people are a lot more friendly, ... more***



*open, whereas English people ... can be very cold, and ... overall just very negative*" (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group1, Abbey p8). It's like in bars: whereas South Africans will just talk to each other whether they know each other or not, British people just go into their own little groups and don't talk anybody else, that's just how it is. When Abbey first came over to the UK she started talking to people, just because that's what people do where she comes from, and I don't think people realised that she was just trying to make conversation. Well you can imagine the kind of misunderstandings that led to, especially in bars, so she learned not to do that. Nowadays she hardly ever speaks to anyone, and if she is honest, she still isn't sure when it's OK for her to start talking to somebody and when it's not; it's like there are a whole set of social rules that she has to learn before she can strike up a conversation with someone here.

It's the same with class: she knows England has a class structure, but she doesn't think she has really found the class that she falls into over here. There is a lot of what she thinks of as middle class people at college, but she doesn't really like any of them; there are a lot of lower class people too, but she doesn't like any of them either. She just comes from a very different background: *"where I grew up and how my family was ... (would put me) into the upper class ... in England. I mean I could go and be friends, with somebody who was brought up in a very wealthy family, because of ... my experiences at home in South Africa, growing up with a maid and being waited on hand and foot"* (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Abbey p8). Don't get her wrong, I am not saying she couldn't have a conversation with someone who came from a lower class background, it's just that they wouldn't end up being

friends because, well because their backgrounds would just be too different to have anything in common. But then again when she looks at upper class people here in the UK she thinks that they are just a bit too snooty: ***“I look at upper class and I think ... people are just a bit too funny about certain things, so it’s a bit difficult for me to find some place ... that I feel that I fit in”***. So it’s difficult for her to find a place where she feels she fits into things over here: ***“I don’t think I do connect really”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Abbey p9), and that’s why she misses her family and her home so much, and misses the farm, the veldt, the wildlife.

That said, she doesn’t think she will ever live in South Africa again, at least not permanently: for two to three years perhaps, but not any longer than that. It’s not that she doesn’t like South Africa; she was born there, she grew up there, it’s her home. It’s just that the South African government have made pretty clear, through the media, through advertising, through all kinds of stuff, that white people just don’t belong in Africa anymore, so it’s hard for her to feel like a South African when she doesn’t feel welcome there anymore. Then again, she doesn’t feel that welcome in Europe either; how can she when it’s so difficult for her to get a visa to stay here? And in England, where she has family, where she would expect no problems because she is white and speaks English as a first language, she has had looks, remarks, she has even had somebody telling her to go back to her own country. She thought that was insulting, hurtful, and left her feeling that once again she doesn’t know where she fits in here.

Abbey's studies aren't quite straightforward either: ***"It was cheaper for me to do the two years at The College ... if I had more financial resources I would have gone straight to Trent (University)"*** (EA, Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Abbey p9). But she doesn't have the financial resources, so she is taking the cheaper option, spending two years doing a business HND at college with the intention of topping this up to a degree with a final year of study at Nottingham Trent University. She has to admit that she is finding it quite challenging because she went to a private school in South Africa, which was quite privileged: ***"I was brought up in an elite atmosphere ... (so) to go to a very cosmopolitan atmosphere was quite a bit of a change for me"*** (EA, Interviews, Round 1, Group 1, Abbey p3). It's not that there is anything bad about the college, ***"It just feels that my goals, compared to other people's goals, are not the same. So, I don't really mix with people in the class, because we are just too different kinds of people"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 1, p3). She puts a lot of effort and a lot of time into her studies, whereas other students don't bother to work, don't get marks needed to pass the course, and just don't seem that bothered: ***"they don't really focus on achieving ... they are just there because they've got nothing else to do"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 1, Abbey p2).

It's unsurprising that she finds it unfair: she is coughing up lots of money to do the course, she's a good student, she works hard, and sat next to her is somebody who doesn't work, isn't interested in achieving anything and doesn't give two hoots about whether they pass the course or not. In itself that's OK – it's their life after all. They aren't bothered because they aren't losing anything, they are English, they don't have to pass and they don't have

to pay fees to be there. What really feels unfair is that their failure doesn't seem to matter to anyone; the teachers allow them to continue the course, continue to fail and be disruptive along the way. Is it really surprising that she doesn't really mix with people at college? She and they are just too different, they want different things; they have different ideas of where they want to get to in life and different ideas about how to get there.

It's OK, she doesn't really get much free time to socialise with people anyway. Her student visa allows her to do up to twenty hours paid work a week in term time, while in the holidays she can work full time and she takes advantage of this to pay her college fees. She does a part time job in a hotel in term time and works as many hours as she can get in during the holidays. Doing a part time job alongside full time studies is tough going for her, so she is always tired, always stressed and never seems to get any time to just relax. When she gets a day off she tends to just catch up on her sleep, sometimes sleeping for fourteen hours straight before starting her next shift studying; she certainly doesn't have time to go out in the evening or go shopping much. It's hard; I think you need to be a very strong person to do that. Sometimes it feels like all she does is study and work, but then again she hasn't got a choice because she needs to raise between £7000 and £8000 to pay for her fees; she works to earn the money: ***"if I don't do it ... I'd have to leave the country"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 1, Abbey p2). ***Whereas: "After I get my degree I'm eligible to go for a work visa and residency permits"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Abbey p7). To tell the truth it's taking its toll on her health; she can see it in her weight, she can see it in

her skin, she doesn't sleep properly and it's also having a negative effect on her relationship with her sister and her sister's husband. They just can't wait for her to finish, to leave, because they just want to get on with their life, which is understandable; they need their own space, but she expected more from her sister. So once again she feels disappointed, hurt: another place where she doesn't feel welcome.

## **Die**

Die is 16 years old and from China. She came to the UK to study because her parents want her to get a good education and like many Chinese people they think that education in England is very good. She is studying A Levels and trying to improve her English at the moment; after that she will go on to study for a degree at university. When she first came to England a year ago she attended a private college with other international students of the same age, but she was really unhappy there because she missed her friends and family and didn't really understand what people around her were saying most of the time. In China she was very happy because everyone around her spoke the same language as her, she was good at her subjects in school and she had lots of friends. But when she came here to the UK she found herself having to work really hard to learn a new language, new material in her subjects and ways of behaving in the classroom, all without the support of her friends and family.

She thinks that education in China is very different to what it is here. In China teachers make their students study hard and give them lots of homework to do, but teachers: ***“In China ... they teach you something, it’s not useful in your life ... you just need to remember and have exam”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Die p6). What students learn isn’t really very practical, they don’t have to understand why things are like they are, they just have to memorise information and then provide the right answer in exams; that’s the important thing. Teachers in England on the other hand teach differently, they explain things, students can ask them questions if they don’t understand something, and they don’t give out too much homework, so students have plenty of free time. Die thinks that that’s good, very good. What she finds hardest about her studies is trying to keep up with the language. The courses she is doing at college are all in English; they are for English students and her classmates are English, so Die spends much of her time trying to understand what her teachers and classmates are saying. This hinders both her ability to play an active part in the class, where she doesn’t feel confident enough to speak, and make any friends at college. She says this is: ***“because it’s different language ... there’s some word I don’t understand, and they always watch TV, and I’m not, so maybe nothing to speak”*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 1, Die p5).

When she first came to Nottingham she lived with an English host family in Beeston. Some of her friends told her that living with a family can be difficult, so she was worried at first, but when she got there they were really nice. However because her parents were worried about her being isolated she moved to live with her cousin, who is studying at the university and lives in a

more central part of the city. It's good because they both speak Chinese, so they understand each other; the down side for Die is that that her cousin is in the last year of her course, so she's generally very busy with her studies. So Die ends up spending most of her free time alone, drawing, watching TV or talking to her friends in China on the internet. Sometimes her cousin takes her shopping with her friends from university; her cousin has been able to make many friends there as there are many Chinese people studying at Nottingham University. Die really likes to go with them, but she has to settle for window-shopping as things in the UK tend to be much more expensive than they are in China. Sometimes they all go out to a Chinese restaurant in the evening. She enjoys that too; the only problem is that as her cousin's friends are all older than her they tend to think of Die as a child: ***"I come here, I feel I'm too young ... because other ... Chinese people ... sometimes, they just look at you as a child, and they don't speak more to you, you feel very lonely"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 1, Die p7). It's interesting for her to see other people around them though, English people. Chinese people like to drink, but English people get really noisy and aggressive when they have been drinking; she has seen English people arguing, shouting, and even hitting each other, all because of drink. Chinese people are not like that, not like that at all. Maybe they can get a little noisy when they have had a few drinks, but then their friends would take them home.

She wants to go home, home to China; she misses her friends and her family so much. It wouldn't be so bad if she had managed to make some new friends at college, but she hasn't because her classmates are all English.

They just talk about English TV all the time, which she doesn't watch, so they don't have much to talk about other than their studies. She had hoped there would be a Chinese girl of her own age in the college, someone she could speak to in her own language. They could have talked and gone window shopping and eaten in Chinese restaurants, but there is no one. It's not surprising that she feels very lonely, and it doesn't help that she is also bored. She feels that she has too much free time here with too many holidays in which she doesn't know where she can go or what she can do, so she just ends up staying at home drawing and watching TV and talking to Chinese friends over the internet. It may be that when her cousin finishes her course at the university and goes back to China her parents will bring her home too. She is pretty sure this is what will happen because without her cousin here she would be alone in England and her parents would worry about that. She thinks that this would be good, although, on the other hand she is worried that if she goes back to China she would be really behind in her studies and have to work really hard again, catching up with what she will have missed while she has been in England. She doesn't really want to do that, but her parents have told her not to worry about anything; they have said that the most important thing is that she is safe.



## **Discussion (International Students)**

### **Migration to the UK**

On the surface both Abbey and Die's migrations can be viewed as events motivated by the desire to study here in the UK. Abbey decided to come over to England to study for a UK degree because education in her country is not as well recognised in the world (Abbey), while Die, like other Chinese people, came here to study because her parents thought that studying in the UK would provide her with a good standard of education (Die).

However, the nature of their migrations was more complex than merely arriving and undertaking a course in an educational establishment; they also required that they had, or had access to, sufficient monies to fund their studies. In addition to this both Abbey's and Die's migrations can be viewed as a flow towards an individual or individuals already resident in the UK. For Abbey this was her sister and her sister's husband, for Die it was her cousin, who was studying at the university.

### **Relationship with Education**

As Abbey and Die's migrations to the UK were motivated by education it is not surprising that their relationships with education are central to their lives here in the UK. Both talked about their ambitions to attain a degree from a UK university, suggesting that they both imagined an extended period of stay, with Abbey intending to 'top up' her Higher National Diploma with a year at university, and Die needing to attain A levels first. In expressing such

ambitions both described UK educational qualifications as holding merit at an international level. For Abbey, studying toward a UK degree represented an investment that would realise an asset within the 'global' economy.

***“eventually I want to settle ... maybe in Australia or in America, so I need a degree that’s going to be recognised in those countries ... and the UK offers that”*** (Abbey).

Whilst for Die, who was 16, this investment was one being made by her parents, who, like other Chinese parents, were purchasing a UK education as something that would be of merit or value to their daughter in the future.

However, Abbey and Die’s relationships with education are more than economically transactional; they also involve engagement in the classroom. For Abbey, this has been fraught with tensions in the classroom, which appear to stem from her background in South Africa:

***“I was brought up in an elite atmosphere, and to go to a very cosmopolitan atmosphere was quite a bit of a change for me”*** (Abbey).

***“It just feels that my goals ... are not the same. So, I don’t really mix with people in the class, because we are just too different kinds of people” ... “they don’t really focus on achieving ... they are just there because they’ve got nothing else to do”*** (Abbey).

Die has also found the classroom difficult in terms of relationships with her peers:

***“because it’s a different language ... there’s some word I don’t understand, and they always watch TV, and I’m not, maybe nothing to speak”*** (Die).

This suggests that her interactions are undermined by a lack of linguistic competence, but there is also a failure to communicate culturally with her British peers. However, despite this, she stills prefers the teaching style she encounters in the classroom to the ‘fact driven’ learning she experienced in school in China.

***“In China ... they teach you something, it’s not useful in your life ... you just need to remember and have exam”*** (Die).

However Abbey and Die both spoke about factors and concerns that lie above and beyond the classroom. Die’s relationship with education is underpinned by anxieties about her education becoming further and further from that of her peers in China, which suggests that at least in her mind, a UK education is a life plan that has yet to be completely resolved.

Abbey’s relationship with education, on the other hand, is underpinned by concerns about money. Although she initially claimed her parents were meeting the costs of her course fees, she later conceded that she was effectively funding her studies through working evenings, weekends and holidays in a hotel. This struggle to ‘self fund’ explains why she attends the

college as a prologue to university, despite feeling that her classroom peers add little to her educational experience:

***“It was cheaper for me to do the two years at The College ... if I had more financial resources I would have gone straight to Trent (University)”*** (Abbey).

But despite this strategic academic detour, Abbey’s struggle to earn enough money is having negative impacts across the landscape of her life as her studying full time and working part time is not giving her time to rest, is causing anxieties about whether she will be able to earn enough money, is affecting her physical health and mental health, and is also causing problems in her relationship with her sister.

### **Relationship with the State**

Abbey’s relationship with the State is very much framed by the relationship she holds with education, in that her residency and ability to study in the UK as a fee-paying international student is sanctioned by the State through her student visa. This enables her to study in the UK, to work part time in term time and full time in the holidays, and also provides a structure through which she hopes to extend her residency into the future:

***“After I get my degree I’m eligible to go for a work visa and residency permits”*** (Abbey).

***“(but) if I don’t do it (study)... I’d have to leave the Country”*** (Abbey).

Although, like Abbey, Die's residency in the UK is dependent upon a student visa granted by the State, she appeared largely unaware of any relationship she holds with the State.

### **Relationship with UK Society and Cultures**

Abbey talked extensively about UK society and its cultures and how she thought these differed to those of her native South Africa. She thought the UK was a safer society in which to live, but thought that compared to the friendliness and 'openness' of South African society:

***"English people ... can be very cold, and ... overall just very negative"***

(Abbey).

But beyond discerning a difference in national character, Abbey also talked about differences in social polity, in that whilst it might be considered normal for her to strike up a friendly conversation with a stranger in South African society, doing so in the UK might evoke a very different set of assumptions. From this Abbey realised that despite sharing a common language, there were things about UK social life that people from other countries would need to learn when interacting with people in the UK.

Abbey also acknowledged that she was finding it difficult to understand how she might 'fit in' with UK society and its cultures. She didn't appear to have much in common with her classmates at the college, possibly because by UK standards her life in South Africa was extremely privileged:

***“where I grew up and how my family was ... would ... (put me) into the upper class ... in England. I mean I could go and be friends, with somebody who was brought up in a very wealthy family, because of ... my experiences at home in South Africa, growing up with a maid and being waited on hand and foot”***

(Abbey).

On the other hand, having such experiences in South Africa does not appear to have enabled her to connect or make friends with people from privileged backgrounds in the UK.

***“I look at upper class and I think ... people are just a bit too funny about certain things, so it’s a bit difficult for me to find some place ... that I feel that I fit in” ... “I don’t think I do connect really”*** (Abbey).

When Die spoke about UK society and its cultures she did so as a 16 year old in full time education and therefore the levels at which she was able to act and interact were more restricted than those of Abbey. She noticed that the culture of the classroom was different to her experience in China, not merely in terms of teaching style, but also in the currency of popular culture (English TV and the programmes, music and celebrities attached to it) with which her classmates made conversation. This suggests that successful interaction as a student required something more than Die’s participation in academic activities, but also the ability to ‘tap into’ or share the kinds of things that her fellow classmates were interested in talking about.

This would suggest that if Die were to access and refer to the kinds of social artefacts and discourses provided by the UK media she might be more successful in making friends in the classroom. But rather than assaying the UK media to find common ground for conversation with her classmates, Die would much rather have access to Chinese friends with whom she could share her own Chinese social and cultural references. And it is this preference for her own social and cultural references that appears to frame the relationship she experiences with UK society and its cultures when she is not at the college. At college she feels isolated and alone, at home she and her cousin speak only Chinese, they interact with a community of Chinese people who, like her cousin, are students at the University of Nottingham, and they eat Chinese food and occasionally eat out in Chinese restaurants. As such, she appears to spend her time within a sub-culture of UK society made up of Chinese international students who 'tap into' established cultural forms produced and provided by the culture of previous migrants of Chinese heritage, who own Chinese shops and restaurants, who run community associations, use the language, etc. However, her individual relationship with this culture is limited by her age and how this is perceived by others:

***“I come here, I feel I’m too young ... because other ... Chinese people ... sometimes, they just look at you as a child, and they don’t speak more to you, you feel very lonely” (Die).***

## **Forms and Levels of Agency**

- The Student Visa

The student visa represents a significant form of agency for both Abbey and Die as it enables them to be resident in the UK for the period of their studies and to extend this should they wish to undertake further studies (although these must be able to demonstrate an incremental level of attainment and the ability to continue to meet the tuition fees). For Abbey, the student visa also enables her to have limited access to the UK job market (part time in term time and full time in the holidays) and therefore provides her with access to some form of financial support. As such the student visa not only allows them access to education, but also to broader roles in society. Die's age restricts her to roles such as consumer, public transport user, patient, etc., whereas Abbey is able to enjoy roles such as worker, co-worker, National Insurance contributor, credit card holder, commuter, etc.

- Education

As fee-paying international students, education can be identified as the primary form of Abbey and Die's agency in the UK, as their student visas not only enable them to study here in the UK, but also provide an opportunity to renew their applications for residence if they wish (or are able) to progress to a higher level of study and demonstrate their ability to meet the tuition fees. However, education (in terms of the college) has not proved to be a 'place' in which either Abbey or Die has made friends with other students. Abbey does not seem overly concerned with this as her chief concern is to attain a university degree, which she believes will provide her with the opportunities



to apply for work visas and residency permits in the UK and further afield. For Die, or rather for her parents, education also holds the promise of agency within the knowledge economy but this is some time in the future. Right now the agency education offers Die herself is that it provides her with the opportunity to engage and interact with and within a sub-culture of fellow (albeit older) Chinese international students who are studying at the university.

- Family

Familial relationships are bound up in both Abbey and Die's migration to the UK, but beyond that, family also provides both of them with some form of stability: accommodation, someone to talk to, someone to care about their safety, someone to help navigate a new place and new ways of doing things, someone who will share the agency of their own knowledge, someone who can provide a home full of cultural artefacts from home, a home from home, a place to feel safe.

- Paid Employment

For Abbey, her job (or the ability to undertake paid work) is another principal form of agency. It not only provides her with the opportunity to earn money with which to pay her tuition fees, but to experience a role within society that is different to the one of a fee-paying international student.

- Symbols, forms, bodies and structures originating from a native culture

With many international students from China and an existing Chinese community in the city, Die has access to shops, restaurants, associations, etc. where she can find Chinese food, Chinese language and Chinese people who will be able to help her understand 'how things are done' here in the UK, based on their own experiences.

Although Abbey might not have access to a large South African community, we might expect her to glean some cultural references (food, words, familiar terms, etc.) through her sister.

- Language

As a South African, Abbey is a native English speaker and therefore her knowledge and use of language helps and enables her to understand and negotiate life here in Britain.

Die, on the other hand, is not a native speaker, and her level of competence in the English language can be seen to restrict her agency within the college and the society in its broader sense. However she does gain agency from her ability to access Chinese language, although one might argue that understanding her life in the UK through the veil of another language (even her own) might serve to undermine her chances of gaining higher levels of agency via greater linguist competency.

- Residency

For Abbey living in Britain is a form of agency:

*“I liked the fact that it was safe, that I could walk around at night and nothing would happen to me, whereas in South Africa ... you get in your car and you’re afraid somebody’s going to hijack you, it just completely unsafe ... (living here) the whole danger thing, it’s just been taken away”* (Abbey).

- Purchasing Power Parity

Die’s agency is restricted by how ‘far’ her money ‘goes’ here in the UK compared to China. This effectively means that although she may have been able (and used) to buying particular goods in China (clothes, games, etc.), these same items are significantly more expensive here in the UK.

Abbey is also subject to such relativity in the cost of goods and services. In South Africa she grew up in ‘privileged’ surroundings (attending private school and employing domestic help), however such privilege has proved relative as it has not managed to exchange at a value that would empower her with similar levels of agency here in the UK.

## **5.2 Spouses of UK Citizens**

The voices of Gee and Hansa were chosen to represent the five participants of this investigation who were identified as spouses of UK citizens. Each of

the five had travelled from their native country to live with a husband of wife who was a UK citizen and predominantly of a different ethnic heritage (four out of the five participants). Each was granted leave to remain in the UK on the basis of this relationship.

## **Gee**

Gee is 31 and came to the UK from Hong Kong with her husband, who is a British citizen: ***“I came to England because my husband is a UK citizen ... we met in Hong Kong, but he want to start his business in UK, so we come back here”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Gee p1). When she arrived in the UK she found that: ***“Almost everything (is) the same”*** – same cars, same clothes, shops, shoes, restaurants, etc. You can find them all here, maybe different makes, but they’re still here. ***“Just Hong Kong people is quite rushed ... and UK it’s quite relaxed”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Gee p3), but then it’s a big international city, so it’s really surprising to Gee that people in the UK have a laid back attitude. But for daily life here, most of it is pretty much the same. The language is different, that’s true, but even that wasn’t too much of shock for Gee because Hong Kong had a British Government; it’s a bilingual city, so she was already used to having English spoken around her when she was there, and had even learnt a little English. Here of course it’s all English, but, ***“When I faced some problem I don’t know, I don’t understand, I just ask my husband, so he helps me a lot”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Gee p7),

and it was him who encouraged her to enrol on an ESOL English course at college. When they first moved here they lived in Newcastle, where her husband's father owns a restaurant which she worked in when she first arrived, but later she and her husband moved to Nottingham to open a gaming shop in the Lace Market area of the city. They live in a flat above the shop and she divides her time between working in the shop and studying ESOL at college.

Gee's studies are important to her because she would like to find a job here and thinks that she needs to improve her English to do so. In Hong Kong she worked as an administrator, but when she tried to get a similar job here in England she wasn't successful. She thinks this was due to a number of things, firstly her lack of UK work experience, secondly that her Hong Kong qualifications don't seem to be recognised here, and thirdly that UK employers want their staff to speak English, if not perfectly then at least well. So if she wants to get back to an office environment she will have to improve her English and get some UK qualifications under her belt; she already has an International Diploma and has also got a certificate in Business Writing now, but she wants to do more, to keep learning, keep studying and keep getting better because it will look better for a potential employer. She thinks: ***"The teachers is quite good ... their teaching skill is really good" ... "They teach ... very clear, if we don't understand they will try to explain ... it's good ... Hong Kong education system is quite hard, you just remember, even if you don't understand you have to remember, but ... here it's different, they try to explain"*** (EA Interviews, Group 2, Round 1, Gee p4). Gee likes that.

The bad thing about her course is that students with different levels of English are put together in the same classroom, so the teachers always have to stop the class to explain something that many of the students already know. This isn't helped by some of her classmates only attending once a week, despite everyone else having to attend classes on four days of the week. She is pretty sure that some of them only come because they have to; they don't seem to want to be there: ***“some classmate just come for reporting to somebody, or some organisation, I don't know, but they are not really want to come to study ... our classes are four days a week, but some people just come one day a week”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 2, Gee p5). Then when others do make it clear that they aren't there to learn, they just disrupt the class. Gee thinks that maybe they get something if they come to the class; she doesn't know what the story is, but it's annoying because the disruption they cause gets in the way of those people like Gee who want to learn and make the effort to get to all the classes. She also doesn't think that the course is very academic in its approach because the classes feel like they are teaching English for everyday usage rather than working toward a formal qualification.

Gee also finds where they live problematic; the shop is in the centre of the town and is surrounded by pubs and bars. Although it's fine in the day, there are always a fair few people wandering about in the evening, with the inevitable drunken behaviour. At the weekend – Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights – the area is just full of drunken people; men, women, students, even kids sometimes shouting, swearing, fighting, falling over or just going to sleep on the pavement. Gee thinks that you would never find

that kind of behaviour in Hong Kong, despite it being a big city; if someone is drunk they go home, or they ask a friend to take them home, but here everyone is drunk. Having to see this kind of behaviour on her doorstep is quite scary for Gee: ***“in Hong Kong most of the ... English people ...they were well educated, and they were quite nice, but in here, I don’t see they are quite nice”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 2, Gee p8). When she worked in her father-in-law’s restaurant in Newcastle they sometimes had customers in who would say, “Hey you, Chinky” when they wanted serving. It was really quite upsetting for her. If she were in Hong Kong and she and her friends met a black guy or an Indian guy they would never treat him differently, they would never single him out for abuse; Hong Kong’s just not like that, everybody’s equal. Here it’s different, and even in their own shop Gee and her husband have had people shouting, “You’re Chinky, go back to China” at them. Sometimes it’s been drunken people, sometimes it’s been teenage kids. That’s awful, especially when it happens in their own shop. But she has had worse than that; she was in Nottingham, just walking down the street and a man came up and hit her, just because she is Chinese. She thinks that’s wrong, just wrong.

Maybe she would feel less vulnerable if she knew more people here in Nottingham. In Newcastle they had her husband’s family and his friends, but in Nottingham they haven’t managed to make any friends at all. Every day is the same, seven days a week, twelve hours a day, just her and her husband, the same set of customers in the shop and the same people in the classroom. When they finish work they go up to the flat, maybe watch TV for

a while, then they just go to sleep. Sometimes she feels like it's a really lonely kind of existence here. Her husband's family think they should start a family, but she doesn't want to have one just because they want it; she will do it if and when she wants to. Her family in Hong Kong is quite modern, they always allowed her to make her own choices, but traditional Chinese people, especially those in England, well at least her father-in-law's generation, think that their children have to do what they want. ***“Traditional Chinese ... especially in England, the last generation ... (they think) my children have to do what I want ... Chinese is like that, I'm your Father, you're my children, you have to obey my order or my idea ... you don't have choice”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 2, Gee p6). She thinks in her father-in-law's case he just knows what China was like 38 years ago and nothing can change his mind. In the first two years of her marriage, this used to really upset her. She used to think to herself, “How can his family think they can control me, it's my life not theirs.” But then she talked to her husband and he told her, “They just want you to show respect, you just have to listen to what they say and agree to what they ask you to do; you don't actually have to do it unless you want to”, so that's what she does now, and it works.

Although Gee met and married her husband in Hong Kong, they only came to the UK because he wanted to set up his own business here. She would rather they lived in Hong Kong: ***“Hong Kong is more, for me ... it seems a bit difficult looking for a job (here), a proper job, ... in Hong Kong I can do much more better ... I'm not saying I don't like England, just it seems (there is) limited opportunity for me”*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Gee p3), mainly because it proved difficult for her to find the kind of job she is used to doing,



whereas in Hong Kong she knows she could do much better for herself. It's important to her: Hong Kong people work, it's part of who they are; some people might have money of their own, but most people work because without money they just can't survive, not like here. ***"In Hong Kong ... you need money, then you can survival, but in here ... I'm not sure (if it's) because the government supports or not, it's seems people is much more lazy than the Hong Kong people. (Here) even they don't work, they have money from the government, but in Hong Kong ... you have to work"*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Gee p7) ... ***"I want to earn my money by myself ... not I ask people to give me money ... I hate that, I absolutely hate it"*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Gee p6). So not being able to find a job here is difficult for her, not just because she is used to earning her own living, but because it feels like she has become completely dependent upon her husband, which takes away any sense of achievement and independence she might get from living here: ***"(I feel) no satisfaction for myself (here), because ... (it) seems I cannot living by myself, I cannot protect myself"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Gee p7) ... ***"(I have) no family, no friends, (and) I feel ... very lonely"*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Gee p5). So with no family or friends here, with no job and no confidence to walk about in the area she lives, it's not a life that leaves her with any sense of achievement or satisfaction. It's not surprising she is hoping their gaming business takes off so she and her husband can put in a manager and move to Hong Kong, where they could set up some kind of new business and live there instead; that way she could go home.

## Hansa

Hansa is 36 and came to the UK from Thailand seven years ago when she married an Englishman. She is now a British citizen and lives with her husband in the Bulwell area of Nottingham. She does three jobs at the moment: two of them cleaning, one in the morning, one in the evening, weekdays, then at weekends she works in a Thai restaurant. Her ambition is to own her own restaurant, *“the same as any other foreigner,”* (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Hansa p1), but to start with she would like to get a better job, a single job where she can work nine to five instead of mornings and evenings, but thinks that she needs to improve her English first. For this reason she is doing an ESOL course at college. She likes going to college, but hasn't got time to attend full time because of her work, so she attends classes in the afternoon between her jobs. She says that college not only gives her the opportunity to improve her English, but also helps her build her confidence. When she goes to college she meets people who are just like her, people who have come here to England from all sorts of different countries. She really enjoys that because it makes her think that they all feel the same kinds of things that she does, they all feel the same frustration of being in a foreign country. They have the same difficulties over language, the same loneliness at not having their friends, family or familiar things around them, and because of this, because she can see that it's not just her in this situation, she doesn't feel so much alone here in this country.

When she first came to the UK she didn't understand anything that people said and thought that she wouldn't be able to live here because in her head everything was blank and that scared her. Because of this she never did anything or went anywhere on her own; everything seemed to be difficult for her, really difficult. She also felt lonely. In Thailand she has a large family and they all spend a lot of time together, but here she only has her husband. He has been good to her: **"he always help me, back me up, anything I want to do, ... he want me to achieve something in the future"** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Hansa p3), and that's good. Of course they had their problems because neither of them knew each other: **"(he) have to ... accept me for something and ... I accept him for something, because we ... different culture, different background"** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Hansa p4). But even having her husband here, she still feels very, very lonely, mainly because she can't find a friend here, a good friend, a true friend. She thinks it's difficult for people from other countries to make friends here because English people just don't have the patience to listen to foreigners if their accents aren't perfect, and if they do then they don't listen to what they have to say unless it's about the kinds of things that they talk about. If the foreigner has anything else to say they just aren't interested, **"because they don't understand you, and some got no patience to listen to you ... (unless) you like to talk same story as them ... they just like to talk (about things) like Coronation Street"** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Hansa p8). When she goes shopping or is out and about people will allow her to talk, but it never really feels friendly and sometimes she feels frightened because people will shout at her or be nasty to her, people she has never even met before, even kids. That would never happen in Thailand: kids have respect for people there, especially older

people; here they can be scary, really scary. **“Sometime (people) they not talk to you like a friend”**, but as a foreigner it’s just something that happens, **“you have to live with it, and then I think you get used to it”** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Hansa p5). It happens, so you eventually get used to it and then you come to accept it.

Hansa says: **“In my country ... I was very poor, that’s why I haven’t got a good education in Thailand”** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 2, Hansa p7) nor have people got the kind of opportunities that people here have, so she feels very lucky to be here in this country. The UK is what she calls an “open country”: people can speak out here if they don’t agree with something; they can voice their opinions about how the country should be run. In her country, in Thailand, people just can’t do that because criticising the authorities or the government can get someone or their family into trouble, big trouble. Here it’s not like that; people can have their say, openly, and she likes that. She also, **“like(s) the facilities in England, because my country hasn’t got ... public transport, medical care ... (care for the) disabled ... somebody (to) look after old people”** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Hansa p8). There certainly aren’t any state benefits that people can turn to when they need them. In Thailand it’s easy: there isn’t any help, whether you need it or not. If you have a child you have to look after it yourself and you have to pay for those things it needs: medical treatment, food, clothes, everything. People can’t have lots of children because it’s just too expensive, you have to be able to afford to bring them up. **“Sometimes (she) think(s the) government spoil ... and interfere with people too much, I not agree with that ... It’s nice to have child benefit ... when you (are on a) low income, but it doesn’t mean you don’t want to go to work at**

***all ... just make the baby all the time. Because I see that ... in my area (Bulwell), (I) see all the young girls, they don't want to go to college or university ... when they finish the school, they just start a family, because they got a money support from government"*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 2, Hansa p7-8). She doesn't think that's right.

Hansa thinks she works too hard. She works mornings and evenings so she doesn't really have much chance to go out at night and at the weekends she's working in the restaurant, so any spare time she gets she tends to just stay at home and do her housework, watch a little TV or read a book. She knows she should stop; she knows she should make more time for herself, but she tells herself she has to keep going because one job doesn't pay her enough money. In general she likes it here and she thinks most people here are nice and are good. ***"I'm very pleased that I can speak English, and when I go home ... (if I meet) foreigner, I can help them"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 2, Hansa p7). She will be able to help if they don't understand something or need to know how to get somewhere, that kind of thing. She goes to Thailand once every two years to see her family at the moment; if she could afford it she would go every year because she misses them so much. Even so, ***"Every time when I went back home I feel, a little bit successful"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 2, Hansa p9) because she lives in a different country, she can speak English, she earns money from her work, she has savings of her own put aside in a bank account. That feels nice, it feels like she has achieved something here. She thinks it's good to achieve; she thinks it's good to study and to work for her money; she thinks it's good to live in a country that has facilities and services she can draw on if she needs them,

but her roots are definitely in Thailand: *“I’m going back home (to Thailand) ... at the end, when I get older”* (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 2, Hansa p8).

## **Discussion (Spouses of UK Citizens)**

### **Migration to the UK**

What Gee and Hansa’s migration events have in common is that they both came from South East Asia to marry and live with men who are UK citizens. However, here the commonality ends. Gee married her ethnically Chinese, Cantonese speaking husband in Hong Kong and came with him to England because he wanted to start up a business here in the UK.

Hansa, on the other hand, came from Thailand to Britain unable to speak English to live with a husband of a different ethnic heritage who could speak no Thai.

### **Relationship with Education**

Both Gee and Hansa were studying ESOL courses (English for Speakers of Other Languages) at the college. They both thought that learning English (through education) was important to them, as they had each identified English language acquisition as the key to increasing their prospects within the UK job market.

In terms of the classroom Gee recognised that there were differences between her experiences of education in her native Hong Kong and her experiences at the college in Nottingham:

***“The teachers is quite good ... their teaching skill is really good” ... “They teach ... very clear, if we don’t understand they will try to explain ... it’s good ... Hong Kong education system is quite hard, you just remember, even if you don’t understand you have to remember, but ... here it’s different, they try to explain” (Gee).***

However, she was disappointed that the course appeared to be structured more towards practical language skills rather than academic qualifications. She was also disappointed that not all her classmates were interested in learning:

***“Some classmate just come for reporting to somebody, or some organisation, I don’t know, but they are not really want to come to study” (Gee).***

Hansa on the other hand enjoyed the practical leaning of the course and understood the classroom to be more than merely a place of learning, but a place that enabled her to meet other people in similar situations, other foreigners, a place where she could talk to people, swap stories and make friends. She also really relished the opportunity to study because prior to coming to the UK she had only received a basic education.

***“In my country ... I was very poor, that’s why I haven’t got a good education in Thailand”*** (Hansa).

Therefore, although she might have had little to compare her classroom experiences to, she was able to compare it with an absence of education opportunities in her native Thailand.

### **Relationship with the State**

Both Gee and Hansa communicated very little about how they understood their individual relationships with the State other than that these were in some way linked to their British husbands. Gee seemed largely unaware of any relationship with the State other than this.

***“I came to England because my husband is a UK citizen ... we met in Hong Kong, but he want to start his business in UK, so we come back here”*** (Gee).

Hansa, however, through her marriage of seven years, had applied for and been granted British citizenship in her own right. This effectively means that her relationship with the State is no longer as a dependant of her husband, but as a citizen in her own right. She can choose to live in or leave the UK regardless of the relationship she holds with her husband.

However both appeared to understand the State through public provision, and how this related to the levels of provision in their native countries. Hansa recognised that the UK supported its citizens far more than her native Thailand, and approved of this:



***“I like the facilities in England, because my country hasn’t got ... public transport, medical care ... (care for the) disabled ... somebody (to) look after old people”*** (Hansa).

Although she felt that this level of provision served as a valuable ‘safety net’ compared to Thailand, where access to public services relies on the ability to pay for them, she also feels that UK state provision, in seeking to support the needy, can fail to bring about the best outcomes for people, in that it can serve to create long term dependency:

***“Sometimes I think (the) Government spoil ... and interfere with people too much, I not agree with that ... It’s nice to have child benefit ... when you (are on a) low income, but it’s doesn’t mean you don’t want to go to work at all ... just make the baby all the time. Because I see that ... in my area, (I) see all the young girls, they don’t want to go to college or university ... when they finish the school, they just start a family, because they got a money support from government”*** (Hansa).

Gee, on the other hand, voiced very strong opinions about the kinds of relationships she perceived between the State and British citizens and went as far as saying that she ‘hated’ state dependency:

***“In Hong Kong ... you need money, then you can survival, but in here ... I’m not sure (if it’s) because the government supports or not, it’s seems people is much more lazy than the Hong Kong people. (Here) even they don’t work, they have money from the government, but in Hong Kong ... you have to work” ...***

***“I want to earn my money by myself ... not I ask people to give me money ... I hate that, I absolutely hate it” (Gee).***

### **Relationship with UK Society and Cultures**

Gee describes her relationship with UK society and its cultures as a difficult one, despite having been familiar with the English language, English people, forms of organisation, etc. in her native Hong Kong:

***“Almost everything (is) the same, just Hong Kong people is quite rushed ... and UK it's quite relaxed” (Gee).***

However, she has witnessed scenes of drunkenness, disorderly behaviour and also been the victim of both verbal and physical racial abuse, which has left her feeling scared and confused: scared because she fears for her safety living in the UK and confused because her experiences of British people in Hong Kong were positive:

***“in Hong Kong most of the ... English people ... they were well educated, and they were quite nice, but in here, I don't see they are quite nice” (Gee).***

She also describes the relationship she experiences with her husband's ethnically Chinese British family as being markedly different from her own family in Hong Kong. This is because while she understands her own family to be quite 'progressive' in terms of the way they allow their children to make decisions and choices about their life for themselves, her husband's family is far more 'traditional' in this respect.

***“traditional Chinese ... especially in England, the last generation ... (they think) my children have to do what I want ... Chinese is like that, I’m your Father, you’re my children, you have to obey my order or my idea ... you don’t have choice” (Gee).***

Hansa’s relationship with UK society and its cultures has evolved over the seven years she has lived here with her husband. When she first came to the UK she, like Gee, was afraid, but this was because she could not speak or understand the English language, and knew no one but her husband. During this seven year period she and her husband had to ‘get to know’ each other, not merely in the way that any other couple would, but as people who spoke different languages, had different social backgrounds, and who were brought up in completely different cultures:

***“(he) have to ... accept me for something and ... I accept him for something, because we ... different culture, different background” (Hansa).***

Running in parallel with getting to know her partner, Hansa also had to ‘get to know’ UK society and its cultures incrementally over time. She has had to learn to communicate, to find employment, and learn how to navigate a life here in the UK. However, this appears to have been, and continues to be, a solitary and lonely experience for her, despite her being married to a British husband. This is partly because most of her time is taken up with work commitments and partly because she has found it hard to make friends with British people:

***“because they don’t understand you, and some got no patient to listen to you ... (unless) you like to talk same story as them ... they just like to talk (about things) like Coronation Street”*** (Hansa).

This suggests that Hansa has recognised that many British people utilise cultural discourses (in this case the storyline of a popular soap opera) as ‘common ground’ on which to base their conversation; it gives them something to talk about. Not knowing the same storylines, Hansa finds herself ‘left out of the loop’. However the hostility that Hansa sometimes senses in her daily life, and has learnt to live with, might be seen as the failure of some of the British people she comes into contact with to understand Hansa’s ‘storyline’:

***“sometime (people), they not talk to you like a friend, and you have to live with it, and then I think you get used to it”*** (Hansa).

### **Forms and Levels of Agency**

- Spouse

Both Gee and Hansa’s principal form of agency is, or has been, their marriages to their British husbands. This has enabled them to travel to and remain in the UK. Marriage has also enabled them to find paid employment, access state structures, such as health and education, and eventually to citizenship in their own right should they wish (an option taken by Hansa). They have both also found their husbands supportive of their lives here:

***“When I faced some problem I don’t know, I don’t understand, I just ask my husband, so he helps me a lot” (Gee).***

***“he always help me, back me up, anything I want to do ... he want me to achieve something in the future” (Hansa).***

- Familiarity with Social Systems and Structures

Because Hong Kong was until recently a British crown colony, Gee grew up in a city where the English language, British people and British systems of governance and provision were part of her everyday life. This familiarity, with the language, with systems, and with people provides Gee with agency pertaining to how things work, if not culturally, then of the way things are done and organised such as driving on the left hand side of the road, the police, the post office, etc.

- Paid Employment

Both Gee and Hansa have enjoyed a level of agency through their ability to take paid employment, although their experiences have been very different. Gee came to Nottingham with her husband to open a computer gaming shop, and prior to this she worked in her father-in-law’s restaurant. She would prefer to find a job doing the kind of work she did in Hong Kong, where she was an administrator for a large company, but she has found it difficult to find such a role here because UK employers have not recognised her Hong Kong qualifications or work experience. Hansa, on the other hand, has three separate part time jobs, which she finds tiring and restrictive upon her personal life. She keeps doing them all because combined they allow her a

level of independence, in that she is able to earn and save money for her own use and own purposes.

- Education

Gee and Hansa both understand education as an import form of agency. For Hansa, education is a way of meeting people in similar circumstances to herself, although it has not served to introduce her to other people from her native Thailand. It also provides her with a source of motivation and aspiration as she firmly believes that it will help her find a better job. Gee also views education as a form of catalytic agency in that she believes it will enable her to learn new things while validating or translating her existing skills into UK qualifications that she can present to prospective UK employers.

- Residency

Although Hansa's residency in the UK was originally dependent upon her marriage to her British husband, being resident in the UK, as opposed to them living as a couple in Thailand, has provided Hansa with a wealth of agency. Not only has she been able to take advantage of the agency that derived from her marriage (access to structures of state provision, the right to find paid employment, etc.), but she has also built on these to accomplish other forms of agency that she might not have attained in her native Thailand. Hansa was too poor to access education in Thailand; residency here in the UK has enabled her to take this up. Paid work has enabled her to gain economic resources that can be saved to convert at a greater relative

purchasing power in her native Thailand, and she has also succeeded in attaining a 'conversational' level of spoken English; both of these are achievements she can be proud of when she visits home:

***"I'm very pleased that I can speak English, and when I go home ... (if I meet) foreigner, I can help them" ... "Every time when I went back home I feel, a little bit successful"*** (Hansa).

▪ Home and Home Ties

Although Gee might feel isolated and vulnerable in the UK, she thinks of Hong Kong as the place where she could lead a more fulfilled life; a place where she could retreat to if everything were to go wrong, or became too much for her, her home:

***"Hong Kong is more, for me ... I'm not saying I don't like England, just it seems (there is) limited opportunity for me" ... "(I feel) no satisfaction for myself (here), because ... (it) seems I cannot living by myself, I cannot protect myself" ... "(I have) no family, no friends, (and) I feel ... very lonely"*** (Gee).

Similarly Hansa understands Thailand as her real home, and she would visit more often if she could afford it as she misses her family and the kind of life her family leads in Thailand. For Hansa Thailand is home, a place where she intends to return permanently one day:

***"I'm going back home (to Thailand) ... at the end, when I get older"*** (Hansa).

## **Chapter Six**

### **Narrative Voices - EU Nationals and Asylum**

#### **Seekers**

##### **6.1 EU Nationals**

The voices of Kleber and Marta were chosen to represent the five participants of this investigation who were identified as EU nationals as each of the five held an EU passport.

##### **Kleber**

Kleber is a 25-year-old Brazilian national who holds an EU (Italian) passport through his parents. His journey to the UK started when he was studying for his Civil Engineering degree in Brazil. He was attending a specific lecture in which the lecturer asked the class, “Who here speaks English?” and not one person in the class put their hand up, no one could speak English. The lecturer was really disappointed and asked the class why they didn’t and said, “Don’t you know that you need English?” This struck a chord with Kleber and he thought to himself that if he wanted to work for one of the better companies in Brazil he would need to speak English. So after graduating he decided it was something he would pursue and thought it



would be best to study in an English speaking country, that way he would be able to learn quicker than in a classroom alone. He figured it would take him about three months to become a fluent English speaker and also thought that this would be a good amount of time to spend living in another country. His options were New Zealand, Australia, England and the United States. He thought the United States would be a good place to visit, but couldn't imagine himself staying for any length of time. ***"If I had gone to New Zealand I should (have to) apply for visa and I should go to school every day just to have a visa to stay there, and perhaps in 6 months ... if I want to stay like I did here ... I would not be able to ... because my visa should expire ... I come to England only for that actually, just because ... if I had to stay here longer I could"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Kleber p3). In the end he decided to come to England, mainly because his parents were worried that he would be travelling alone, and as his Dad said, if something happened to him he could just go to Italy. In Italy he would be as good as home and also, as he has an EU Italian passport, he knew that if he wanted to stay longer in the UK he could.

When Kleber first came to England he lived in London, he didn't know anyone, but had found an agency that placed language students with English families on the internet before he came, so started his time here living with a family. Living with English people was interesting for him; he remembers being amazed by just how many potatoes they ate. It was like every meal was served with potatoes: pasta with potatoes, pizza with potatoes, everything they ate was with potatoes, it was amazing. Observing the family was great, but he didn't manage to communicate well with them because his English was so poor, so he ended up spending most of his time hanging

around with other Brazilians speaking Portuguese. So although he had originally thought that three months would be enough time for him to pick up the language, after he had been here that long he realised that he would need to stay longer, although he recognised that it wasn't going to get much better if he continued to hang around with Portuguese speaking friends. Because of this, when the opportunity to move out of London to Rugby with a French friend he had made popped up, he took it. He and his friend came into Nottingham for the nightlife and it was at that time that he thought it would be a good place to live. So when his brother decided to come over to England as well he decided that they would get a place there together, so that's what they did.

He studied on an ESOL course at college, which was good because as an EU national resident in the UK he didn't have to pay fees. He thought the course was good, but used to say to one of his classmates that they were the only ones there that really wanted to learn English, as most of the class were there because attending the course enabled them to get some kind of benefits. ***"I remember two ladies ... they are there, not to learn English, they are there just because they have nothing to do ... at the time they go to the class, they left their ... kids ... in the crèche ... they go there just to get the bus pass and stuff ... When the teacher used ... to write if you are in the class (the register) if the teacher do it at the beginning of the class, they just left the class, they just go home"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 3, Kleber p6-7). Other people used to leave too. They used to say that they weren't interested in learning English because they had been living in the UK for years and that they could speak English as well they needed. The teachers didn't care that

much either: ***“The teacher I think they ... (were) more interested to have people in the class than ... (whether) the people is learning or not ... because if there is no people in the class they cannot make the class ... he’s interested or not, that doesn’t matter, I just need him here”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 3, Kleber p3), because if the numbers dropped the class would be dropped too. Kleber thinks it was only he, his friend and a girl from Slovakia who were genuinely interested in learning, the rest weren’t really. The Slovakian girl used to get so upset and angry because the others were just messing about in the class and spoiling it for those in the class who wanted to learn English. ***“I think the greatest points in the college was to talk with friends ... I met my best friend there”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 3, Kleber p4), and it ended up that he attended his classes regularly because he knew that his friend was going to be there as well. So going to college meant they would meet up every day, talk, have lunch together, and then after the class they would go into the town and take a look around, do things together, and discuss how things in England worked in comparison to how they worked in their own countries.

Kleber thought that how English people interacted would be different: ***“I thought it would be much more different than it is ... for example, a night out is ... quite the same thing ... the same songs, the same people, you can see the same group of guys, same group of girls, and then how they talk to each other ... what you have to do to try to pull a girl ... it’s very similar”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Kleber p3-4). He thought it would be different. What he did find difficult to adapt to were the times at which people did things. In Brazil if you ask someone to dinner you probably meet at seven or

eight or even nine o'clock, but here in England people used to ask him to dinner for five - that's really different. So is the time English people go for a night out. In Brazil people start meeting each other about midnight, they go into a club around one o'clock in the morning and don't get out until five or six. In England he used to have to go out about ten or eleven, because by two o'clock everywhere was shut. Also, Brazilians don't have this culture of drinking; they drink in the evening with friends just the same, but Kleber thinks that English people drink too much, or too often, or for the whole day even. Brazilians don't drink like that, it's just not something they would do.

What Kleber thinks is more interesting is the difference between what he thought the UK would be like before he came and what it was really like when he arrived. He thinks that: ***"In Brazil ... I think the TV make in our minds ... that Brazil is shit, (while) Europe is much better, everything's perfect, and it's not... The country (the UK) is much richer than us, the public service is much better, but it's not perfect ... (when) I went to London, everyone who go to London for first time say, Jesus ... I'm not in London, I thought it was much better, because London, from TV or from papers ... you just know the museums and stuff and everything is beautiful, and then you get there and you see London's got really, really poor areas, and then you say, no, that's not happening, I'm not in London"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 3, Kleber p8-9). So, although people in Brazil might have the idea that Europe is this perfect place because it's safe and clean and governments provide great public services, compared to Brazil and other South American countries Kleber has seen that European countries have problems too.

Kleber thinks that towns in Brazil are different: ***“In Brazil ... the poor areas are not in the town ... the poor areas ... surround the town ... so I don’t see ... much violence and stuff ... because I’m not there ... I’m not living in poor areas ... Of course (in) Brazil we’ve got much more crimes ... but I think in England you see more, because the people ... surround you ... the people are in town ... they are mixed with you”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 3, Kleber p2). Of course it’s still safer here than it is in Brazil and Kleber thinks that the police are really good, really efficient. ***“I remember ... reading in the papers ... that the police in England ... was not good, they ... use firearms ... but I don’t agree with that, I think English police is ... really efficient ... When my mobile got stolen, I called the police, they ...are really nice to me ... asking me ... how you feeling ... you alright ... that’s much different than Brazil ... (In Brazil) you can call the police, but ... they always say that they so busy ... if you’re not dying today they don’t do anything ... if you go to Rio, it’s a mess ... as they earn very little money ... the police are criminals as well”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 3, Kleber p10).

Kleber is back in Brazil now. He probably won’t be coming back to England because it’s quite expensive to travel to Europe from Brazil. Also he has a job now. When he went back to Brazil he found a job as a Civil Engineer; they were looking for people who could speak English and had some experience living abroad, so he was a strong candidate. When he thinks of the time he spent living in England he remembers it as a kind of holiday, an opportunity he took to live abroad and have a different set of experiences from the sort of life he lives in Brazil. For example: ***“I work(ed) in a bar, I never work in bar in Brazil, so ... I’m making my history ... making friends ... living different things than I will live in Brazil”*** (EA Round 1, Group 3, Kleber p5). He thinks it was

really good to have had that experience, to set out to learn English in another country and to have achieved it, so it's now a big part of his life, a chapter in his personal history. He doesn't think that his life has really changed too much, but he thinks he has a much broader outlook on life. Perhaps he is a little more experienced than his friends now, perhaps a little proud of his achievement too. He tells everyone what he did and they are really jealous of him. They say, "Oh I can't believe you did it, you made it, you actually went to England and learned English, you did it" and he says, "Yes, I did".

## **Marta**

Marta is 26 and came to the UK from Poland with her friend Natia after graduating university. ***"I have a Masters degree in Psychology ... Poland is very high unemployment so it was very difficult to find a job for me ... so I didn't have money. In my profession I have to improve my ... skills, without money it's impossible, so that's why I came here (to the UK) to earn some money"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p1). So although she would have liked to continue her studies, done a PhD or something, without funding it was simply going to be impossible for her to even think about it. Even if she were lucky enough to find a job in her preferred area – psychology - she would earn such a small wage that she would only be able to pay for her food and her rent, no treats, just working to make ends meet. She certainly wouldn't be able to buy a flat or go on holiday: this would be very difficult. That's why they came here to the UK, to work and earn money, easy as that.

Besides, as she says, "**English is most important today to find good job, even in Poland**" (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p1). Maybe she will get to do her PhD here too one day, maybe she will end up doing something completely different, but first her main objectives are to earn money and improve her English, then she will see what will happen.

When she and Natia first came to Nottingham they didn't know anyone. They had done some research, talked to people who had been to the UK, then rented a house via the Internet. One day they were both living at home and the next they were living in the Meadows of Nottingham. A friend at home had given them a contact of someone: "**When I was in Poland my friend gave me a phone number to his friend who lived here ... I didn't know her before, but in first week I called to her and we met ... and she helped us a little bit, you know, go to job centre and something like that**" (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p7). Within a week they had found their first work, cleaning at the university. OK so it wasn't a great job, but they came here to find work and were really happy that they had found it and were able to start earning money so soon after arriving. While doing this job they found a better one, working for a company in Beeston that repairs mobile phones. Marta tests the phones after they have been repaired. Initially it was through an agency, but the company liked her work and offered her a contract. That's why it's so good here; in Poland it's hard to find work, whereas, "**here life is easier, it's much easier to get job and make money**" (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group3, Marta p3). She has talked to a lot of Polish people who came to England with the intention of staying for a few months, but now want to stay longer because things are so much easier here than at home. They can get a job, they can

earn money, **“they can buy what they want, they can go everywhere”** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p3) and Poland is only two and a half hours away by plane; it’s not even expensive – last time she went home she paid £30 to fly there and back.

She started to study ESOL at college in December when a friend at work told her about the course, but said, **“I come to this lesson every second week because I have two shifts in my work, so I can come only every second week”** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p4). Because she wanted to study English more seriously she decided to give up her job and start a full time, yearlong course, this time at another college. She still needed to support herself financially, which meant she had to find a part time job that wouldn’t clash with her time in class, so it had to be something she could do in the afternoons or evenings. It was hard for her to find something suitable because she didn’t want to work in pubs or clubs, simply because she wouldn’t feel safe going home late at night, and she also didn’t want to work at weekends because that’s the only time she gets to spend with her boyfriend. It took her about a month to find something, which was hard because she was worried about being able to pay her rent and buy food, but it happened and now she is working in Primark on the till and sometimes overseeing the changing rooms; actually she does more or less whatever they ask her to do. But she’s happy with it: **“In Poland (even) working ... full time ... it’s very hard to pay all bills. It’s stupid ... here you can go to College working part-time and live”** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 3, Marta p4). It seems unfair, but that’s the way it is. She likes her new class though: **“I think**



*that is (a) good class ... everybody wants to learn English ... we went to College to learn English, not to have a fun, so it good"* (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 3, Marta p4). Also, as she is an EU citizen she doesn't have to pay fees: *"(the) EU pay for me (to study ESOL) so that's cool, I know that people from China pay £3000 for whole year"* (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p4).

On a personal level, Natia went back to Poland; she got a job at the university working in their field, psychology. So Marta is now renting a room in a shared house in the Radford area with some people she hadn't known before. Three of them are Polish and one man is half English, half Jamaican. It's not the best situation because she likes things to be clean and tidy, but her new housemates don't seem to care that much whether the house is dirty or not, but for now it's where she lives, so she has to put up with it. Her boyfriend Tomaz is also Polish. He moved to Leeds when he got a job there, so at the moment they only see each other at weekends and communicate via the internet the rest of the time. She intends to join him there in June when she has finished her course and is hoping she can get a job at the Leeds branch of Primark by getting some sort of transfer. She thinks that at the beginning it will be good to have a job, any job, and then she can think about finding something better, perhaps as an interpreter. She's heard that employment agencies need people who can speak both Polish and English because they have so many Polish workers on their books.

Marta doesn't know how long she will stay here in England because she wants to go home to Poland some day, although right now she doesn't know when that will be. She has a lot of Polish friends here and says, ***“every day I listen Polish language, in my work, on the streets ... shopping, everywhere are Polish people”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 3, Marta p4) so much so that sometimes she forgets that she's in a different country. But she feels ***“(It) is no(t) our place here in England, because we cannot do what we really want, or is very hard ... to aim (to do what we would like to do) ... (but) here is easier life, easier to get money and to afford for many things ... You don't work in your profession, but you have money to do what you want”*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 3, Marta p3). So they can work, but not in the kind of work they would really like to do, or rather, it's very hard for them to do so. Marta is very much aware of this, but at the same time she doesn't want to think too much about her career at the moment, mainly because when she does she worries about her future and what will happen in the long term, so it's easier for her to think about the next month or the next year and short term goals around work and money.

## **Discussion (EU Nationals)**

### **Migration to the UK**

Kleber and Marta both share a number of characteristics: they are both in their mid twenties, both recently graduated from university, both hold a European Union (EU) passport and both travelled towards the UK with the intention of finding paid employment. However the nature of their migrations

as events was different. Kleber is Brazilian and holds an EU passport through his Italian parents. He came to the UK on a working holiday with the intention of learning English. Marta came to the UK from her native Poland specifically to find work because the UK held more opportunities for her to earn a living.

***“I have a Masters degree in Psychology ... Poland is very high unemployment so it was very difficult to find a job for me ... so I didn't have money. In my profession I have to improve my ... skills, without money it's impossible, so that's why I came here (to the UK), to earn some money”*** (Marta).

However her migration was a networked event. She used the internet to research opportunities in the UK, she and the friend she came with booked accommodation before arriving and they were also given a 'contact' who helped them with orientation when they arrived

***“when I was in Poland my friend gave me a phone number to his friend who lived here ... I didn't know her before, but in first week I called to her and we met ... and he helped us a little bit ... go to job centre and something like that”*** (Marta).

### **Relationship with Education**

Kleber and Marta's relationships with education were based upon their desire to learn English. Both worked full time and went to the college to attend part time ESOL classes (English for Speakers of Other Languages), which were fee-free to EU passport holders. Marta would have liked to have attended more regularly, but the work she did, in a company that repaired mobile phones, meant she was only able to attend her classes every other week.

***“I come to this lesson every second week because I have two shifts in my work, so I can come only every second week” (Marta).***

Despite being highly motivated to learn, Kleber found the classroom environment very frustrating because he felt that his opportunity to learn was undermined by the disruptive behaviour of other less motivated students. He also suspected that some of his classmates were not there to learn, but to take advantage of benefits that arose from attendance:

***“I remember two ladies ... they are there, not to learn English, they are there just because they have nothing to do ... at the time they go to the class, they left their ... kids ... in the crèche ... they go there just to get the bus pass and stuff ... When the teacher used ... to write (the register) if the teacher do it at the beginning of the class, they just left” (Kleber).***

He was also disappointed that his teachers appeared to ‘turn a blind eye’ to such behaviour for reasons of their own: that a fall in attendance could result in the class being withdrawn from the college timetable:

***“The teacher I think they ... (were) more interested to have people in the class than ... (whether) the people is learning or not ... because if there is no people in the class they cannot make the class ... he’s interested or not, that doesn’t matter, I just need him here” (Kleber).***

Marta thought that learning English was important for her career development, not just in the UK, but in terms of work in other countries in the future, even in her native Poland. As such, she changed the relationship she held with education from part time study of English that fitted around her full time job to studying English full time (at a different college) and working part time. She liked the new course because the students were motivated:

***“I think that is (a) good class ... everybody wants to learn English ... we went to college to learn English, not to have a fun, so it good”*** (Marta).

### **Relationship with the State**

Kleber and Marta’s relationships with the State are framed through their EU citizenship, which enables them to live, work and move freely throughout the European Union. Fortunately for Kleber, who had come to the UK to learn English, it also enabled him to study ESOL at the college fee-free. Other than this, and perhaps reflecting the lack of restrictions imposed on his ability to live, work and study in the UK as an EU citizen, Kleber spoke very little of his relationship with the State other than of an experience he had with the British police. His mobile phone had been stolen and in his dealings with the police he was able to test this experience against expectations he had of British policing (possibly drawn from Brazilian media discourses that flowed from the shooting of Jean Charles de Menezes on the London Underground in 2005 (BBC News, 2005)) and compare this with his feelings about the police in Brazil.

***“I remember ... reading in the papers (in Brazil) ... that the police in England ... was not good, they ... use firearms ... but I don’t agree with that, I think English police is ... really efficient ... When my mobile got stolen, I called the police, they ...are really nice to me ... asking me ... how you feeling ... you alright ... that’s much different than Brazil ... (In Brazil) you can call the police, but ... they always say that they so busy ... if you’re not dying today they don’t do anything ... if you go to Rio, it’s a mess ... as they earn very little money ... the police are criminals as well”*** (Kleber).

Marta also appeared to be largely unaware of any relationship she held with the State, possibly reflecting the freedoms provided by EU citizenship, which enable her to live, work and study in the UK unhindered by red tape or visas. But as Marta is an Accession 8 (A8) EU citizen, she cannot just ‘up and go’ to work where she wishes in the EU (A8 citizens are granted access to the UK, Republic of Ireland and Swedish job markets) and therefore her relationship with the State in the UK is more significant than she appears to recognise. Her status as an EU citizen also enables her access to study English without having to pay fees:

***“(the) EU pay for me (to study ESOL) so that’s cool, I know that people from China pay £3000 for whole year”*** (Marta).

And the access the State grants her to the UK job market enables her to live out a very different kind of life than if she were in her native Poland:

***“In Poland (even) working ... full time ... it’s very hard to pay all bills. It’s stupid ... here you can go to college working part time and live” (Marta).***

### **Relationship with UK Society and Culture**

Kleber and Marta both talked about their relationships with UK society and its cultures in ways that suggest they perceived and understood it to differ from the norms, values and assumptions that underpinned social and cultural life in their native countries. Kleber spoke of being surprised by the similarities between UK and Brazilian youth culture:

***“I thought it would be much more different than it is ... for example, a night out is ... quite the same thing ... the same songs, the same people, you can see the same group of guys, same group of girls, and then how they talk to each other ... what you have to do to try to pull a girl ... it’s very similar”***

(Kleber).

Although he noted differences in terms of the times at which British people would meet for particular activities, such as meeting for dinner, going for a ‘night out’, the time people went into and out of nightclubs and attitudes to alcohol. Another difference he noted was the way in which the economic geography in Britain’s urban areas differed from those in Brazil and how this difference, in what is effectively ‘town planning’, serves to shape the individual’s experience of a town in terms of the kinds of people, events and activities one might expect to encounter there:

***“in Brazil ... the poor areas are not in the town ... the poor areas ... surround the town ... so I don’t see ... much violence and stuff ... because I’m not there ... I’m not living in poor areas ... Of course (in) Brazil we’ve got much more crimes ... but I think in England you see more, because the people ... surround you ... the people are in town ... they are mixed with you”*** (Kleber).

He also talked about how the media in Brazil enabled people, including himself, to ‘build a picture’ about what life was like in Britain. However when he came to Britain his construct of what Britain was going to be like came ‘face-to-face’ with if not Britain, then parts of Britain that he had not expected to find.

***“In Brazil ... I think the TV make in our minds ... that Brazil is shit, (while) Europe is much better, everything’s perfect, and it’s not... The country (the UK) is much richer than us, the public service is much better, but it’s not perfect ... (when) I went to London, everyone who go to London for first time say, Jesus ... I’m not in London, I thought it was much better, because London, from TV or from papers ... you just know the museums and stuff and everything is beautiful, and then you get there and you see London’s got really, really poor areas, and then you say, no, that’s not happening, I’m not in London”*** (Kleber).

Marta, on the other hand, appeared to be largely unaware of any direct relationship she holds with UK society and its cultures. This is possibly because she appears to live out her daily life here surrounded by other native Poles, so much that she sometimes forgets she is living in Britain:



***“every day I listen Polish language, in my work, on the streets ... shopping, everywhere are Polish people”*** (Marta).

Rather, she talked about her relationship with UK society in terms of an economic opportunity. She thought that life in the UK was much easier than in her native Poland:

***“easier to get job and make money”*** (Marta).

This is because in Poland rates of unemployment are high and even those in employment find it hard to manage their disposable income to buy their own home, or go on holiday every year, whereas here in the UK Marta has the opportunity to undertake paid employment at rates of pay that outstrip pay expectations in her native Poland, which empowers her as a consumer and allows her to act like the fellow Poles she describes:

***“they can buy what they want, they can go everywhere”*** (Marta).

The bubble of ‘Polishness’ that Marta appears to be surrounded by is produced by the sheer weight of Polish migrants living in the UK. But her sense of living in her own culture, of separateness from UK society and its cultures may also be influenced by the feeling that the UK offers few long terms opportunities for her:

***“(It) is no our place here in England, because we cannot do what we really want, or is very hard ... to aim (to do what we would like to do) ... You don’t***

***work in your (chosen) profession, but you have money to do what you want”***

(Marta).

### **Forms and Levels of Agency**

- European Union Citizenship

Although Kleber and Marta are both EU citizens, citizenship alone does not provide them with a ‘level playing field’ in terms of the forms and levels of agency they experience. Kleber’s Italian EU passport enabled him to enter, stay and work within any part of the EU without a visa, as well as granting access to public services and a right to vote in both local and European elections.

Marta’s ability to work, however, as an Accession 8 (A8) EU citizen, was restricted to the UK, the Republic of Ireland or Sweden. Despite this, her EU citizenship provided her with a major form of agency here in the UK in that it enabled her to access structures of social provision and the job market. As previously identified, it also supplied her with a form of agency within education, enabling her to study ESOL in further education, fee-free (see Relationship with Education).

Kleber’s EU citizenship also made it far easier for him to study in the UK, for although he had considered learning English in New Zealand, Australia and the USA, he came to the UK because there would be less ‘red tape’:

***“If I had gone to New Zealand I should (have to) apply for visa and ... go to school every day just to have a visa to stay there, and perhaps in six months***

*... if I want to stay ... I would not be able to ... because my visa should expire ... I come to England only for that actually ... (because) if I had to stay here longer I could” (Kleber).*

- Education

Education provided both Kleber and Marta with the opportunity to learn and refine their spoken and written English. Kleber also thought of education as a ‘place’ where he could meet people and make friends:

*“I think the greatest points in the college was to talk with friends ... I met my best friend there” (Kleber).*

For Marta education proved a flexible form of agency in that she could ‘juggle’ her studies with work commitments.

- Language

Learning English proved a valuable skill for Kleber. On returning home to Brazil he was offered a position as a Civil Engineer on the basis that he could speak English and had spent time working abroad, while Marta believed that proficiency in English was key to the opening of new employment opportunities, not only in the UK, but also in her native Poland:

*“English is most important today to find good job, even in Poland” (Marta).*

- Paid Employment

Having access to paid employment provided both Marta and Kleber with agency to earn money with which to support their lives here in the UK.

For Marta it was the promise of work that provided the impetus for her migration, whilst the stability of regular paid employment made it possible for her to establish her life here and to plan toward enhancing her employment prospects via education in a way that would not be possible in her native Poland:

***“in Poland (even) working ... full time ... it’s very hard to pay all bills. It’s stupid ... here you can go to college working part time and live”*** (Marta).

Kleber also understood paid employment as a way of experiencing a very different kind of life from that which he had experienced before in Brazil:

***“I work(ed) in a bar, I never work in bar in Brazil, so ... I’m making my history ... making friends ... living different things than I will live in Brazil”*** (Kleber).

- Friends

Having a close friend allowed Kleber the agency of having someone to share his thoughts, his interests and his activities, while for Marta a network of Polish friends had been a key form of agency. She travelled to the UK with a Polish friend, a friend in Poland provided her with the name of a friend here in Nottingham who advised them how to look for work (by introducing them to

the job centre, etc.) and once at work it was a Polish friend who told her about the language courses at college.

- An Imagined Reality

Kleber spoke about an imagined reality, a set of ideas, concepts and constructs (that fed from discourses in the Brazilian media) with which he drew some kind of cognitive hypothesis about what life was like in the UK. However, this hypothesis about life in the UK proved to be very different to what he experienced when he arrived here.

- Travel

Marta has been able to take advantage of cheap airfares to travel to and from her native Poland, making returning home to see relatives, for holidays and even for an emergency, relatively quick and inexpensive.

- The Internet

The internet has also provided Marta with agency. She and her friend booked their flights and accommodation through a website before they came. She is able to get internet fares for air travel and she also communicates with her Polish boyfriend through the internet.

## **6.2 Asylum Seekers**

The voices of Rashid and Telan were chosen to represent the five participants of this investigation who were identified as asylum seekers. Each of the five had travelled from their native countries to seek asylum in the UK. Each was undertaking ESOL classes at a college of Further Education while waiting for their applications to proceed through the UK legal system.

### **Rashid**

Rashid is 20 and came to the UK from Afghanistan. He's been living here in Nottingham for three years now and came to the UK because his life was in danger in Afghanistan. His father had originally fought with the Mujahideen against the Russians, but when the Taliban came to power they kidnapped him and Rashid's brother and took them to fight for them. During the war they were both killed, but when the new government came to power they wanted to arrest and imprison members of Rashid's family for supporting the Taliban. They were searching house-to-house to catch them, so at that point Rashid left his family and his home and came to England. When he arrived in the UK it was very hard for him because he didn't know anyone; he couldn't communicate and found it hard to find anyone to make friends with. To start with he was housed in Wolverhampton with other people from Afghanistan, but they were older than him and from a different ethnic group to him. Because they were bullying him the people from the National Asylum Support

Service transferred him to a house in the St Ann's area of Nottingham where he met two guys, also from Afghanistan, who are now his best friends. He feels lucky that he made such friends because they helped him with so many things, like how to use a bus and a supermarket, through to helping him with his social worker and introducing him to the idea of studying at college. When he first arrived in the UK he was introduced to a solicitor who helped him with his application for asylum before being interviewed by people from the Home Office. ***"In May 2003, the Home Office refused my court (application for Asylum) ... I appealed for High Court ... and I'm still waiting, I'm waiting, for two and half years for my decision"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Rashid p6). It's been very hard for him to wait such a long time without knowing what's going to happen. In the meantime, he thinks it's important that he does something constructive with his time. Currently he says: ***"I'm ... trying hard to learn English, because I need (to learn) ... if I want to live here (in the UK) ... and ... do something for my future"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Rashid p7). ***"I (am) interested in (becoming an) electrician"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Rashid p1) and hopefully he will start studying toward that next year or maybe the year after that.

When he speaks of Afghanistan he says: ***"Here and Afghanistan is totally different ... (the) culture and the lifestyle ... in Afghanistan (is) as you've never seen ... Mostly people are uneducated people and they don't think about other people's life, rather ... their own lives, because the only thing they think (of) is the power, they need the power, everywhere and everything they want to do's with power ... Here ... you can communicate with people, you don't have to argue ... or if you want to argue it's not going to be a fight at the end of this. If***

***you do the same arguing in Afghanistan you will be killed, or you will be tortured by the person you are arguing with***” (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Rashid p3). He thinks that religion in Afghanistan is also different to what it is here. In Islamic countries people have to pray and they have to fast, but here people have got the choice to do so or not, and he thinks this is a lot of freedom for people, which is why people are not generally religious. Another big difference is the relationships between men and women. In Afghanistan women are covered: ***“when I saw a ... woman, or ... girls, I couldn’t see their faces”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Rashid p8), and men and women are also separated: ***“In my Country ... women are not allowed to sit with men ... they can’t even communicate to each other”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Rashid p8). Men and women are certainly not allowed to express any feelings they might have for each other, unless they are married. Here in the UK Rashid can see and talk to people whether they be male or female, and he thinks that it’s better being to be able to mix; if he hadn’t got away from Afghanistan he would be a much shyer person than today, especially when talking to women. On the other hand Rashid says: ***“I’m a Muslim, I have to do as my religion says, but unfortunately I don’t find it easy to do here ... because (as a Muslim) you don’t have to see ... women and ladies faces or their bodies, as you can see everywhere (here) ... and you can’t, stare your eyes from them, it’s very difficult for me to cope with this kind of situation”*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Rashid p7). It is also difficult for him and his friends to worship in Nottingham. They are Shiite Muslims and although there are Mosques for Sunni Muslims in the city, there is no Shiite Mosque. Sunnis would allow them to come to their Mosque and pray if they wanted, but Sunni worship is different to Shiite worship, so they wouldn’t attend. Because of this



they prefer to pray together or at college, where they have been given a special prayer room to do so.

Afghanistan is a very different country to here, that's obvious to Rashid, but he has also noticed that there are differences between people and places here in the UK. The people he tends to talk to when he is not at college are people in and around where he lives in St Ann's. They are not originally from England, but come from different parts of the world, like Jamaica, or countries in Africa or Asia, and they communicate using a kind of street language that sounds a lot like what you hear in rap music. But when he's visited other parts of the city where there are more English people he has noticed that the language used is a more traditional form of English, more polite, more formal perhaps. This is interesting for him because what he has seen in St Ann's and other parts of the city is that people are not very polite to each other at all, they are more likely to swear and talk aggressively to each other. So it's very hard for him to know which type of English he should speak. If he talks how the teachers at college teach him to speak on the street, people think he is stupid and ask, "Why are you talking like this?" If he uses words or phrases from the street language in the classroom, his teachers and classmates students think it's funny and ask, "Why are you talking like this?" He finds it very confusing.

Rashid says: ***"I'm happy (here) because I'm safe here and I can study" ... "I don't care about other people, whoever they think I am, where I come from, or what religion I am, because it's free, no one can discriminate me"*** (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 4, Rashid p4-7). He feels safe, he can talk to

whoever he wishes to, he can study and work toward doing something productive with his life, no one can threaten him or hurt him because his rights are protected by the law, and that's a great freedom. What he is not happy about is his situation, waiting for a decision on his application for asylum from the High Court, which means that he can't do things he would like to do, like take a part time job or live somewhere other than Nottingham. His only choice at the moment is to stay in the city and attend college, and he doesn't have much control over that either: ***“from September there will be a changes ... it won't be available to continue going on courses, like English courses, or any other courses”*** ... ***“the government arrange to no more free courses for people who came from different countries”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Rashid p1-2), so it's looking like he won't be able to continue his studies. He thinks it's really important that he continues with his courses because if he is to achieve anything in this country he needs to improve his English and learn things that will enable him to get a job in the future. If he can't study he won't be able to speak to people, he won't be able to learn anything: ***“I need to improve my English ... I need to achieve something ... I still need to come to college to do these things. If not I won't be able to ... speak to someone or even to achieve anything”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Rashid p2). He will be left with nothing to do but sit and wait for his appeal to be heard, just sitting and hoping. Right now these courses are all he has, so he is trying to get help: ***“I just want to get some help from my tutors, from my social workers, or ... even my solicitor”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Rashid p7), to see if they can argue his case and let the people in charge of these things know how important these courses are to him.

## Telan

Telan is a 26-year-old Kurdish man who came to the UK from Iran. In Iran he had worked as a smuggler, smuggling contraband goods, such as alcohol, cigarettes or anything else people wanted to buy but couldn't get across the Iranian-Iraqi border. It was illegal and alcohol in Iran is of course 'haram' – not allowed under Islamic law – but it was worth it because he could make good money. One night he and the friend who he worked with were crossing the border back to Iran with their merchandise when they came across a small group of people walking along the same path as them. The people said to them, "We are Iranian, we want to go to Iran, do you know about the paths across the border? Could you lead us?" Telan and his friend quickly determined that these people were carrying goods of their own and as they were going the same way an agreement was struck, that they would guide them across the border. However, after they had walked for half an hour or so the people suddenly turned on Telan's friend. He was shocked, it was so sudden: two of them grabbed him, another killed him with his hands, just like that. The other two tried to grab Telan as well, but he struggled free before they had a firm hold of him, then he ran and kept running until he could run no further, till he collapsed breathless, but it was OK because he had lost them. When he got home to his village he went straight to his father and told him everything that had happened. His father told him to wait at home and not to go outside the village while he went to find out what had happened. His father was gone for some time. When he returned he told Telan that the Police had found the body of his friend and that his friend's father blamed him

for his son's death. Because of this his friend's father had told the police that Telan was working for the Iranian Communist party, smuggling illegal literature across the border into Iran, which unlike the usual goods he smuggled, could carry an indefinite prison sentence, if he were lucky that is. Telan's father said to him, "You can't stay here anymore, it's not safe, they are already looking for you. You must go somewhere else, somewhere safe, somewhere away from here." And so it was, Telan's father arranged for him to travel over the border to Turkey. In Turkey he found a people smuggler who agreed to take him to Europe. He wasn't able to tell him which country he would take him to, but he agreed that it would be a European country where he could seek asylum and where he would be safe. For this he paid the people smuggler \$9,000.

When he arrived in England some weeks later it was on the back of a lorry. Telan had travelled on lorries for his whole journey, crossing into mainland Greece from Turkey and then taking the long haul across the continent to the Calais-Dover ferry crossing, not that Telan had seen any of it as he was hidden in the back of an HGV amongst the boxes. Then, just like that, the driver opened the doors and shouted something he didn't understand. He staggered out into the early morning light and the driver drove off leaving Telan on an empty road. He walked until he came to a petrol station. He couldn't speak any English, but spoke the word he had been told to remember by the people smuggler to the girl working behind the till: "Free". The girl phoned the police, they came and he was taken to a police station where he was fed and allowed to shower; by that time even he thought he

smelt pretty bad. He stayed in a police cell overnight and then someone from Refugee Action arrived the next day to take him to an emergency house. Within a month he had met with a lawyer and had made an application for asylum with the help of an interpreter. The interpreter spoke his language, Farsi, but he was from Iraq, not Iran, so some of his words were Arabic, which Iranian Farsi doesn't have, but they got through it OK and after an hour and forty-five minutes Telan was asked to sign a written statement, and so he did. It was only later when someone asked him whether the interpreter had read his statement back to him that he realised that the interpreter could have misinterpreted what he said to the lawyer. When his application for asylum was heard in court it was turned down, so Telan asked his solicitor to appeal because his statement was not accurately interpreted and he didn't know this because the interpreter hadn't read his statement to him before he signed it. The solicitor wrote a letter of appeal and sent it to the Home Office, but they did not believe him. He wanted to appeal again but his solicitor said, ***"sorry I can't appeal for you ... because Home Office not paying for you"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Telan p2). ***So Telan lost all the things he used to get while he was waiting for his case to be heard. "After six months ... I refuses any help ... my voucher, and my home, I'm homeless now. Sometime some of my friends he said, we come to my house, some time I sleep in the street, sometimes I sleep in the Sneinton (night shelter)"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Trevor p2). From then on he had to register at the police station: ***"Every month I have a sign in the police station ... a lot of people when they ... sign ... in the police station, police arrested and taken to detention centre, he want send back to his country"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Telan p6) ... ***"Always I scared about the police ... my body shaking, I'm scared ... because***

*I'm thinking maybe ... arrest me ... take me to Detention Centre*" (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 4, Telan p4) from where he would be repatriated, sent home to Iran. Telan was attending college while he was awaiting his decision. He wanted to study: *"I would like to go to study, firstly for my English, if my English is got better I want learning for, to go into university, and I would like ... (to) work for myself ... (as a) journalist, or engineer"* (EA Interviews, Round 2, Group 4, Telan p3), but he can't do that now, all those dreams were gone, just like that.

He feels lucky that he has some friends who know his situation and try to help: *"I have a lot of people, English people ... and two, three Kurdish people, he know I'm refuses everything ... (they) give ... me money sometime and helping me"* (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Telan p7). Also the *"Refugee Forum, give ... food to people ... and £10 a month ... to homeless people"* (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Telan p7) who have had their application for asylum declined and have lost their benefits and their homes. One friend let him move in with him in Derby for a while, but it was very risky for his friend as he was on benefits, so every time someone official came around to his house Telan would have to disappear. It was a huge help for him though, because without his help he would have been living on the streets. When he got to Derby he tried to resume his ESOL studies at the local college, but the people there said they couldn't let him onto the course unless he had a letter with his name and address on it. Telan told them his situation, that he didn't have any means of support and asked them if they would give him a chance to study, but they said they were sorry, they couldn't do anything: no paperwork, no study. He learnt that without refugee status you can't do

anything in this country. When an individual is awarded refugee status they can do anything they want to: they can study, they can get a job, and they have free time to take up hobbies. But without refugee status Telan knows you can't do any of these things. He doesn't understand why the Home Office won't just give him refugee status because if he had the 'paperwork' he could get a National Insurance number, he could work, he could pay tax, he wouldn't need to be reliant on benefits. But he thinks this won't happen, he thinks this country just wants to send asylum seekers back to where they came from and they want to call it 'voluntary return', but Telan knows it's not their choice. First they get sent to a detention centre and then they get sent home. He thinks that people here don't know what it's like in his country. In Iran there are is no support for people, people just work and look after their own interests: ***"Not any benefit in Iran for people ... most people going to work, find work for itself, never in my city you find one factory"*** (EA Interviews, Round 1, Group 4, Telan p8). It's poor; he doesn't want to go back to that. If he can't get refugee status in the UK he wants to try elsewhere: ***"I want to move this country, go to another country ... At the moment I have a application form to going to Canada ... I think it will be safe"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Telan p11). He thinks it will be safe for him there and as he already speaks a little English it would be easier for him to adapt: ***"I speaking a little now English, if I'm going to another European country like France or Spain or Germany or Holland, it's not easy, it's a different language"*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Telan p11).

In the meantime he has a job; I can't tell you where he is working because it's 'cash in hand' and he doesn't want anyone to know about it. He's running a

shop, working on the till, serving customers, putting the stock out, pricing the goods, everything really. The downside is he has to work ninety hours a week, for which he is paid a straight £200. It's not what he wants to do and it doesn't make him feel very good knowing he is paid so little for so many hours, but what can he do? He doesn't have the necessary paperwork to get the kind of job where he would work forty hours a week for the minimum wage and get two days off to do the things he would like to do, so he works ninety hours a week for £200. It's nothing for him: he has to pay rent to his employer, £60 a week for a bedroom in a shared house. His lunch costs him £4 a day, and then he smokes. He buys illegal cigarettes because although English cigarettes are better quality they are too expensive for him. He knows it's not a good situation to be in, but what are his options? ***“Without the State you can't say anything, you can't have a hobby, because you just thinking about your work, you're thinking about your boss never be(ing) angry with you, take you out of that job ... if you have (refugee status from the) State you not scared of that, the benefit pay you ... when you have a State, no ones ask you for anything, if you want to find a part-time job you show your State (paperwork) and the guy invite you, but if you not have anything they ... doesn't give you any job”*** (EA Interviews, Round 3, Group 4, Telan p10). If he had paperwork Telan could do everything he wants: study, work, do what he wants with his free time, but without it he can't, he can't say anything, he can't have time off work, he just has to go to work and hope his boss doesn't give his job to someone else. He knows it's not good, that it's no kind of life, but without paperwork, what can he do?



## **Discussion (Asylum Seekers)**

### **Migration to the UK**

Both Rashid and Telan migrated to the UK to seek asylum from repressive regimes in which they feared for their lives. However they can also be seen to have made significant journeys, which involved the crossing of numerous national borders to arrive in the UK and claim asylum. Their journeys can also be seen as movements from poorer regions of the world towards one of the richest regions in the world.

### **Relationship with Education**

Rashid and Telan's relationships with education appeared to be two-fold. Firstly they offered them the opportunity to learn, develop and practise their English, and they were both enrolled on ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses. Secondly they both believed that education would provide them with a link to the kind of life they would like to live if their applications for asylum were granted. It enables them to consider the possibility of a future in the UK and what that future might entail:

***"I'm ... trying hard to learn English, because I need (to learn) ... if I want to live here (in the UK) ... and ... do something for my future"*** (Rashid).

***"I (am) interested in (becoming an) Electrician"*** (Rashid).

***“I would like to go to study, firstly for my English, if my English is got better I want learning for, to go into university ... I would like ... (to) work for myself ... (as a) journalist, or engineer”*** (Telan).

### **Relationship with the State**

Until he receives a final, definitive decision on his application Rashid will be caught within what appears to be a paradoxical relationship with the State. On the one hand, his application for asylum has been ‘drawn out’ by the processes and protocols of the legal system, especially since he appealed to the High Court after his initial application was denied in 2003:

***“in May 2003, the Home Office refused my court (application for Asylum) ... I appealed for High Court... and I’m still waiting, I’m waiting, for two and half years for my decision”*** (Rashid).

On the other hand, his residency in this country, his housing, his living expenses, his access to education, legal aid, social services, health provision, etc. are all completely dependent upon the State. And such dependency, effectively waiting in the foyer to see if he is going to be allowed to ‘join the club’ or asked to return home, disturbs him profoundly. Waiting and wondering for such an extended period of time is difficult. But what makes it worse is that this relationship with the State already serves to position him side by side with society; he has friends, pastimes, a life, a present but not a future, or at least not one he is sure of. And the life he does lead does not allow him autonomy over what he does or where he goes, for he just has to content himself with study and Nottingham while he waits.

Telan's relationship with the State also frames the rest of his experiences here in the UK and his problems started when his appeal against the Home Office's initial refusal of his asylum application was declined in court. The upshot of this was that the State withdrew its support, therefore severing him from the kinds of social provision that he had enjoyed until that point:

***“After six months ... I refuses any help ... my voucher, and my home, I'm homeless now. Sometime some of my friends ... some time I sleep in the street, sometimes I sleep in the Sneinton (night shelter)”*** (Telan).

Through this experience Telan realised a very different relationship with the State to that which he had experienced while his application was being processed:

***“Every month I have a sign in the police station ... a lot of people when they ... sign ... police arrested and taken to detention centre ... send back to his country” ... “Always I scared about the police ... my body shaking ... because I'm thinking maybe ... arrest me ... take me to detention centre”*** (Telan).

### **Relationship with UK Society and Cultures**

Clearly the relationships that Rashid and Telan experience with the State serve to affect the forms and levels of agency they are able to draw upon when interacting with and within UK society and its cultures. However, this might also serve to explain why Rashid appears to be something of a

spectator who looks in on UK society and its cultures and compares and contrasts it to his past life in Afghanistan.

***“Here and Afghanistan is totally different ... in Afghanistan ... they don’t think about other people’s life, rather ... their own ... the only thing they think (of) is ... power, they need ... power, everywhere and everything they want to do’s with power ... Here ... you can communicate with people, you don’t have to argue ... or if you want to argue it’s not going to be a fight at the end of this. If you do the same arguing in Afghanistan you will be killed, or you will be tortured by the person you are arguing with”*** (Rashid).

Another difference he talked about was religion, attitudes to religion and the part religion played in normative behaviours in his native Afghanistan at the time he left. As a Muslim whose family was closely involved with the Taliban movement, Rashid was used to a life where women were segregated from men, physically, verbally and visually:

***“In my country ... women are not allowed to sit with men ... they can’t even communicate to each other, they can’t say any of their feeling to each other”***  
(Rashid).

***“when I saw a ... woman, or ... girls, I couldn’t see their faces”*** (Rashid).

Therefore, in coming to the UK, he experienced a world that, in its proliferation of secular and liberal values, was completely different to his past experiences in Afghanistan, and as such served to challenge his identity as a Muslim:

***“I’m a Muslim, I have to do as my religion says, but unfortunately I don’t find it easy to do here ... because (as a Muslim) you don’t have to see ... women and ladies faces or their bodies, as you can see everywhere (here) ... it’s very difficult for me to cope with this kind of situation”*** (Rashid).

Although, despite thinking that there was a lack of religiosity in the UK, he also recognised that this represented people’s freedom to choose whether to pursue a religious life, rather than having one imposed on them by society.

He also recognised differences in the culture of spoken language. Where he lived in the St Ann’s area of the city people spoke to him in a kind of ‘street language’ that was the result of a mix of languages from Africa, Asia and the Caribbean. He noted that this ‘street language’ differed from the kinds of language he heard spoken at the college and in areas of the city where there were less migrant peoples.

Telan’s relationship with the State also brought about a change in the relationship he experiences with UK society and its cultures. Denied state provision, denied a home and a voucher for food and expenses, he can choose either to return to the country he fled from or live a life outside of the provision and protection of the State. And the choice Telan made, to become an illegal immigrant rather than be repatriated, served to disempower him further for it served to push him underground into another society, another culture – that of the illegal immigrant: a culture with its own rules and its own set of problems. And for Telan this meant working illegally, 90 hours a week

for £2.22 per hour, and then renting a room off his employer to sleep in at night. But without the protection of the State, without recourse to ‘the minimum wage’ or a 40-hour working week, without anywhere else to go, he found himself ‘bonded’ to the terms set out by his employer:

***“Without the State you can’t say anything, you can’t have a hobby, because you just thinking about your work, you’re thinking about your boss never be(ing) angry with you, take you out of that job ... if you have (refugee status from the) State you not scared of that, the benefit pay you ... if you want to find a part time job you show your state (paperwork) and the guy invite you, but if you not have anything they ... doesn’t give you any job”*** (Telan).

Avoiding the police, living as an illegal immigrant, being dependent upon his employer, may all appear to us to be risky ways to live, but even in this kind of life position Telan is closer to the kind of society he wants to live within:

***“Not any benefit in Iran for people ... most people going to work, find work for itself, never in my city you find one factory”*** (Telan).

This life also provides him with time to think about other countries he might go to, other chances:

***“I want to move this country, go to another country”... “At the moment I have a application form to going to Canada ... I think it will be safe”*** (Telan).

## **Forms and Levels of Agency**

- Application for Asylum

Although Rashid had been waiting a significant period of time for the High Court appeal to the decision of the Home Office to decline his application for asylum, he has been awaiting this in this country. Therefore, although this has kept him in limbo, it is arguably a kind of agency that has kept him resident in the UK, and offers him hope that he may yet be granted refugee status. Telan also had to wait for his application to be heard through the courts, and while he waited he was given accommodation and a voucher for his living expenses, however as soon as his application was declined this form of agency ended.

- The State

Although Rashid and Telan may feel it is the State that has blocked their applications for asylum, the State is also responsible for providing them with a wealth of agency. This has included access to public services, housing, living expenses and legal services, and it has also effectively extended their stays in the UK. However, because the State plays 'door-keeper' to their aspirations to join society as economically active, self-supporting migrants, they live in a condition of complete dependency upon state provision. Telan's circumstances demonstrate the level of this dependency, in that when his access to the provision offered by the State was removed (when the State refused to continue funding his legal fees once the courts had declined his application for asylum):

***“sorry I can’t appeal for you ... because Home Office not paying for you”***

(Telan).

he was left without a home, without a voucher for living expenses and without access to public services.

- Residency

Residency, and the hope that it will be made permanent, provides Rashid with a place where he feels safe, a place where he can work towards a new life:

***“I’m happy (here) because I’m safe here and I can study” ... “I don’t care about other people, whoever they think I am, where I come from, or what religion I am, because it’s free, no one can discriminate me”*** (Rashid).

On the other hand, the terms of his residency are restrictive, at least till a decision is made on his application for asylum, which may mean he is asked to leave the UK, so his options are limited to activities determined by the State (to go to college and stay in Nottingham while he waits).

- The Illegal and the Black Economies

In finding himself without the agency of the State and its provision, Telan reverted to another form of agency, the agency of those who are empowered by a total lack of power: the power to disregard the rules and move into the ‘black economy’. Yes, this left him open to exploitation from his employer who clearly capitalised on his predicament, but it also buys him both an



existence and time to think about what he might do, or where he might go next.

- Friends

Friends have been an important form of agency to both Rashid and Telan. They were responsible for introducing Rashid to the college, where he learned to speak English, they helped him to find a social worker, and they are the people he shares his life with here in the UK. Friends might not have been able to help Telan's asylum application, but he appears to have made friends, both fellow Kurds and British citizens, who have been able to give him some form of agency in terms of providing him with help, both with money and with accommodation:

***"I have a lot of people, English people ... and two, three Kurdish people, he know I'm refuses everything ... (they) give ... me money sometime and helping me"*** (Telan).

- Education

Rashid and Telan both understand education to be a valuable form of agency, in that it promises to provide them with a way of gaining linguistic competency and qualifications that will help them find work if and when they are to be granted asylum, and the opportunity to act autonomously within UK society. However, although their status as asylum seekers allows them to study, it allows them little power over their ability to study onward and upward. Rashid described how his access to education is dependent upon government policy:

***“from September there will be a changes ... it won’t be available to continue going on courses, like English courses, or any other courses” ... “The government arrange to no more free courses for people who came from different countries” (Rashid).***

Telan’s move to illegal immigrancy served to sever his access to education completely.

- Help from Professionals

Possibly due to his sense of powerlessness, Rashid appears to actively seek support from those professionals who he comes into contact with, as if he were himself a cause that needs support:

***“I just want to get some help from my tutors, from my social workers, or ... even my solicitor” (Rashid).***

- Refugee Organisations

Telan spoke of the help he received from refugee organisations. They helped to place him in accommodation when he first arrived in this country, and when he was no longer eligible to receive state provision they were also a source of some basic support:

***“Refugee Forum, give ... food to people ... on Saturday for one week, and £10 a month ... to homeless people” (Telan).***

They also provided him with a place to meet people, fellow nationals, people in the same situation, a place to swap stories and experiences, and a place to give and receive advice.

- Language

Rashid and Telan spoke of learning English as an asset for the future, whether in terms of a life in the UK:

***“I need to improve my English ... I need to achieve something ... I still need to come to college to do these things. If not I won’t be able to ... speak to someone or even to achieve anything”*** (Rashid).

or as a form of agency in other English speaking countries, should he seek asylum elsewhere in the future:

***“I speaking a little now English, if I’m going to another European country like France or Spain or Germany or Holland, it’s not easy, it’s a different language”***  
(Telan).

## **Chapter Seven**

### **Movement and the Landscape**

The previous chapters looked at the narratives of those international migrants selected to represent each of the four groups of individuals who gave their 'voices' to this study. It considered their migrations, the relationships they realised with education, the State, UK society and its cultures, and the forms and levels of agency they were able to mobilise when acting and interacting with these structures. In this chapter I will consider both their journeys and the relationships they realised in terms of agents, agency and the scapes of migration (see 2.3 The Scapes of Globalisation).

#### **7.1 Migratory Agents and the Agency of Migration**

One thing each of the international migrants held in common was that the UK represented a destination, a physical 'place' that each had arrived at after having travelled considerable distances by a variety of means. Another was that in migrating to the UK, each acted as an agent – of their personal aspirations, their circumstances and of migration itself – and in doing so experienced the act of migration as a sequence of events in which they utilised the forms and levels of agency they were able to bring to bear upon the events and experiences their journeys entailed.

For Bourdieu (1990) people, like things, are situated in and related to 'place': both individuals and groups reside or find themselves inhabiting particular places at particular times, within which they understand and experience various and particular relationships and abilities to act. This relationship with place, what Bourdieu (1999) would term 'habitus', suggests that international migrants would experience varying and variable forms and levels of agency when acting and interacting within the UK. However because agency in international migration is bound together by the sheer range, weight and variety of cultures, forms, languages, laws, ideas, ideologies, etc. of international migrants themselves it is too fluid, too flexible and too difficult to define or determine into a single structural concept, even globalisation itself (see 2.3 A Web of Agency). As such, we must look at the web of actions and interactions experienced and acted upon by international migration as a fluid form of agency that expands and constricts to enable a world of differing possibilities with and within the topology of global scapes described by Appadurai (1996) (see 2.3 The Scape of Globalisation). This is apparent within the journeys the participants of this study made in coming to the UK and in their interactions with its cultural, social and bureaucratic systems and structures.

## **International Students**

The international students who travelled to the UK to gain educational qualifications with student visas travelled as agents of a discourse that seeks

to communicate and define UK education and its qualifications as an investment valuable enough to migrate to and pay for. They travelled toward such education with the agency of a sponsor who had agreed to underwrite their course fees and their UK living expenses if necessary, the legal requirements of travel to the UK (a passport, a visa) and a belief in their own intellectual abilities. They travelled toward a relative already resident in the UK who could offer them a place to live, as well as knowledge and practical expertise relating to life and living in the UK. In acting as such agents (of UK education) they were seeking to 'tap' into the agency of a further discourse, that UK academic qualifications would have value for onward study, future employment prospects and further migratory activities.

On arriving in the UK the international students would have faced a 'place' that represented the UK border and its controls. Be it an airport, a railway station or port, negotiation of this 'place' required that they provide the necessary documentation (passport, visa, letter from educational organisation, etc.): in essence that they were prepared and had brought with them a set of legitimatising documentation that they were already aware of.

Once settled the students were able to draw upon their familial agency for accommodation, for orientation, for help in negotiating social structures (health, education, etc.) and help in understanding how to go about doing things in a new society and culture (how to get on a bus, open a bank account or ask for directions, etc.). In addition to these functions their relatives also offered the agency of a friendly face, familiar food, a shared

language and stories of home. They were able to draw upon the agency provided by education, which endowed them with the timetabled activity of their studies and peers (other students); education provided a place in which they could be purposive and also provided a place to make friends. Within the terms of their student visas the international students were able to access the agency of being able to enter the UK job market, where they were able to undertake paid employment (albeit restricted to part time in term time). This ability to work not only enabled them to supplement their incomes, but also to experience the 'world of work' with its rules, routines and rituals and fellow workers who presented further opportunities to learn about UK society and its cultures and to make friends. However, access to paid employment is a double-edged sword: on the one hand they are able to supplement their incomes with wages earned from part time work (up to 20 hours per week in term time), but dependency upon this income leaves them little rest when added to travelling time and full time study (both in terms of time spent in class and homework).

Bringing these forms of agency together provides the international students with a fourth level of agency that served to dictate the form, if not level, of their agency moving forward into the future. If they can continue to incrementally succeed academically and if they can continue to meet their course fees they will be able to stay in the UK should they wish to do so. Achieving higher qualifications is considered by the international students to offer enhanced agency, not only in terms of employment 'back home', but also in terms of opportunities to migrate to other countries (by utilising the

perceived value of UK academic qualifications) and the ability to apply for UK working and residency visas. However, being able to remain in the UK might also provide opportunities for the international students to earn money, to live safely, to continue living with their relatives, or even to stay with those people with whom they have formed relationships and partnerships.

These forms of agency can be seen as linked in a linear trajectory of events and sets of experiences attached to those events, but they can also be understood as representing four distinct zones of migration in which the international migrants acted as agents and brought the various forms of agency they had to bear upon the experiences and circumstances they found themselves having to negotiate.

The first zone represents the levels and forms of agency the international students were able to bring to bear upon the negotiation of a set of circumstances that surrounded and underpinned their movement toward the UK. Successful negotiation of this zone required that they were able to draw upon a given level of agency (for them an intellectual ability), the things necessary to negotiate the bureaucratic practices, processes and procedures that underpin international travel (documentation, tickets, visas), sponsors able to demonstrate the ability to underwrite the international students' educational and living expenses if necessary, and sufficient funding for at least initial travel, accommodation and course fees.



The second zone represents a zone of arrival, a place or point at which the international students entered the UK, and the sets of physical, legal and bureaucratic obstacles and problems that they would have found there. Successful negotiation of this zone for the international students was intrinsically bound with the level of agency they utilised to navigate the first zone. If they were able to successfully pass through the second zone of migration it was because they had successfully met the requirements of zone one: enough funding, the necessary sponsor, a student visa and in the case of this study, a family member already resident in the UK.

The third zone represents the zone of residence, the place to which the international migrants arrived in order to take up some form of occupancy, occupation and activity; a place within which they lived and undertook activities to which they would apply their time and energies. For the international students of this study this place entailed living with a family or a family member who already had some level of prior knowledge about life in the UK, and time spent engaged in study and undertaking supplementary paid employment. The family setting provides a level of safety with which to negotiate new social and cultural meanings and ways of doing things while simultaneously providing familiarity in terms of repository of cultural meaning (language, food, media, etc.) from which they could draw.

Successful entry to and occupation of the third zone enabled the international migrants to enter into a fourth zone, the zone of aspiration: a place toward which the international migrants are able focus their existing agency; a place

to which they aspire as agents. For the international migrants this was a zone in which their studies, their achievements and their qualifications would be used in transaction of qualifications gained for some form of stability, be it a well paid job at home, the opportunity to migrate to another country or to continue to stay in the UK.

### **Spouses of UK Citizens**

For the Spouses of UK citizens the first zone, the zone of physical migration from their native countries to the UK, entailed them negotiating the bureaucratic practices and processes of international travel in terms of fares, tickets, timetables and visas. They travelled into and across that which was for spouses who participated in this study the significant distance of this zone, with sufficient funds to do so in the relative comfort of an aeroplane, toward a husband or a wife already known and already a citizen of the UK. This agency brought with it a sense of security, an understanding that they were not travelling toward the unknown but toward an individual and possibly a family who would love them, care for them and provide for them. They travelled across this zone with the promise of a home, of opportunity, of a new life, of love and all the things attached to a marital relationship, and through their marriages they also travelled with the promise of playing a part in society themselves: earning a living, having access to healthcare, to education, to benefits and eventually to citizenship in their own right.

To negotiate the second zone, the zone of arrival, the spouses, assuming they had successfully satisfied the necessary bureaucratic machinery of the Border and Immigration Agency, were reunited with their husbands and wives. For them success in the zone of arrival was dependent upon the necessary preparations prior to touch down, and these included their husbands and wives being able to demonstrate that they had a family home and access to sufficient funding to feed, clothe and house their new spouses. Therefore, from the point of their arrivals, which for the spouses of UK citizens who took part in the study was the airport, they were taken to their new homes by their husbands and wives who would not only be able to provide the agency of necessity (food, shelter, safety, etc.), but also a whole host of agency in terms of orientation, advice and expert knowledge relating to the particular UK culture and its relationship to UK society they now found themselves within and therefore part of.

In terms of the third zone, the zone of occupation, the spouses of UK citizens gained agency through the agency of their British husbands and wives and therefore to some extent became agents of their spouses' agency. If their spouses were of the same heritage then they were able to share language, food, customs and culture. If not, and if what they experienced was alien, then the habitus they faced had an isolating effect. A dominant aspiration amongst this group was the desire to work, which they were empowered to do as wives and husbands of British citizens, however they faced difficulties in finding employment that matched or built upon the forms and levels of skill and responsibility they had enjoyed in their native countries. Therefore the

agency they were able to bring to bear to negotiate the UK job market, and therefore their ability to contribute to the family unit or claim a level of independence, had not migrated with them when they journeyed to the UK; neither had their friends or their family. They tended to seek the company of countrymen or women in order to reference culturally specific resources such as language and food.

In terms of the fourth zone of migratory agency the spouses of UK citizens aspired to heightened levels of independence, either as UK citizens in their own right or as part of returning home to live with their families in familiar social and cultural surroundings. However, such agency would require that they were able to access and draw upon a given level of financial resources and therefore attaining this was a primary goal toward which their aspirations were aligned. In both cases, independence relied upon their ability to undertake better paid work or capitalise on a business opportunity.

## **EU Nationals**

The EU passport holders negotiated the first zone of migration with the agency of their European nationality, which legitimised their travel, employment and lives within the member states of the European Union. This physical agency, which served to enable them to identify themselves as individuals who would be able to move freely, engage in paid employment and be supported by the structures of state provision, was complemented by

research they were likely to have done about accommodation, employment and leisure activities in preparation for their journeys. To travel the EU nationals chose from a range of transport methods (road, rail, flight and ferry) and were also able to take advantage of an existing network of 'cheap flights' that has evolved to connect the cities of continental Europe. Therefore, although they travelled across the zone of migration with the legitimacy of their nationality and the knowledge that 'home' was a relatively short flight away, they travelled if not toward friends or family, then toward a set of social networks and structures that would serve to provide them with the opportunities to live, work and experience life here in the UK.

Their EU nationality also enabled them a relatively speedy negotiation of the second 'arrival' zone of their migration, as the wine-coloured covers of their EU passports served to legitimise their presence in the UK and therefore enabled them to pass the line drawn across the floor by the UK border and immigration controls with a minimum of delay. From here they were met by friends or family, or went about negotiating the British transport system to get to their intended destinations.

In terms of the zone of occupation, the third zone, the EU nationals appeared to cluster around service sector employment opportunities and attach themselves to diasporic clusters of their own countrymen and women with whom they could share a common language, foods and news from home. Their social networks might also include international migrants from countries other than their own, who they would meet through work or study, with whom

they could develop both language and shared understanding of UK society and the cultures they came into contact with. The key form of their agency was the ability to take paid employment as this not only allowed them to live in the UK, but also to have spare money to buy clothes, computers and cars, to take up leisure pursuits and to go on holidays. As agents they appeared largely unaware of the relationship they held with the State, in that the level of agency provided by the form of their agency, their EU citizenship, served as a vehicle that made it relatively easy for them to move, to work and to access services.

In terms of the fourth zone, the zone of aspiration, the EU nationals aspired to an incremental continuation of the forms and levels of agency they had realised as international migrant workers. Having been successful in finding paid employment and occupying very often a series of working roles, they aspired to build upon this form of agency by leveraging their opportunities to find better paid work (be it through social networking, work experience or qualifications) or to 'make money' by exploiting market synergies between the UK and their native countries. As such their occupation of the fourth zone can be seen as resting upon an entrepreneurial understanding of the opportunities possible through the mobilisation of the skills, abilities and resourcefulness they had utilised to negotiate life and work in the UK. This self-validating sense of confidence in their skills and abilities is in turn validated by the sense of successful consumption, which they understand as legitimate social action within UK society. Therefore the aspirations that flow from such are the aspirations to utilise their skills and abilities to maximise

their access to economic resources, for use in greater consumption of goods and services, which in turn serves to validate their power as consumers. Flowing from these is a contingency, which communicates the belief that having been successful in tapping into the economic resources of the UK they would be well prepared and might even aspire to tap into those of another country, which serves to lever a sense of identity with the concept of cosmopolitanism.

## **Asylum Seekers**

The asylum seekers negotiated the first zone of migration with economic agency: the funds necessary to pay to be transported, trafficked and smuggled across numerous international boundaries toward a nation state in which they intended to claim asylum. They travelled with their scars, their fears and their experiences, but in doing so they also travelled as a recognised and established cargo along established trade routes organised and administrated by established traders. They also travelled across zone one, migration, with the concept of asylum: the promise of a safer, stable and enriched life in a European country, a Western country, a richer country.

The second zone, the zone of arrival, saw the asylum seekers looking to find agency from their experiences, fears and anxieties, and their scars, both physical and emotional, which they sought to utilise as agency with which to engage with UK society and its systems. In response they were able to

realise various existing forms of social and legal agency that had aligned toward the growing numbers of asylum seekers that had found their way down the established trade routes. Therefore their experiences in the second zone were full of activity, as the administrative and provisionary structures of the State were mobilised to ensure that they were housed, fed, healthy and granted access to the necessary legal representation that would determine their claims for asylum.

Although their claims for asylum provided the asylum seekers with the agency to remain and live in the UK while their applications were processed, their ability to negotiate the third occupation zone of their migration was greatly limited. Their applications for refugee status served to stimulate the provision of resources that ensured they had food, were housed, and had access to health services and education; however the flip side of their occupancy was that they were not allowed to operate outside of the framework of provision. Most had been waiting prolonged periods of time – some years – but this was because their initial claim for asylum had been denied and they were awaiting the decisions of appeals they had lodged through the legal system.

This served to bring about a general feeling of 'limbo' in which the asylum seekers would await a decision that would lead to either an independent life in the UK or detention and repatriation. This general lack of agency had severe implications for the mental health of the asylum seekers. Furthermore, restrictions on their movement, activities and the requirement to regularly



register with an immigration officer, often at a police station, served to bring into being a feeling that they were imprisoned within a system awaiting judgement.

The fourth zone of agency for the asylum seekers represented the aspiration of independent and legitimate residency in the UK, with unrestricted access to its job market and structures of social provision. However the zone of aspiration for the asylum seekers entailed the assay of options that would flow from the refusal of their applications. The first option would be whether or not they had exhausted their rights to appeal, or to remain in the UK; the second would be whether they would accept repatriation and, if not, what kinds of agency they had to avoid it. One aspiration was to leave the UK to make a fresh claim in another European or North American country, although this would be difficult without paperwork or sufficient money to pay to be smuggled. If the aspiration was to remain in the UK until a solution came in the form of marriage to a UK citizen or a change in government policy, or help from friends, then the option was to become an illegal immigrant, running the risks of exploitation, poverty and crime.

## **7.2 The Agency of Migration**

Understanding the migration of the international students, spouses of UK citizens, EU passport holders and asylum seekers in terms of four distinct zones of migration suggests that these zones will be experienced and

negotiated differently by different groups. This is because each of the groups was able to bring different levels and forms of agency to bear upon the zones of migration, arrival, occupancy and aspiration.

## **Zone One – Migration**

The ability to access the first zone, the zone of migration, which each of the international migrants entered into in order to physically migrate across a number of national boundaries to reach the UK, required agency in itself. The minimum form of agency required to enter into and negotiate this zone was economic, therefore suggesting that in real terms, migration amongst the group of international migrants who took part in this study rested upon their ability to pay to travel. The level of this basic (economic) form will determine whether the migratory event undertaken by the migratory agent travels in the first class compartment of an aeroplane or lies hidden in amongst the goods in the back of a lorry, but this level is not economic in itself: it relies upon a second form of agency, legitimacy.

Legitimacy is a form of agency that establishes under what terms the individual is entitled or has a right to migrate across international territory into the boundaries of a nation state that is other than his or her own. The EU passport holders held legitimacy through their citizenship of EU member states, and an established transport infrastructure, designed to promote and profit from European mobility for business and leisure, provided them with

cheap, quick and efficient air travel. The spouses of UK citizens gained their legitimacy from their husbands and wives, however this legitimacy would have required higher levels of economic agency than the EU nationals, firstly because the husbands and wives had to be in a position to demonstrate they held or had access to the economic means with which to support their spouse, secondly because the couple would have to purchase a marriage licence, and thirdly because, at least in terms of those that took part in this group, the husbands and wives travelled 'long haul' from poorer parts of the world, and therefore their airfares would have been relatively expensive. The international students' legitimacy also involved a greater level of economic agency than the EU passport holders in that they had to travel long haul to get to the UK, but also had to have in place sufficient funding to demonstrate they would be able to meet their initial course fees and living expenses. Legitimacy for the fourth group of this study, the asylum seekers, was their ability to direct significant economic resources toward the act of migration; this legitimacy enabled them to negotiate this first zone without visas, without passports and without border controls. The third form of agency, social capital, serves to weave together the other forms and determine the nature of the habitus the international migrants experienced when occupying the first zone.

The EU passports holders inherited social capital by virtue of their birth into an EU nation state, which gave them legitimacy to travel across EU borders, to utilise existing travel hubs, and to tap into a European 'world view' that acknowledged the term, concept and geography of 'European' as a shared

culture to which they legitimately belonged, and therefore in which they legitimately had agency.

The social capital of the spouses who took part in the study was linked to the UK citizen husbands and wives, for it was they who provided the legitimacy and the resources that supported and sponsored their journeys through the first zone of migration. Although it was beyond the scope of the study to determine how, where or why they first gained this agency, the group could be split between those who shared the same heritage and language and those who entered zone one with the knowledge that they and their spouse were not able to communicate with each other in their native tongue. The social capital brought into play by the international students was not merely the ability to utilise their economic agency and legitimising sponsors to be educated in the UK, but also required that they were seeking to pitch their intellectual abilities against the UK academic system. This not only indicates that they already possessed a given level of experience within the academic systems of their native countries, but also that entering zone one represented the drawing together of agencies in a life plan that saw UK qualification as a means to an end. Of course, the asylum seekers would have drawn upon a wealth of social capital that enabled them to access the levels of economic agency necessary to fund their entry into zone one. However once they had entered the zone their abilities to influence or make decisions about their journeys, and even their lives, were greatly diminished. Having little or no agency to migrate by legitimate means (with passports and visas) they accepted becoming illegal immigrants, dropping under the radar of border

checks and immigration controls, but simultaneously disempowering themselves to dependency on people traffickers for the duration of the journey through the zone.

## **Zone Two – Arrival**

The ability to reach zone two, the zone of arrival, indicates that the international migrants had sufficient agency to successfully negotiate zone one, migration. However to negotiate the second zone, which in effect represented the gateway to the UK, they needed to draw upon the forms and levels of agency they held, were able to draw upon, had brought with them, or were travelling toward as a form of legitimacy.

Legitimacy can be understood as the basic form of agency in the second zone, as without some form of legitimising agency the international migrants would not be able to pass through UK border and immigration controls. The group with the least legitimising agency overcame their deficiencies, which might have stopped them entering the UK, by paying to be smuggled through the border controls on the back of heavy goods vehicles. At this point they were abandoned on a quiet road and left to wander until they were brought to the attention of the police, where they made the applications for asylum that were effective in empowering them with a form of agency that legitimated their presence in the UK through the State's obligation to grant asylum to those fleeing persecution. The group most empowered to cross the UK border were the EU nationals who inherited legitimising agency from their

parents, which effectively meant that they passed border and immigration controls by virtue of their EU passports. The legitimacy of the other groups, the spouses of UK citizens and the international students, can be understood as transactional. The spouses gained the legitimacy necessary to negotiate zone two through transaction with their UK husbands and wives (in the form of a marriage), while the international students passed through zone two because they had entered into a transaction with a UK educational establishment.

### **Zone Three – Occupation**

Having successfully negotiated migration and arrival the international migrants were faced with a zone of occupancy, the zone in which they would realise the kind of life they would live here in the UK. Within zone three 'legitimacy' provided a level of agency that framed the kinds of social actions and interactions the international migrants both made and were able to make. However this legitimacy can be seen as having various forms when mobilised onto the different areas across the domain of occupation in the UK.

#### **Place**

Different forms of legitimacy provided different groups with different levels of agency in terms of where individuals came to live. The international students and the spouses of UK citizens both lived with family members and therefore the place they occupied was both predetermined and had been established

by the ongoing occupation of that individual or family. The EU nationals, on the other hand, were more likely to live in private rented accommodation that was shared with friends or with other international migrants. The asylum seekers lived in accommodation secured by social agencies, which was more often in poorer areas of the city. Unlike the EU nationals, who were responsible for paying their own rents, their ability to determine where they lived and who they lived with was limited.

### **Relatives**

The spouses and the international students were also able to benefit from the agency of their relatives: the spouses from their UK husbands and wives, the international students from their UK based family members. This effectively meant that they were able to draw a wealth of social capital from people who possessed a developed knowledge of the ways in which the part of UK society they experienced worked, and therefore helped them to negotiate this. The EU nationals tended to use social and friendship networks to the same effect, collaboratively negotiating an understanding of the way things worked and codifying it within a cultural language focused toward entrepreneurial opportunity. The asylum seekers also used a negotiated understanding of the way things worked built from interaction with other asylum seekers, be they countrymen or people experiencing the same sets of issues. However their agency differed from the entrepreneurial EU nationals as they were unable to legitimately tap into the economic resource of the job market; instead their network was more altruistic.

## **Paid Employment**

The ability to access paid employment in the UK was a form of agency that motivated each of the international migrant groups. The EU nationals were most active in the UK job market as they needed to work to support their lives here in the UK, although they tended to work in the service sector. The international students also worked to support their lives here in the UK, although doing so (even part time alongside full time studies) caused them to overstretch themselves. The spouses of UK citizens, perhaps indicating that they realised a greater sense of permanence in the UK, sought to lever their skills in an attempt to secure better paid work or pursue the kind of professions they worked within in their native countries. The asylum seekers, excluded from the job market, wanted nothing more than to be able to work legally, often stating their desire that they should be able to work while they awaited their decision.

## **Relationships with the State**

Another form of agency that framed the way in which the international migrants experienced the zone of occupation was the relationship they held with the State. The EU nationals appeared largely oblivious of a relationship with the UK state, instead understanding the European Union as a place in which their citizenship was universal. At the other end of the scale the asylum seekers were almost completely reliant upon state provision for their lives in the UK and yet saw this as a relationship that sought to restrict their freedoms. The spouses of the EU nationals and the international students, who made their way through the zone of arrival (zone 2) with legitimacy



gained from a transaction made with a UK citizen husband or wife or a UK educational establishment, in fact had made a transaction with the UK State. For the spouses this transaction entailed that they would be given leave to remain in the UK while they were married to their UK husband or wife for at least the period necessary for them to apply for citizenship in their own right. For the international students this legitimacy was bound within a transaction that allowed them leave to remain in the UK if they were able to demonstrate incremental academic success over time and pay their fees.

This poses a further level of agency: the currency enabled by the residency status of the migrants, as under the terms of their residency each category of international migrant realised different levels of agency. A primary indicator of this was access to the job market, which, bar the one student who was under 18, was a predominant concern of all those who took part in the study, although access to the structures of state provision such as benefits, education, health and housing were also important.

All the international migrant groups were able to access core services such as the police and the health service, although this almost certainly has had consequences for those who had moved to an illegal residency status. However, the ability to legally engage in paid employment can be linked to the level to which this grouping of migrants felt able to play an active and independent part in society that came before even language (which was not necessary if one worked with a fellow national who could speak English). For the international students it represented the ability to subsidise their living

expenses (which included course fees), although doing so had negative impacts upon their studies; for the spouses it represented the ability to meet people and gain a level of independence from their partners; for the EU nationals it was the opportunity to earn a living, which may also have presented more purchasing power than their native country, even if this was in Europe; and for the asylum seekers it represented the legal barrier between state dependency and the ability to move forward and make an independent life for themselves in this country.

This third level of agency describes the range of restrictions imposed upon different people from different kinds of backgrounds, and there is a marked difference between the levels of agency realised by the EU nationals, who appeared to have very little knowledge of any relationship they held with the UK State, and those who were monitored and administrated through their relationship with education (international students), a UK citizen (the spouses) and those seeking refugee status (the asylum seekers).

This clearly positions migrants as being engaged in a power relationship with the State that serves to describe the way people coming from different parts of the world experience different levels and forms of agency by virtue of their places of birth and their statuses within those places. Although the study has acknowledged that it failed to capture the voices of 'club class' migrants, who were unlikely to be studying in a college of further education, the categories it sampled show a distinct hierarchy of received agency.

## **Language**

A form of agency that was of equal importance to each of the groups was language. On a surface level English was the lingua franca and all the international migrants who took part in this study engaged with the UK and its social structures via the English language. However, this was far from universal: the EU nationals spoke of countrymen who lived and worked in the UK without having to learn English, relying instead on friends and colleagues to negotiate spoken and written English, and the asylum seekers also used networks to learn and negotiate language.

English also represented a way of communicating with other people who shared similar circumstances: a coming together of people from different nationalities to build, decipher and discern an understanding of UK society and its cultures. The individuals who were most motivated to improve their English were those who saw English acquisition as necessary for them to process in their life plans. The EU nationals understood English as a tool that would enhance their economic opportunities. The international students were required to demonstrate that their spoken and written English was sufficient for the purposes of their studies. The asylum seekers were motivated to learn English because it represented the language of the country they sought to live and work in, although they tended to find written English more difficult because of the requirement of adopting a different written script (a different alphabet).

The most isolated group, however, was that of the spouses who married their UK husbands with no shared language. These faced the reality of a life in which they were unable to communicate: unheard and unable to understand the world around them until they found someone who spoke their native tongues. This brings us to the second level of language use: native language. All of the international migrant groups drew agency from the ability to communicate with speakers of their native languages. This was easier for those with large numbers of their countrymen also resident in the UK such as some of the EU nationals, although the other groups were able to draw upon the clustering of people around college for the international students, or refugee organisations for the asylum seekers, and even the spouses were able to find fellow nationals in restaurants or community centres.

Therefore a fourth level of agency can be found within language, although it must not be forgotten that the majority of voices were enrolled on ESOL courses (English for Speakers of Other Languages) which they identified as important to their chances of integration in terms of the workplace, alongside the skills and qualifications that would enhance workplace opportunities.

### **Basic relationship with and within Society**

The relationships realised with the UK society and its cultures were predominantly as structural consumers of goods or services. The EU nationals held relationships with a job market that provided them with economic capital, which in turn empowered them as consumers of housing, goods and services. The international students held a relationship with their

host educational institutions and service sector part-time jobs, which provided them with opportunities to subsidise their living expenses, but at the cost of limiting their leisure time. The spouses had the agency of their UK husbands and wives, but tended to find themselves outside society unable to understand the points at which they could interact on an equal footing. The asylum seekers found themselves in a kind of quarantine in which they could see UK society and yet were denied the opportunity to take an active part in it.

No group was more likely than any other to have British friends, but instead relied upon other international migrants, and this was not merely due to language barriers, for even those whose native language was English found negotiating British culture fraught with meanings, assumptions and normative behaviours that differed from their native cultures. Even the spouses of UK citizens, who one might expect to make British friends through their husbands and wives, found it difficult to form close relationships with British people, either because their partners had few friends of their own or because of cultural differences. Rather, all groups tended to seek diasporic clustering of their own nationalities, where they could expect to find shared language and familiar cultural references such as food, shared meanings, assumptions, etc. The alternative to this was interaction with other international migrants, which relied upon spoken English mobilised to develop an understanding of British society and the cultures that surrounded them. For the EU nationals and international students whose residency relied upon the ability to find paid work or to achieve in their studies, this

engendered identification with cosmopolitanism. For the spouses of UK citizens and asylum seekers, both of whom aspired to spend at least a significant period of time (if not their lives) in the UK, this engendered identification with exclusion. For the spouses this was due to difficulties in integrating with British people, while for the asylum seekers this was due to problems in integrating socially.

Therefore a fifth level of agency is having access to people in similar circumstances, or those able to confer some level of help on the basis of understanding the individual's circumstances. People from one's native country are able to provide artefacts from home in terms of common cultural currency as well as language, and they might also share the same trajectory and be able to pass on valuable lessons learnt. People in similar circumstances from other countries are also able to help, although it is likely that they will be linked by the same language or English. This form of agency helps people to navigate a way through culture and society by use of stories, experiences and lessons learnt.

## **Zone Four – Aspiration**

Within the fourth zone (aspiration) it is possible to discern that the different levels of agency the different groups are provided with by their relative legitimacy have the effect of bringing into being different aspirations.

The EU nationals, fuelled by the reference to their own levels of success, aspire to focus their entrepreneurial skills toward economic opportunities, which are linked to the aspiration to understand and express themselves as workers and consumers of goods and services, with the belief that having already done it they will be well placed to migrate into another country and take advantage of economic opportunities.

The international students also identify with the concept of cosmopolitanism, although they have had to complement their main work – full time study – with paid employment, which has left them less time to enjoy leisurely pursuits. However, their aspirations relate to the agency they can gain from completing their studies, which will offer them greater opportunities to get better paid work in their native countries, or for use in further migratory events in the future.

The spouses of UK citizens aspired to a working 'career' in the UK that matched if not the kind then at least the level of paid work they did in their native countries. This communicated that they aspired to employment above and beyond the service sector working roles that the international migrant tended to occupy. It also indicated that they aspired to a level of independence from their UK citizen spouses, be it as an economic contributor to the relationship or as a way of securing monies to send home to relatives.

The asylum seekers aspired to gain legitimacy to remain in the UK and to act as citizens, in particular with reference to the ability to access the UK job market. If this was not allowed they aspired not to be repatriated to those countries from which they had spent significant economic and physical resources escaping. As such, they aspired to remain in the UK until another opportunity became available, even if this meant going underground to become illegal immigrants.

### **7.3 Movement and Scapes**

The previous chapter looked at the 'voices' chosen to represent those who agreed to take part in this study in terms of their migratory events, the relationships they realised with education, the State and UK society and its cultures, and the forms and levels of agency they were able to mobilise within these interactions. In this section I will consider these events, relationships and agency in terms of Appadurai's (1996) five scapes:

- The Ethnoscape: the scape produced by the movement of people, who together form a fluid and evolving facet of the global world we live within.
- The Technoscape: the global configuration of technology and its relationship to the growing reality that all technologies are increasingly fluid, rapid and persuasive in their abilities to permeate boundaries regions and continents.



- Financescapes: the scapes given form by the global activities of investments banks, money markets and stock exchanges, which speed finance around the world at the click of a mouse.
- The Mediascape: the distribution and capacity of the media to produce and disseminate information and images to ever growing audiences across the world.
- Ideoscapes: the scape produced through chains of images, terms and ideas, which serve to underpin and frame concepts such as identity, democracy, citizenship and sovereignty (see 2.3 The Scapes of Globalisation).

## **The Ethnoscape**

If one thinks of the UK as a single, separate and discrete place, international migrants can certainly be viewed as part of a landscape that may appear to be a fluid and evolving movement of people. However, if one looks at the UK as the latest point in a greater global landscape, one might consider international migration as a series of flows that indicate a series of purposive actions.

The EU nationals flowed into the UK to take advantage of a range of opportunities that were legitimised by the UK's membership of the European Union, and this was far from universal across the community. Citizens of the EU from Accession 8 countries had limited options in terms of migrating to

work. This legitimacy was also extended to individuals born outside of the EU whose parents are EU nationals, who were able to experience greater levels of migratory agency (legitimacy) than those who held passports/nationality of their native, non-EU countries alone.

The international students travelled to take advantage of UK education as a purposive act that sought to tap into the agency of UK qualifications. However, one must also consider that the student visa might also be utilised as a way of legitimising entry into the UK and it was interesting that the group of international students who took part in this study all had family already resident in the UK.

The spouses of UK citizens can be seen as an indication of the Ethnoscape in that they illustrate a world where people fluidly move across the world, meet people and fall in love. Although this is purposive movement in itself, questions must be asked about the movement of people from poorer areas of the world toward the relatively rich UK, especially when the people share neither a common ethnic heritage nor a common language with which to communicate.

The asylum seekers also followed a route that took them from a relatively poor part of the world toward a richer one. This is of course not to say that their claim for asylum was in any way invalid, only that they were sufficiently empowered to make a journey that targeted a region they had identified as

most purposive to their asylum, in opposition to those who flee with nothing more than their lives.

This suggests that the Ethnoscape may well be fluid and evolving, but its fluid and evolving nature might also communicate the purposive actions of individuals and groups that serve particular functions on social and economic levels. It is a reflexive targeting of richer areas of resources, in much the same way that globalising capitalism targeted areas where resources were cheaper.

## **The Technoscape**

Both the purposive movement of the international migrants and also their lives when here were supported by a global Technoscape. All took advantage of a global network that connects the world by air and by sea, with road and rail spans across almost every part of the inhabited world, and whereas all roads no longer lead to Rome, they do eventually lead to everywhere (Rome included). Underpinning this was a series of technologies that made such an infrastructure possible, which made the movement of people and goods a seemingly endless stream of movement.

Technologically enabled satellite TV and mobile telephone systems also made it possible for the international migrants to receive media from home and keep in contact with friends and family, at home in the UK and internationally. The internet also played a significant part in the experiences

of the international migrants. The international students and EU nationals used it to find out about opportunities and facilities in the UK, and when they came they also used it to communicate with friends and family at home and as a source of information about both home and the UK. The asylum seekers and spouses of UK citizens were less likely to have in depth use of the internet before they came, but they were keen to learn to use it to find news from home or research information here in the UK.

This suggests that the Mediascape was influential in keeping people in touch and keeping them abreast of events in their native countries. This meant that although distant, they were able to access the familiar relatively easily, keeping abreast of and in contact with events, ideas and experiences that were on the other side of the world, keeping them linked to a set of ideas and relationships in a way that could never have happened before the Technoscape.

## **Financescapes**

The Financescape, the scape given form by the global activities of investment banks, money markets and stock exchanges, of course played a significant part in the arrangement and operations of globalisation, and there are clearly groups for whom such a scape would be directly relevant (the political and economic elite). For those of us who fall into any other category the scape of global finance might look a hazy and distant land, however it is

important to remember that such a Financescape was a core component of the globalisation project (see Chapter Two – Times, People, Places), and one which produced and provided the terrain that reflexively attracted the global flows of migration from poorer countries to richer areas of the world. Of course more recent events have served to unearth the fallibility of global finance with effects that have yet to play out in terms of the changing canvas that is globalisation and our relationship with it.

The interviews unearthed little evidence of the international migrants using the Financescape and it would be wrong to infer that they were engaged in sending money home in manners suggested by the International Labour Organisation (see 3.1 International Migration: The Statistics). The evidence does indicate that the sample was either economically active or seeking to be (in the case of the asylum seekers), however this is related to the UK domestic economy and not the global Financescape.

## **The Mediascape**

The Mediascape, the capacity of the media to produce, distribute and disseminate information and images to ever growing audiences across the world, is evident in terms of the international migrants' use and utilisation of technologically enabled electronic forms of media. The narratives suggest, albeit to varying degrees, that the UK was familiar to the international migrants through sets of ideas and images communicated via the global

media. This not only framed concepts, ideas and fantasies related to what it is 'like' to live in the UK, but by extension, showed what 'life' would be like if a consumer of this information were to arrive in Britain.

The Mediascape could also be seen to work reflexively for the international migrants in that they were able to access images, language, news, entertainment and other forms of cultural information from their native countries via the technology of the Technoscape (satellite TV, internet and other electronic media). In this way it enabled them to communicate and actively produce, distribute and disseminate their own images, stories and ways of understanding life in the UK to networks of friends and family, be they dispersed in other parts of the UK, in their native countries or across the globe.

## **Ideoscapes**

The Ideoscape is the scape produced through chains of images, terms and ideas that serves to underpin and frame concepts such as identity, democracy, citizenship and sovereignty. The narratives of this study suggest that the Ideoscape is far from universal because differing levels of legitimacy are apportioned to different international migrants within the UK.

Apportioning different levels and forms of legitimate ability to act can only serve to fragment international migrants into the kinds of separate lives that

have already been reported within many inner city areas, not on the basis of skin colour or religious belief, but on a more fundamental level, the ability to 'buy into the Ideoscape'.

EU nationals have no need to buy into ideas of citizenship or democracy at a UK level because they are already espoused to the Ideoscape of the European Union, and although this may currently restrict new citizens, a timetable for full and equal rights of citizens is set down in EU law. Spouses of UK citizens can understand their relationships as part of the Ideoscape in that they serve as a legitimate route to approach and attain citizenship in their own right, although this will be dependent upon happy relationships with their husbands and wives for a sustained period of time.

On the other hand, international students and asylum seekers are less likely to 'buy into' an 'enlightenment worldview' that places them at arms length from democracy and citizenship because their status posits them as paying guests or needy distant relatives. As such it is more likely that the chain of images, terms and ideas they espouse will be ones that understand and communicate either the agency provided by wealth and money, or alternatively 'othering', inequality and social injustice.

## 7.4 International Migration

The discussion undertaken in this chapter thus far demonstrates that although on a surface level international migration can be understood to comprise journeys or trajectories taken by people moving from one physical place to another for a range of personal, social and economic factors, the nature of these journeys exposes international migrants to sets of scenarios, states and circumstances within which they are required to act. Such actions are undertaken within or with reference to each of the four distinct zones of migration (see 7.2 The Agency of Migration), and the levels of success the migrants have when negotiating each of the zones will depend upon the forms and levels of agency that they are able to draw upon.

The journeys and circumstances of the international migrants who took part in this study appear to be consistent with several patterns of international migration referred to in Chapter One: firstly, that they can be seen to fit into the various categories that serve to group some of the more popular reasons why people migrate to the UK; secondly, that the majority of their journeys represented a movement away from a poorer area or region of the world toward a richer one (UNDESA, 2006); and thirdly, that once here in the UK the vast majority of the international migrants sought to gain access to and maximise their agency within the UK job market and paid employment (International Labour Organisation, 2006). However it is important to acknowledge that understanding the extent to which this was the primary



motivation for migration for those who took part in this study was not the intention of this investigation and is therefore beyond its scope.

## **International Migration and Reflexive Globalisation**

Although in its very broadest sense globalisation can be thought of as a relatively recent term that serves to describe the practical, political and procedural organisation of capital, commodities and consumers, networked together to shunt products and services from poorer parts of the world toward the wealthier markets of the West and the North, this is not a completely new concept. Colonial economic structures also brought goods to the 'home' markets of the colonialists. Massey (1999) sees such trade as having taken place within a 'spatialisation of modernity' in which places and regions were bounded by the 'internally-generated authenticities' that determined how each would understand each other; for the British public this would be shaped predominantly by the produce, products, stories and ideas that were shipped back to Britain.

Although globalisation can be seen as roughly following along the same lines as the 'spatialised' economic operations of colonial modernity, its utilisation of modern technologies, logistics and political and financial scapes has produced such sweeping changes to the domain of supply and demand that it appears incomparable and unrecognisable in comparison to colonial forms of trade. The global market no longer needs to rely on established

colonial links; it no longer needs to wait for the crop of a single country to come to market; on the whole it can source products and produce in places where they are best placed to bring maximum return for the investment. In doing so globalisation changed the internally generated authenticities with which the British public understood its relationship with the world. In seeking to capitalise on the relative wealth of the UK market, global capitalists have saturated and re-saturated global networks in their physical, intellectual, political and technological forms and in doing so have thrown up sets of reflexive and emergent 'authenticities' that travel through the physical, electronic and psychological networks of globalisation to configure themselves as ubiquitous forms and conditions alongside the frocks, food processors and foreign holidays.

This investigation found that the majority of international migrants entering the first zone of migration did not do so by travelling along the kind of colonial links to the UK that we might have expected to find should this investigation have been carried out 30 or more years ago. Rather they travelled along routes created by the global activities of business and governments, be they the flights designed to carry businesspeople, politicians and tourists to every locality in the world or routes created to bring cheap products and produce across the Bosphorus into the European Union.

If the networks of globalisation made these journeys possible, plausible and affordable it was because they utilised networks created, administered and serviced to promote, provide and perpetuate the appetite and expectation for

cheap products and produce that has provided consumers with sets of cheap and disposable options with which to clothe, feed and entertain their families. Cheap and cheerful has not only become an authenticity, it has become a ubiquitous element of life in the Britain of today. However creating, culturing and continuing such ubiquity has thrown up a set of second level ubiquities: people, politics, social interaction, criminal activity, disease, religion – all flow around the world with similar ease to global products and produce. These second level ubiquities do not exist because of globalisation, but rather as existing discourses that travel back reflexively through the structural webs of ideas (Appadurai, 1996), technologies (Castells, 2000) and logistical infrastructures, and in terms of international migrants, this reflexivity has enabled the embodiment of fantasies, the realisation of dreams and the globalisation of peoples, cultural imaginations and what were hitherto localised ways of living (Brah, Hickman et al, 1999), now in motion, now fluid.

A major feature of this research has been its attempt to capture something about how these localised ways of living and the forms of agency attached to them have interrelated with the act of migration and with UK society and its social structures. However the relationship between international migration and globalisation is a complex one; it is not simply a case of deciding to migrate and utilising networks that already link the resources of poorer regions of the world to the richer markets of the North and West (see 2.1 To the Global). Many people in the poorest parts of the world simply can't afford to migrate even if they would like to, for the ability to move to another country tends to require access to some form of economic resource, and those

struggling to subsist are unlikely to have access to such. Rather it is those whose lives are above the subsistence level, those who have some form of income above and beyond what is required to survive, those who can save or borrow enough money, who are most likely to embark on migratory journeys (Stalker, 2000). And despite the fact that those individuals who participated in the research came to the UK for a number of different reasons and from different parts of the world, all were able to negotiate the first migratory zone, migration (see 7.2 The Agency of Migration), because they were able to draw upon some form of economic agency:

- The international students not only met the costs of their travel to the UK by air, but they also possessed the necessary resources to meet the costs of their course fees and living expenses, which were also underwritten by their sponsors.
- The spouses were also able to meet the costs of their travel to the UK by air, and UK citizen spouses provided an existing socio-economic platform.
- The EU nationals were each able to fund their travel to the UK, be it by air or by road, and had sufficient funds to support themselves whilst they looked for paid employment.
- The asylum seekers, who arrived both by air and on the backs of heavy goods vehicles, each paid significant amounts of money to people traffickers to smuggle them into the UK.

This not only suggests a converse with the idea that international migrants tend to be those who have some form of financial agency (Stalker,

2000), it also highlights that to negotiate the first zone of migration the international migrants had to make some form of financial transaction that allowed them to utilise an existing logistical infrastructure; they had to act and have agency as consumers to arrive in the UK. However the experiences of the international migrants who took part in this study demonstrate that their acts of consumerism in this first zone of migration were not equal, but dependent upon the forms and levels of agency they could bring to the act of migration itself. Those with EU nationality had the most agency because their freedom to move if not throughout the European Union then at least to the UK was enabled by an existing road, rail and ferry network as well as a hub of cheap flight airlines spanning much of the continent. At the other end of the scale the asylum seekers paid significant amounts of money to traffickers to purchase transport that would enable them to pass across borders without passports or visas, therefore indicating that their lack of agency to travel legitimately was offset by economic agency.

Together this suggests that if globalisation is reflexive, if it provides and produces networks through which people can reflexively travel back alongside businesspeople, politicians, tourists, televisions and tropical fruit, then it is because international migrants have or are able to muster the agency necessary to act as consumers of global travel. Without economic agency the poorest travel in the same ways they have always travelled: on foot, fuelled by the food in their bellies and the strength in their limbs.

## **The Agency of International Migration**

Zones two and three of migration, arrival and occupation (see 7.2 The Agency of Migration), demonstrated how the different international migrant groups were able to mobilise different forms and levels of agency. However, it can also be said that the State attributed different levels of agency to each group, thus creating groups who were empowered more than others. This suggests that although the authenticities of the participants of this research (education, marriage, migration within the EU and asylum) might have been 'internally generated' by their personal circumstances, preferences or agency, their presence within the research suggests that they are also authenticities that had some level of agency, or met some level of eligibility, when they came into contact with border and immigration controls. Put another way, border and immigration controls and the agencies that perform such functions not only act to police the physical boundaries of the nation state, but they also act to police its moral boundaries. For the ability to proceed forward into the UK after showing one's passport to the immigration officer is not only based upon one's ability to meet one of the pre-defined categories of eligibility, it is also based upon one's success in convincing him or her of one's authenticity as a citizen, a tourist or a foreign diplomat. Clearly if one's passport has the right insignia on the front, or if one is already in possession of the necessary visa, one would expect the event to be reasonably uncomplicated, but should somebody 'turn up' without, with suspicious or with unfamiliar 'paperwork' then the individual will have to undergo a cross examination of why they wish or think they have 'the right' to

enter the country. Such power over its geographic boundaries can be seen as the State exerting its right to 'authenticate' those wishing to enter the country as the kind of people we as a nation find acceptable or useful. They are decisions made on the basis of morals or ethics relative to its own society and cultures (Smith, 2000) that determine what is deemed to be profitable, productive or morally justifiable in terms of who will be accommodated within, or assimilated into, society.

Of course, there will be international migrants who will belong to one or more of the groups; for example an EU citizen might have been studying in the UK or be married to a UK citizen, yet will require neither a student nor a spouse visa to pass through the second zone, arrival. In the same way asylum seekers (the group who experienced the least amount of agency in zones two and three) would find their agency increased if they were to marry UK citizens or find the resources to become international students. This suggests that agency beyond zone one is based upon the legitimacy the State apportions to each group. In this study EU nationals had the most agency in the UK, as they were able to travel freely, have unrestricted access to the UK job market and act with the independence their incomes allowed, but this was because their status as EU nationals gave them the legitimacy to do so in that their presence, residency and ongoing activity in the UK was made legitimate by European Union treaties. Other groups also held legitimate claims to be in the UK, although this carried clauses and caveats: wives and international students were allowed to cross the second zone of migration, arrival, because they were sponsored – the spouses by a UK citizen husband

or wife, the students by an educational establishment and an individual able to underwrite the costs of their studies and living expenses. Their lives in zone three, occupancy, were bound to the legitimacy connected to their UK spouses or UK education (and their ability to pay for it), and although both groups had access to greater legitimacy in the future (by applying for citizenship in their own right for the spouses or applying for a highly skilled migrant visa for the international students), the here and now was attached to making a success of the relationships they had entered into. Again the holders of the least amount of legitimacy were the asylum seekers who went to great measures to bypass UK border controls, negotiating the second zone of migration, arrival, by slipping off the back of the HGV they had been smuggled in onto a quiet road. Their agency within zone three, occupancy, was limited by the level of legitimacy that the State granted them. If they experienced a kind of limbo where they waited for a judgement that would grant them full access to the UK this is because this was exactly what was happening: the State was assessing their legitimacy as refugees.

The level of legitimacy apportioned to each group by the State in turn produces authenticity for the individuals in those groups in the third zone of migration, occupancy. Not only does it provide a legal basis for residency and activity within the UK, but such residency and activity frames ways of life that in turn provide and produce identification with particular roles (as a student, a spouse, an EU citizen or refugee). This provides sets of discourses, trajectories and ways of understanding one's relationship with the world one faces (Giddens, 1991). In the third zone of migration, occupancy, a dominant



discourse was the ability to access the job market to subsidise their living costs (for the international students), to support their lives (for the EU nationals), to contribute to the family unit (for the spouses of UK citizens) or as a way of playing an independent part in society (for the asylum seekers). In doing this the study suggests that although the international migrants carried with them an identity that related to the meanings attached to their life experiences in their native countries, this did not deter them from identifying with the forms of advanced capitalism and consumerism they found in the UK; rather they appeared to actively engage with it. This is because paid employment was a form of agency in itself, as it served to empower those groups who held (or were apportioned) agency to do so; it provided them with independence, mobility and aspiration within the fourth zone of migration, aspiration.

However the levels of agency that the international migrants could achieve via legitimate access to paid employment appeared to be limited, in that they tended to work in poorly paid service sector jobs in hotels, food outlets, shops and factories. Massey (1999) might explain this as being attributed to modes of political agency within a power structure that harks back to colonial times (Massey, 1999), which in turn serve to articulate and differentiate people who are empowered by their nationality, roughly along the lines of people who are from the West, and people who are not (everyone else) (Hesse, 1999). If this serves to create a geography of power (Massey, 1999) within the UK it is more complex than the mere spatial distribution (Hesse, 1999), but has its roots in historically evolved norms, values, meanings and

symbols, which, once embedded, produce and reproduce sets of ideas, concepts and discourses that serve to referentially differentiate those who conform to dominant cultures, physiologies and world-views of 'the West' from those who do not (Young, 1990). It serves as an apparatus within which 'places' and regions, and therefore those people who come from them, are identified and nominated as 'other' than us; that they are from beyond the physical boundaries of the nation state or the socio-political boundaries of the European community. It identifies that their cultures are beyond the boundaries of the known; beyond the familiar and the safe; somewhere 'out there', 'other' than here (Massey, 1999). It also produces systems, procedures and protocols that enable people from such places to be vetted and authenticated for the merit of their movement (Acton, 1999).

If this were so then international migration serves to replicate the same kind of 'geography of power' as globalisation itself (Massey, 1999), which creates uneven power relationships, not only in the knowledge, expertise and economic resources necessary to manage the practices and processes of globalisation over time and space (Castells, 2000), but even of morality (Smith, 2000). It represents the kind of geography that communicates a scenario where we in the 'First World' agree to invest, organise and manage the resources of other parts of the world, and in our development of them, we can then think of and call those countries part of the 'developing world'. Then having organised and managed their resources into goods and services we can move these to our own markets so we can maximise profits, keep shareholders happy and enrich our societies. OK, maybe enrich isn't quite

the right term, but we can certainly make our societies feel richer by widening the experience of consumption, making it more flexible, with greater choices, and 'add value' to the experience by reducing the commitment necessary for consumers to consume. We can buy something today for a fraction of the price it was yesterday, then throw it away when we get bored with it, because it's cheap enough to go out and buy a new one. And perhaps it is not surprising that people in the 'First World' seem preoccupied with eulogising and intellectualising globalisation (Massey, 1999), for we in fact have benefited on so many levels.

Arguably globalisation has been seen as such a success in the 'First World' because it has not only benefited from cheap products based on cheap labour, but also it has enabled the First World to move its dirty work – the foundries, the factories, the unskilled, semi-skilled intensive labour, the risks – to 'other' places (Beck, 1992). Of course the prerequisite of this scenario is that 'people' in developing countries have to agree to stay where they are. There are exceptions for the right sort of people: doctors, dentists, technicians, businessmen, etc. to make up the 'club class' migrants of the global economy (Brah, Hickman et al, 1999), but in general there seems to be a prevailing mindset that believes that it's just no good us putting in all this investment to develop countries if 'people' are going to 'up' and move over here; they need to reap the benefits in their own way, from the comfort of their own homes, not ours. Viewed this way it all begins to sound like the colonial discourses of the past and when one considers that entering the 'First World' is becoming increasingly difficult (Stalker, 2000), especially for

the relatively poor and those with no immediately recognisable skill-set (Massey, 1999), then the insights into the dynamics and geography of power that such comparisons offer might seem increasingly cogent. However the concept of reflexive globalisation would suggest that those working on farms, in factories or in call centres for low wages in the Third World could earn an awful lot more money by coming and doing the same unskilled and semi-skilled work in the First World.

Although the international migrants who took part in the research were able to act and realise agency via the particular 'authenticities' that had made their presence and occupancy in the UK legitimate, their migration reflects a movement across such a 'geography of power' from developing countries to the 'First World'. What enabled them to do so was the ability of the migrants' purpose for migration (as students, spouses, EU nationals or as asylum seekers) to find sanction by the State. However, in doing so their experiences within the third zone of migration appear to indicate that this geography is mirrored in the UK; that the kind of agency that they can bring to bear whilst resident in the UK will be a reflection of the agency they brought with them to enter the UK. This is perhaps most evident with the spouse and EU citizen groups, whose experience of occupancy in zone three was legitimised or 'authenticated' by their rights as citizens or their legal attachment to existing citizens. The international student group also experienced something of this, in that their freedom to remain in the UK is judged upon prima facie duties to study and be incrementally successful in gaining qualifications and meeting fees, without which their 'strings are cut' and they will be asked to leave the

country, their friends and in most cases in this study, the family relationships they had lived within for a significant length of time. Meanwhile the asylum seeker group experienced occupancy in zone three as a kind of 'limbo', cocooned within a bubble of state provision that serves to quarantine them away from the agency of self determination within society until their claims for refugee status have been judged within the legal system. Of course, there will have been asylum seekers whose personal circumstances were given the legitimacy of refugee status, but without this their agency was reduced to being able to look on, and to move within, the world that each of them desperately wants to act within, to be part of, but one which they are not allowed to fully engage with.

However the geography they found themselves inhabiting within the UK was related to the forms and levels international migrants were able to realise with the kind of service level jobs that they were able to access. Education was deemed an important form of agency for all the migrant groups as it was understood to represent a form of agency with which to gain further forms of agency, such as better paid employment or to gain skills for the future; as such it represents a way of understanding a way forward in future, a plan, a cognitive link between the circumstances of the here and now and the fourth zone of migration, aspiration. The aspiration of the international migrants all involved the gaining of agency, either in terms of better-paid employment (the aspiration of all groups), opportunities for further migration events (for the international students) or the opportunity to integrate into UK society and its cultures (for the spouses of UK citizens and the asylum seekers). This

indicates that coming to the UK was not an end but a means to an end for the international migrants, and each had aspirations for the future that were bounded and built upon the agency that they were able to realise and utilise in the UK. The ability to attain economic independence through legitimate access to paid employment within the UK job market also enabled the migrants to realise social stability, in that it provided them with a source of income with which to support their lives here in the UK. In turn this also allowed the international migrants agency as consumers of products, produce and services, and with such consumption came the identification with the role of consumers. Excluded from this agency were the asylum seekers who, denied the legitimacy to work, were forced to watch society from the sidelines and hope that their applications for refugee status would be granted so they too could find work and independence.

Zone four, aspiration, was very much framed by the kind of experiences the international migrants were able to realise in zone three: the international students' aspirations were linked to education, in that they were able to understand study and qualifications as a form of agency that would increase their ability to attain better paid employment and further migratory events in the future. The spouses of UK citizens who lived with their spouses and held legitimate access to the job-market and to society through the citizenship of their husband or wife aspired to independence, through better-paid work and citizenship in their own right. The EU nationals, in having successfully negotiated zone three by access to paid employment and therefore services and consumerism, aspired to move upward on the job ladder or to further

migratory events. The asylum seekers aspired to move from the limbo they had experienced in zone three toward refugee status, toward the ability to live independent lives within the UK where they could move freely, work for their living and make choices about how they wished to spend their free time.

Each of the groups aspired to move forward, to improve their lot economically via access to and progression within the UK job market. Seeking to do so enabled them more power economically, but also socially, as it enabled them to make the kind of choices that Bauman (1998) suggests go hand-in-hand with the understanding of one's self and society and one's place within it through the consumption of goods and services. Although there was little evidence of the international migrants who took part in this study becoming aesthetic consumers, instead the groups appear to understand the notion of cosmopolitan consumers. Individuals in each grouping understood themselves as having been successful in coming to the UK from their native countries, in realising a secure place to live and sustain their immediate needs (although this varied from independent living, through dependence on a spouse, to varying forms of state sanction), and all understood themselves to be part of a greater migrant population living in the UK.

This sense of cosmopolitanism, which was celebrated by all the groups, not only mirrors the banal cosmopolitanism of Beck (2006) (see 2.1 From Modernity, through Consumerism to the Global) in which the international migrants understood and communicated their sense of achievement and agency to date without reference to the level to which this may have been

enabled by the legitimacy granted to them by the State, but also served to provide a basis or foundation from which to understand aspiration moving forward. Their cosmopolitanism was the reflexive element of Beck's (2006) banal cosmopolitanism because although Britons might understand themselves as increasingly cosmopolitan in their tastes and outlooks, reflexive globalisation had brought sets of people who worked as their shop assistants, their hotel workers, their cleaners, their drivers and their bar and restaurant staff, who in turn understand themselves as cosmopolitan for living in another country, for working with and befriending people from all over the world, for seeing their success in achieving this as something they could replicate in other countries. As such the aspirations of zone four were predominantly a celebration of the migrant's ability to work and adapt, be flexible and resourceful in tapping into futures forms of opportunity; it was them understanding themselves as agents of the agency they had realised. The exception to this was the asylum seekers, whose aspirations were limited by the State, and even if they chose to become illegal immigrants once their application for asylum had failed, they did so waiting, hoping for an amnesty in which they would be given the right to remain.

### **Glocalisation and the Scape of Legitimacy**

The previous sections of this chapter have suggested that the kinds of journeys the international migrants experienced through and within the four zones of migration were related to the legitimacy they were able to claim or



be allotted. This legitimacy not only influenced the way they were able to travel in zone one, but also the reception that awaited them in zone two, the kind of agency they were able to utilise and realise within zone three and the ambitions and aspirations they held for their futures in zone four. However, it is important to remember that such journeys were made by drawing upon levels of economic and social agency that were far from the norm in their native countries, especially if they came from countries within the developing world. Such agency was not mobilised lightly: each was a purposive investment in movement that sought to bring about some purpose. For some it was an investment made to gain access to a source of economic opportunity, for others the opportunity to gain qualifications deemed valuable for future prospects; for some to be reunited and make a life with a husband or wife and for others to gain refugee status in a country much richer than the one they had fled. Such purposiveness indicates that the UK did not merely represent a random destination for the migrants, but a locale which they wished to migrate toward.

This suggests that although the migrants may have been empowered to move by the structures and forms of globalised modernity in a process of reflexive globalisation, the migration can also be viewed as glocalisation, the movement toward a particular locale to serve a particular purpose. For the EU citizens from the A8 this was predominantly about the ability to work: the UK was one of three EU countries that offered them a legitimate opportunity to work and therefore they moved from a locale where pay was relatively low to a locale where pay was relatively high. For the other EU nationals the UK

represented a locale where they could learn English while supporting their lives through paid work and sampling life in another country. For the international students the UK represented a locale where they could study for UK qualifications while supporting themselves with part time paid employment, and it also represented a locale where they had existing family members. For the spouses, who in the main came from developing countries, it represented the locale in which their British husbands and wives lived and worked. For the asylum seekers it represented a locale where their application for refugee status would carry more opportunities than other options, which will have included a refugee camp in a neighbouring country, another developing country or another EU country.

Of course 'reflexive globalisation', the movement of peoples back along the conduits of globalising modernity, is not merely understandable by the process of glocalisation, nor is it sufficient to consider the reasons people may wish to migrate into a particular locale from merely an economic model. As Appadurai (1996) suggests (see 2.3 The Scapes of Globalisation), the migration of the international migrants will have been motivated, enabled and facilitated by the scapes provided by global finance, technology, media, ethnicities and ideas. These not only provide hard tangible and pragmatic systems, structures and the globalised configurations of these, they also pour forms, symbols, ideas and the simulacra of possible worlds and the world of possibility into the crucible of the imagination. The research unearthed a wealth of material to suggest that such scapes were influential in the ways the participants in this study made sense of their migratory flows into the UK.

Each must have started with an idea, a conception or realisation that embarking on such a journey would not only be purposive – of utility or of value to them or their families – but also a plausible, possible, realistic proposition. For the international students this idea was related to the value and utility of UK academic qualifications; for the spouses it represented the idea of being able to come to the UK and live with the person they had married; for the EU nationals it was the idea of living and working in another country; and for the asylum seeker group, it was seeking asylum in a ‘developed’ country.

According to Appadurai (1996) such imagined possibilities are part of a scape of ideas (the ‘Ideoscape’), which is brought into being, fed and nurtured by the digestion of image-centred, meaning-laden media discourses (the ‘Mediascape’) within internally generated cultural and ethnic authenticities, which are in turn defined and redefined within a scape of ethnicities (the ‘Ethnoscape’). The ability to realise such imagined possibilities, the capacity to convert what would have until fairly recently been mere fantasies (at least for all but the rich) into fact would have relied upon a number of inter-related and converging realisations:

- The ability to imagine, conceive and realise oneself as part of the global scape of ethnicities – the ‘Ethnoscape’ – made up of people from every nation, every ethnicity, every culture, each travelling across boundaries, through regions to see, to sample, study, work and live.

- The realisation that the systemic financial and technological structures of the unfolding 'global modernity', which reach from the stock markets of the 'First World' across physical, political, social and economic space to the 'developing' world, can be used as a means by which individuals can reflexively catapult themselves into the very heart of the 'First World'.
- Access to some form of economic agency with which to purchase a 'ticket to ride' to one's chosen destination and, in general, sufficient funds to meet at least their initial, if not their ongoing costs of residency.
- The ability to meet, or authenticate oneself within, a category considered legitimate or fitting within the ethical standards of and communicated by the nation state the individual is trying to enter: a recognisable and valid residency status.

These realisations provided the agency necessary for the participants in this study to become agents of 'reflexive globalisation'; it enabled their image-loaded, meaning-rich and discourse-laden fantasies about the global world and their place within it to find praxis within the physical and pragmatic infrastructure that underpins and operationalises 'globalised modernity'.

- The student group became agents of a discourse that articulates the superiority of 'First World' forms of education over those of their native countries. In doing so they imagined themselves as international students studying in the 'First World', found that their intended 'migratory flow' represented an 'authentic category' with which to apply for a student visa and utilised their financial agency to launch themselves to the UK via the

global aviation network. The students in this group also tended to be seen as utilising some form of familial agency, the majority travelling toward a family member who had already settled in the UK after a previous migratory event, who can be seen as enacting the prerequisite role of sponsor for the student's stay whilst simultaneously providing a home for the duration of their stay.

- The spouses met their partners through the actions and activities of their husbands and wives, who had each travelled abroad on holiday, to work or to visit relatives. In entering into long term relationships with their partners, members of the spouse group were able to understand themselves as in some way connected to the global 'Ethnoscape'. And the imagined possibility of migrating to live with their husband or wife became an achievable and realisable undertaking with their marriage because it served to 'authenticate' their migratory flow under the legitimate category of 'family reunification'. They each enjoyed sufficient financial agency to utilise the global aviation system to travel to the UK, and each was able to understand the spouse they were travelling toward as being able to provide them with at least a basic framework of support in terms of a home, food and their social capital, etc.
- The 'Ideoscape' referenced and utilised by those in the EU citizen group appears to be divided between those who imagined themselves living and working in a different country/culture, and those who imagined the possibility of realising greater economic opportunity. Other than that the

practicalities of their global flow into the UK were much the same: none of them needed to 'authenticate' their entry and stay in the UK as they each held European Union citizenship. Their travel from home took the form of the trans-European aviation network or road and ferry and they each brought with them enough financial resources to support their lives here until they were able to find paid employment. Their 'imagined possibilities' of what their lives would be like once in the UK were fuelled by drawing upon networks of friends already living and working in the UK and internet research.

- Those in the asylum seeker group became agents of a very different set of discourses, which articulated the need to flee from fear, violence and oppression. But the possibilities that they imagined – those of being refugees – took them much further than a flight over the border of the nearest friendly or peaceful country; rather it brought them significant distances from their own countries toward the UK. Each utilised economic agency to pay for fake papers with which to arrive in the UK by air, or more predominantly in this group, to pay people traffickers who smuggled them into the UK in the backs of lorries carrying goods from developing countries. Each imagined their life here in the UK would be free from oppression, full of opportunities: a chance to forge new lives for themselves.

However the study suggests that we must also consider that there is a further scape, that of legitimacy. This is of course tied up with the idea of geography

of power (Massy, 1999) in that it serves to attribute to people with different circumstances differing amounts of legitimacy to travel to and live in the UK and therefore different levels of agency when living here. Some groups, the political, economic and commercial elites for example, will travel largely unhindered across the geography of power because their power translates as legitimacy. Another group is the highly skilled (doctors, nurses, IT professionals, scientists, etc.) who may migrate to fill a shortfall in the intellectual or technical capital in First World countries. Those of us who are not part of such elites, nor highly skilled professionals, will understand and experience our agency to travel within the legitimacy that the geography of power enables us; we will travel across the scape of legitimacy. For those of us lucky enough to be born within what was essentially known as Western Europe (those nations not under Soviet control at the end of the Second World War), the legitimacy engendered within the mere covers of our passports is reasonably high, for it not only serves to represent the power of the EU, but communicates an expectation that living in these countries enables a good deal of wealth and power in ourselves.

On the other hand those not lucky enough to be born into the political, economic or commercial elites, hold highly sought after skills, or be born into the developed world will find that whatever legitimacy they hold fairs relatively poorly on the global exchange rate. However, perhaps motivated by the scapes outlined by Appadurai (1996), perhaps enabled by reflexive globalisation (2.3 The Scapes of Globalisation), people do migrate, and in large enough numbers to create a class of migrants who, despite working in

the lower end of the job market, see themselves as cosmopolitan, fluid and resourceful. Arguably they are: they have managed to cross the geography of power to move to a particular locale despite lacking the kinds of agency we usually associate with international migration. However, if globalisation has empowered them, if it has provided them with networks of information, communication, logistics, etc., then it is still required that they draw upon some initial form of agency, for many people in the poorest countries simply cannot afford to migrate (see 3.1 International Migration: The Statistics).

Therefore we must accept that the minimum agency required for the international migrants to migrate to the UK was an economic investment, although the amount of money and the relative value of this investment would have varied hugely. The second form of agency was legitimacy of the migration event, and it would appear that the greater the legitimacy a migrant held (by act of birth or by relationship with a UK citizen), the less the capital investment necessary to migrate to the UK. The EU citizens needed enough funds for their fare and immediate living costs and their levels of legitimacy were highest because of their citizenship. The spouses travelled further and had to account for the costs of visas but they gained legitimacy through their UK citizen husbands and wives who could also meet their living costs. The international students gained their legitimacy through their relationships with education, which means they had to meet the costs of their course fees in addition to travel and living costs, although in that they tended to have family here, their living costs were supported or subsidised. Those who made the most significant investments in terms of travel were those with the least



amount of legitimacy, the asylum seekers, who paid large amounts of money to be smuggled across Europe and into the UK.

## **7.5 Multiculturalism and Cohesion**

If it was the realisation of possibilities imagined with and within a topology of interrelated and overlapping global scapes, reflexive globalisation and a geography of legitimacy that brought the participants of this study to the UK then we might reasonably assume that at least in terms of those from developing regions of the world (all but one of the participants if we include EU citizens from A8 countries) such 'imagined possibilities' can be seen as 'Occidentalisms': sets of cognitive hypotheses about the nature of life in the 'First World' (or of life in a developed European member state for the A8 EU citizens) evoked and evolved in the 'developing regions' that seek to understand and make sense of sets of realities that are arguably reflexive to the meta-discourse of modernity itself (globalisation). It would be the mobilisation of the ideas, imaginings and contextualisation of meanings that serves to engender ideas, attitudes, ways of understanding and behaving toward the developed 'occident' in ways that mirror what Said (1985) described as 'orientalism'.

Such 'Occidentalism' will have been woven together from the threads of the global scapes, from the houses and the cars of those who have returned home from the 'First World' richer (the 'muchunos' or 'returnos' – all

developing countries seem to have a name for them), from myths, and half told stories that describe the opportunities of the US, the EU, the UK. It is a meta-discourse that will signal, shape and seduce the way migrants flowing into the 'First World' from developing regions will understand their migration, and both frame and facilitate their initial interactions when they first come to stand face-to-face with UK society. One might also speculate that it is this meta-discourse of 'Occidentalism' – the internally generated socio-cultural-biographic place, triangulated within the 'Techno-, Finance-, Ideo-, Media- and Ethno- scapes' (Appadurai 1996) – from which the international migrants who took part in this study stepped forth into Britain, its society and its cultures. If this were so then we might expect that such predefined and predetermined cognitive hypotheses would find disparity with and disjuncture from real, 'lived in' forms, standards and modes of enacted life within Britain, and the study provides evidence of this:

- The international students talked about a disparity between what they imagined it would be like to study and live in the UK and the reality of needing to balance their full-time studies with part-time work and the stress, tiredness and general health problems that come with doing so, or the reality of boredom: not having enough things to do or friends to do things with experienced by those who did not need to take part time work.
- The spouses talked about the disparity between what they imagined it would be like to make a new life in a new country and the realities of finding it difficult to interact or integrate with people other than their

spouses: feeling isolated, finding it difficult to find friends and missing their homes and their families in their countries of origin.

- The EU group found disparities between their ideas of what Britain, as a 'First World' country, would be like in relation to the reality of being exposed to poverty, drunkenness and violence.
- The asylum seekers struggled with a disparity that arose between what they had imagined would be an emancipatory experience and the realised experience of being effectively 'quarantined' off from effective participation in society while their applications were reviewed.

This suggests that the 'conceptual constructs' about what their lives were going to be like here in the UK tended to be incomplete or inadequate when faced with the realities of their lives since they had come to this country. Their 'imagined life', drawn from the interaction between their normative, value-rich and assumption-based meanings of their native cultures and the shifting and fluid scapes of globalisation, found disparity with the realities of a life in the UK. Clearly one might assume that such disparity would have provided the international migrants with opportunities to test and readjust these cognitive hypotheses; to learn about themselves within the environments they now found themselves within. And certainly a great deal of this went on, but rather than learning very much about UK society and its cultures, they appeared to have learnt to understand themselves as 'set apart' from it, on the outside looking in, and as such they tended to seek out relationships, structures and forms that had their roots in their own native countries.

This was easier for those from cultures that already had an established or significant presence in the UK, with:

- The Chinese and Pakistani participants being able to access a multitude of cultural forms, symbols and standards, including language, foodstuffs, restaurants, places of worship, media, community centres, etc.
- The Polish participants talking about their ability to live their lives in what might be described as a 'bubble' of Polishness that provided them with access to Polish language, foodstuffs and media, as well as easy access to and from Poland via air.
- The Thai participants working in Thai restaurants where they met and talked to other Thai speakers.
- The Russian participants having Russian friends, frequenting Russian social clubs and a Russian Orthodox Church, and being able to buy Russian foodstuffs from a Russian shop.
- The asylum seekers group speaking of having same nationality friends, with whom they shared time, cooked food and accessed and discussed media from their native culture.

The exceptions to these (who were in the minority) were those whose migration to the UK was underpinned by the wish to immerse themselves in a society and culture that was different to their own, although their friendship networks still tended to be arranged around other foreign nationals as opposed to UK citizens.

This suggests that the international migrants who participated in this study were more likely than not to seek out people who shared the same tongue, the same cultural or ethnic background and the same tastes in food, or just someone else from home. It also suggests that attempting to understand international migrants is far more complicated than merely considering them in terms of the categories that legitimated their flow into the UK. Rather, it suggests that there are culture/ethnicity centred groups who are drawn together by the commonalities of language, ways of behaving, understanding the world, etc. who have each travelled from their homes and found themselves and each other here. They are diasporic groupings brought into being through the reflexivity of globalisation (Hesse, 1999); they are extensions of the 'Ethnoscape' (Appadurai, 1996) – communities that wake, work, laugh, love and live in a foreign land who have their heads and hearts tuned into the frequencies of their native lands. And if this is so then it has significant implications for our notion of multiculturalism.

In the not too distant past, let's imagine you came to my school in the mid-1980s and asked my classmates and me what sorts of groups made up British society. We would have said: those of the British Isles (English, Scottish, Welsh, Irish), migrant groups from the ex-colonies (West Indian, Indian, Pakistani) and, in Nottingham at least, those groups that had arrived after the War (Italian, Polish, Latvian). And clearly, at least at the time, our society would have sounded like a pretty vibrant and dynamic culture to be part of. But such a list seems pretty tame compared to the one we might expect to get from a group of schoolchildren today (and even this small scale

study managed to unearth people from seventeen different countries). We would expect them to reel off a list that would span the seven seas and the five continents; we might even expect the class itself to be significantly more diverse than the one thirty years ago. This leads to the fairly obvious proposition that as the number of cultural groups within British society has increased then the nature of multicultural Britain has also changed.

But this is problematic. According to Kymlicka (2007) liberal multiculturalism involves the rejection of any notion that the State is the possession of one particular or dominant national group, the rejection of the idea that non-dominant or minority groups should be excluded from the structures of state provision or representation, or assimilated into the dominant group via their use, and demands that all individuals be granted full and equal rights as citizens without having to deny or hide their ethno-cultural identity. This effectively means that as citizens, people from minority groups will have the freedom to engage in their own particular and distinctive ways of life (which might include the use of their own languages, cultural rituals and religious practices) without fear or threat from dominant groups who may have power over state legislation or other forms of social or political coercion (Smith, 2000).

This presents the basis for a fundamental paradox within our new, more multicultural society. This is that globally reflexive diasporic groupings, of the kind the participants of this study were drawn toward, might find 'space' to develop and even flourish within such liberal multiculturalism. But even if their

members are citizens, they appear to be focused inwardly upon the cultural meanings and knowledge provided by the diasporic group, rather than focusing the individual toward interaction with different cultures or society as a whole. Clearly the problems associated with this include:

- That a lack of both integration and interaction will make it difficult for individuals to realise or understand their rights as citizens or to access the services provided by the State.
- That the Ethnoscape of such diasporas will be made up of many of the same ethno-cultural groups that will exist to a greater or lesser extent independently of each other, with more likelihood of them being linked by media generated social and political discourses from home, rather than with each other.
- That both the visibility and needs of such diasporic groups will be obscured by the inward focus of their memberships, and the sheer spectrum and number of different groups and groupings.
- That the sheer scale of migration into the UK over recent years (see 3.1 International Migration and the UK Context) has served to create a national demography and regional demographies that will include significant numbers of non-citizens who are reliant upon the structures of the State, yet have no rights as citizens.
- That in contrast to traditional ideas of migrant groups settling to achieve a linear and continual stakeholding in the UK, new diasporic groups might in fact be transient or semi-transient groups who may move to pastures greener as and when they decide to do so.

Of course even the kind of radical change the UK has experienced over recent years is not new: America experienced mass migration in the nineteenth century. It was described as a phenomenon so powerful that it broke down the links and allegiances that held the society together, uprooting the entrenched, setting free countless combinations within a melting pot of possibilities: “some linkages entirely disappeared; some survived intact; some new ones were formed; all were changed” (Ohmae, 1996, p37). And although this describes a plethora of diasporas rushing over a space occupied by a dominant society several hundred years ago, it might be useful as a tool with which to consider the implications of another plethora of diasporas emerging, flowing and clustering over the space we think of as multiculturalism. This is a far flung notion to the idea that multiculturalism in Britain is dead (Kundnani, 2002; Allen, 2007). Rather it suggests that the way we understood the concept of multiculturalism, what it meant to us over a period of time, is dead. For multicultural can no longer conjure up a handful of cultures, who according to the Cattle Report on Community Cohesion (Home Office, 2001) were already living parallel lives that did not seem to connect at any point, let alone overlap or interact to bring about any meaningful interchanges. It must now place emphasis on the ‘multi’ part of the term rather than the ‘cultural’, for the Ethnoscape, the scape of diasporic ethnicities that have found their way to living in these shores can be seen as ‘territorializing’ (Storper, 1997) the social fabric woven from the threads of multicultural policy. In terms of the realities experienced by the participants of this study this effectively meant that life within a diasporic centred cluster of ‘Polish-ness’ or ‘Thai-ness’ was not only possible due to the presence of



other Poles or Thais, but that the cluster would find support through the operations of multicultural policy, which might provide them with interpreters, translators, community organisations or just own language books in the library.

It also appeared that the communities that the participants of this study found themselves in were dependent upon the reasons that authenticated their migration into the UK, with the international student and spouse groups being split between more affluent and poorer areas depending upon the agency of their sponsors or partners, and both the EU national and asylum seeker groups living in more deprived areas of the city. This of course brought the majority of the participants into the kinds of communities that the Cantle Report (Home Office, 2001) found to be divided, fragmented and largely ignorant of other ways of living within the community. But instead of 'multi' describing a demographic of two, three or four ethnicities cohabiting the same community, new ethnicities settling and clustering in the community must herald the 'poly-cultural' and the need to address 'poly-culturalism'.

## **The Shape of the Landscape and the Social Contract**

In arriving at this point, the point where we realise that the changes in the patterns of international migration have brought about a Britain that is far more diverse and far more varied than the living together of the handful of cultures that have been expressed and understood by the term multicultural,

social policy makers, educators and society in general must now come to terms with a society that is much more multicultural. The statistics clearly indicate that Britain and Western Europe in general are now the destination for peoples from across the world, who seek to make a better life, increase their life chances or flee from poverty, violence and oppression. This study has served to unpack the stories, ideas and experiences of a small group of international migrants in the attempt to understand something about their journeys to the UK, the kinds of issues they have had to deal with since arriving, their ideas, their feelings and their aspirations. In doing so it has established that not all international migrants are equal, that there exists a landscape that apportions different degrees of legitimacy to different groups of people, and that these degrees of legitimacy serve to shape and determine the kinds of agency that different groups of international migrants can bring to bear to negotiate their lives here in the UK.

However, despite their coming from different parts of the world, despite them attending a college of FE at the beginning of this study, despite them being resident in the UK, what also drew them together was their tendency to work in service sector industries. Of course there will be groups that were outside the scope of the investigation (the highly skilled, the economic and political elite, etc.) but this group predominantly found work in restaurants, shops, bars, hotels, etc. They appear as those people who surround our lives, serving us with coffee, with alcohol, scanning our groceries at the checkout, cleaning our cars, our toilets and our places of work. In serving such functions their activity within the UK job market can be seen as competing

with the segment of UK society that Bauman (1998) has described as the 'new poor': those who fail to access the economic agency to become 'successful' consumers. If they have done so effectively it may be that they have mobilised various forms and levels of agency that have served to aid and motivate them as a labour force. Considering the reasons for this are beyond the scope of this study, however what the investigation did indicate was that entering the UK job market was one of the key issues for this group of international migrants, because it represented a way of supporting an independent life in the UK, and that the general aspiration was to find better paid work.

However the study indicates that the international migrants who took part in this study were unlikely to integrate into mainstream society and its cultures. One might argue that this was because none of them had been in the UK for any prolonged period of time. But when one considers that their main points of interaction – work, studies, home life – predominantly involved them engaging with other international migrants, it was not surprising that many of them failed to make relationships with UK citizens, and even the spouses confirmed that they knew few British people beyond their husbands and wives and their immediate friends and family. Alternatively, and possibly due to the comfort of cultural artefacts such as food, language and ways of seeing the world, the international migrants sought friends from home, or formed friendships with other international migrants with a familiar language. Finding friends from home could lead to a diasporic clustering, where people of a single nationality come together to celebrate their cultural lives and

heritage, to the extent that some people could live in a 'bubble' of their native countries while living in the UK. This was enabled by there being sufficient access to their native cultures, via the internet and satellite TV, as well as foodstuffs and native language speakers. Friendships formed with other international migrants appeared to facilitate a feeling of cosmopolitanism and altruism directed toward the groups for their achievement in coming to the UK, finding employment and supporting a life in another country.

If one were to understand international migration as merely an economic phenomenon – as the movement of peoples who migrate to fill shortages in skills or the labour market – then one might argue that if there were no more shortages then the migrants would simply migrate elsewhere. However the study suggests that although some of the international migrants did aspire to use the agency they experienced from coming to the UK to bring about other migratory events toward other countries within the developed world, many aspired to continue their lives in the UK. This was because they had learnt the language, because they had a career plan, because they had children born in the UK, etc. If this were so then it suggests that this is of major significance for those working in integration and cohesion in the very near future. However, when looking at this it is important to consider that the needs of such groups will be at least as diverse as the native languages they speak.

## **Chapter Eight**

### **Key Findings and Implications for Policy, Practice and Further Research**

The early chapters of this thesis identified that the UK has experienced rising levels of international migration in recent years and that these rises have had impacts nationally, regionally and at the local community level. Statistical, scholarly and policy research has tended to consider and understand international migrants as a homogenised group who have brought about impacts on local services, local job markets and life in the locale in general. Government policy has tended to understand the bulk of international migrants as temporary in that they hold short term 'transactional' relationships with work in the British economy, which will end as and when the economy slows down. For those who are more permanent, policy veers toward government reports that recommend they become integrated into society and become cohesive with and within the communities in which they live.

However, the literature also indicates that very little consultation has been undertaken with international migrants themselves. As a society we appear to know very little about who international migrants are, the kinds of circumstances that motivated them to come to the UK, the kinds of relationships they experience with UK social structures and society itself, or what their aspirations for the future are.

This investigation has approached such an issue as a set of questions about the migratory journeys, the relationships international migrants experience when interacting with education (as a principal factor in the process of integration), the UK state and society, and the forms and levels of agency they are able to bring to bear on such relationships.

## **8.1 Summary of Key Findings**

The investigation, which gathered data from 20 international migrants who were each undertaking post-compulsory study at a college of further education in Nottingham, produced key findings related to each of its three research questions. These are summarised below.

### **What are the experiences of recent immigrants to the UK?**

- Coming to the UK from their native countries required that each of the international migrants in this study had access to economic agency. Those whose passports afforded them the greatest agency (EU nationals) paid least for their travel to the UK. Spouses of UK citizens and international students paid more because they were likely to travel from further afield (although students also had to meet the cost of their tuition fees). At the other end of the scale those with the least agency (asylum seekers) paid the greatest fees to migrate to the UK (with the aid of traffickers).

- Because international migrants tend to do the same sort of service-sector work, live in the same areas and experience a sense of cosmopolitanism when they come together, they were more likely to strike up friendships with other international migrants (whether from the same or different countries of origin).
- The study suggests that international migrants are likely to cluster around their own diasporas, enjoying news, foods and language of their own countries and friendships and relationships with their fellow countrymen or countrywomen.
- Given that diasporas have arrived in sufficient numbers to set up their own food shops, restaurants and cultural centres and that news and other media from home are readily available through the internet and satellite television, some international migrants can live out their lives in the UK in 'a bubble' of their native culture.
- International migrants in the UK are likely to be living lives that are fluid, flexible and subject to change, in which they use their capacities and recourses to take advantage of opportunities as they present themselves, whether these are in the job market, progression in education or further migratory journeys.
- The study showed that international migrants who were apportioned lower levels of agency by the state aspired to greater independence and more freedom to act as they wished. All aspired to greater economic security.

## **How does the Relationship they have with the state mediate that experience?**

- The relationships international migrants experience with and within the UK are largely determined by the levels of agency apportioned to them by the State.
- Those apportioned the highest levels of agency experience the most freedoms (to work, to travel, to undertake leisure activities) whilst the freedoms of those apportioned lower forms of agency are restricted to greater or lesser extents.
- The highest levels of agency are granted to EU Nationals, who have freedoms to work and reside under EU agreements, while the agency apportioned to other international migrant groupings is bound to their relatives (in the case of spouses of UK citizens), an institution (in the case of international students) or to the State itself (in the case of asylum seekers).
- Although having his or her agency bound to a relative, institution or the State serves to restrict an international migrant's capacity to determine his or her actions in the UK, successful negotiation of this relationship over time can lead to an opportunity to apply for citizenship in his or her own right. If achieved, citizenship offers the international migrant the highest levels of agency.



## **What kind of relationships do recent immigrants to the UK have with UK social structures?**

- Education, in providing international migrants with opportunities to develop language skills and attain vocational qualifications, is understood as an important resource with which to find better paid employment or gain skills for the future. However, perhaps due to it being voluntary, education takes a 'back seat' when other opportunities or more pressing issues arise (international students excepted).
- A general lack of friendships with, understanding of, and even access to British people (spouses of UK citizens excepted) has meant that levels of integration within mainstream society are limited.
- The multicultural model, which has enabled ethnic groups to reproduce ways of living that reflect those of their native culture (albeit framed within the overall social and legal boundaries of the nation state), serves to provide international migrants who share the same or similar cultural heritage as established migrant groups with access to familiar foods, language and culture.
- There is little evidence to suggest that international migrants have much understanding of UK social structures, systems of public provision, political processes or their relationships with them.

## **8.2 Contribution of the Study to the Body of Scholarly Knowledge**

A principal component of any PhD thesis is the contribution it can be seen to make toward scholarly knowledge. This investigation offers a number of contributions that vary from the theoretical and methodological to the value of data gathered by the study.

### **International Migrants, the UK and its Social Structures**

It is important to acknowledge that although there has been a fair amount of scholarly and policy work dedicated to the relationships between international migrants and UK structures, very little of this has been done from the perspectives of international migrants themselves. Because this work does just this, it makes a contribution to an as yet underrepresented body of knowledge. In doing so the investigation not only presents findings that help us to understand the nature of the relationships that exist between international migrants and the state, it also captures the texture of everyday life lived out by international migrants living in the UK.

### **Reflexive Globalisation**

The discussion of 'reflexive globalisation' conducted within the work provides an alternative way of understanding the concept of 'glocalisation'. It suggests that the political, economic, technological and conceptual networks that make it possible for multinational organisations to take economic advantage of

resources in poorer parts of the world are proving to be reflexive. People from poorer, less developed locales have been able to use the networks and processes of globalisation to move toward richer, more developed ones. These people are not just the highly skilled or highly empowered 'club class' migrants who we would expect to be moving across the globe, but also those from poorer backgrounds who have utilised the networks of globalisation to maximise the economic value of their labour, seek asylum, be reunited with a family member or just to live a different kind of life. Globalisation not only allows products and services to be manufactured and delivered in poorer locales, its networks are reflexively enabling people from those locales to migrate toward the richer markets of the developed world to sell their labour, conduct their relationships and live their lives.

### **Agency and Appadurai's Scapes of Globalisation**

Appadurai's (1996) scapes of globalisation provided this study with a cognitive model with which to understand how the process of international migration might be conceived and acted out by individuals, groups and perhaps whole communities. It also provided a framework with which to analyse the narrative stories participants contributed toward this study. In doing so the study argues that the scapes present international migrants with forms and modes of agency that are as fluid and evolving as the globalised world itself. Such agency cannot be understood as a singular form of action, power, capacity or opportunity, but as dependent and contingent upon the evolving nature of the landscapes and their relationships with states, with technology, with money and markets, ideas and ethnicities, and with people.

Seen as such, people do not act and interact with globalisation; globalisation provides them with a myriad of different capacities and opportunities to act and interact with and within it. The study argues that globalisation and the spaces that it comprises is not merely an overarching structure with which international migrants interact, but rather it is the genesis of a whole range of different forms and modes of agency.

### **The Geography of Power**

The study also argues that a further dimension can be added to the landscapes of globalisation: 'legitimacy', which indicates that an international migrant's ability to act on a global level will be determined by the level of agency apportioned to him or her by the nation state on the basis of circumstances, skills or nationality. This, and the agency international migrants are able to bring to bear when negotiating the four 'zones of migration', support Massey's (1999) ideas about a 'geography of power', with the findings of the study supporting the idea that different individuals, from different countries, with differing circumstances will find their powers to act to have differing levels of legitimacy within different nation states.

### **International Migrants and the UK**

It has been mentioned several times in this thesis that there is relative shortage of scholarly and policy research that is informed by the views, opinions and experiences of international migrants themselves. In that this investigation successfully gathered such views, opinions and experiences from a diverse group of international migrants, the study and its data can be

viewed as unpacking what Goffman (1990) would call the 'back region' of the phenomenon that is international migrants and their relationships within the UK. In doing so the voices the study presents stand up against the homogenised statistics used by policy researchers and the kind of stereotypes that have been discussed by both the popular press and the man or woman on the street.

### **Methodological Contribution**

In undertaking this study a further contribution was made toward scholarly knowledge. The literature suggests that the researching of 'hard to reach' samples is notoriously difficult. Therefore this study, in that it developed substantive relationships with people who fall within the category of 'hard to reach', is in the position to provide insights to researchers also seeking to investigate hard to reach groups.

The insights revolve around successfully negotiating access to the sample and the nature of the relationship that was developed between the researcher and the participants who took part in this study. They concede that if a researcher wishes to gather data from the 'hard to reach' he or she must first reach them: i.e. find a place, event or setting where they might meet the people they are seeking to sample. As the participants' involvement is voluntary, there must be something about the research and their participation in it that is attractive, something that enables each individual to get something out of it on a personal, social or psychological level. Also, conceding that participants are people with a multitude of daily routines,

duties and obligations and that the researcher has a vested interest in their participation, he or she must decide to be flexible within the timetables, circumstances and emotional states of the individuals who make up the sample. People are said to live busy lives and the participants of this study were no exception.

The research also suggests that the interview process may be enhanced if interviews are taken from the confines of a research room and instead placed in a setting that affords maximum levels of comfort for the interviewee.

### **8.3 How the Findings Inform the Policy, Social and Scholarly Research Assayed in this Work**

The research assayed for this thesis makes clear that international migrants have not descended on the UK to devour the country's advanced forms of social provision. Rather, in their desire to work, tendency to live in private sector housing and inability to access non-employment related benefits, international migrants are unlikely to figure prominently on lists of public sector priorities (although individual groupings may do so). The statistics and the policy and scholarly research covered in this work do suggest that international migrants are here in sufficient numbers to impact upon public services (perhaps most notably education and healthcare) and that asylum seekers and refugees are more likely to be dependent upon social provision. Yet the vast majority of migrants appear to be carrying on with their lives and

their work regardless and are largely unseen and unheard by UK public provision and policymakers. The fact that the policy and social research assayed within this study largely failed to identify or address the opinions, views or experiences of international migrants themselves reinforces this work's claim to add to the domain. However, one must also ask how the approach taken by this thesis would have added this literature.

### **The LGA's iCoCo Report**

In Chapter One the LGA's iCoCo report (2007) was mobilised to introduce the idea that international migration was having, and would continue to have, real impacts upon services at a community level. The report can be seen as local authorities coming together (through the LGA) to challenge estimates on the number of international migrants living in the UK at that time, and the amount of money (grant) the Treasury apportioned to authorities to administrate services for people in the local area.<sup>x</sup> However the report completely failed to include the views, opinions and experiences of international migrants themselves. Gathering data that served to investigate the relationships that international migrants held with services, and how they understood these from their own perspectives, would have supported the LGA's claim that such people did have existing and ongoing relationships with services and could have unpacked the nature of these. It would have also provided an evidence base within which to support or question the idea, taken up by the Brown government, that the vast majority of international

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<sup>x</sup> By December of the same year the BBC were reporting that the LGA had called upon a House of Lords Select Committee to set aside a £250 million fund for local authorities to deal with the impacts of international migration and make changes to the way the government calculated the numbers of international migrants in the UK (BBC, 2007).

migrants were merely short-term economic migrants with little or no aspiration to remain in the UK outside short term paid employment (see 3.2 International Migration: A Temporary Phenomenon).

## **Policy Research and Statistics**

Chapter Three of this thesis sought to bring together policy, social and scholarly research and statistics to understand international migration and the UK in terms of immigration, integration and cohesion, although it largely achieved this without the views, opinions and experiences of international migrants themselves. This investigation has demonstrated that, given the opportunity, international migrants are both willing and able to tell us about the relationships they hold with the UK and its social structures, and as such could have contributed much toward the policy and scholarly research reviewed in Chapter Three.

The Cattle (2001) and Denham (2001) reports for the Home Office cited in Chapter Three found that communities felt both segregated and fragmented by conditions of poverty, deprivation and weak community leadership. They recommended that countering the effects of these would require:

- Increased knowledge and understanding amongst communities.
- A greater sense of citizenship based on common principles and respect for ethnic, cultural and religious differences.
- Greater cohesion of communities and more integration of those individuals and groups currently subject to real or perceived segregation.



Neither report recommended a blueprint by which these were to be achieved and perhaps, in fairness, it was not the brief of either to do so. However the key to bringing about such requirements rests on the first recommendation, for a sense of common citizenship and greater cohesion and integration can only hope to flow from increasing knowledge and understanding amongst communities. Such knowledge cannot be produced by statistical enquiry, nor can it be engendered through seeking to capture the expert and experiential knowledge of service managers, public sector professionals or social theorists. It can only be achieved by engaging with people within the communities in which they live in order to capture their views, their opinions, experiences, histories and stories. The methods employed by this investigation would bring much to such an enterprise.

### **Integration and Cohesion**

Policymakers and professionals working in and around the integration and cohesion agendas have much to consider from the findings of this research. Integration will be levered by opportunities to 'acculturate', but the difficulties international migrants find in forming close relationships with British people, matched with the relative ease with which many appear to form relationships with other international migrants, be they part of the same diaspora or otherwise, suggest that leveraging integration is not going to be an easy process.

Evidence of 'diasporic clustering' found in this study is of course not a new phenomenon. The criticisms of multiculturalism raised by Castel (2001) and

Denham (2001) were based on communities who shared the same ethnic heritage, lived in the same areas, undertook the same kinds of work and looked toward the community and its links to another country for cultural identity. It is therefore unsurprising that international migrants working primarily in low skilled, low paid, service sector jobs, living predominantly in affordable private sector housing, with little experience of the nuanced networks of UK society will be concentrated in particular areas, looking toward each other to understand how things work and reaching back to their homes for familiar friendships, language, foodstuffs and community. However, it is such clustering of diasporas that provides the networks with which individuals can live and work in the UK whilst encasing themselves within a 'bubble' of their native countries.

The implications of international migrants being concentrated in areas that cluster around their diasporas to the extent that some might live in 'bubbles' of native culture are substantial for those working within the integration and cohesion agendas: firstly, because they appear to represent what Ager and Strang (2004) define as the 'means and markers' and 'social connections' indicators of integration (see 3.2 Integration) operating in separation to the 'facilitators' and 'foundation' indicators (language, cultural knowledge, rights, expectations, etc.); secondly, because they demonstrate that the multicultural model has proved a robust platform on which to accommodate the rapid arrival and settlement of significant numbers of international migrants and the communities they have clustered together to become; and thirdly, the draw toward the familiarity of a diasporic cluster will impact upon attempts to make

international migrants cohesive within the communities in which they live, resulting in an increased likelihood that they will live lives that are as divided and separated from mainstream society as other groups that inhabit the same areas, from which they will be equally divided.

Of course the paradox of community cohesion appears to lie within its tenets. That shared values, shared respect for others and a shared sense of citizenship are related as much to the process of 'acculturation' as they are integration (Berry, 2006), and it would be easy to assume that recently arrived international migrants would hold strong enough links to their homes to not wish to integrate with mainstream society, or become citizens for that matter. However such assumptions would be an incomplete assessment of the situation. In undertaking low skilled, low paid work, most international migrants will cluster into private housing in areas that are subject to high levels of deprivation (areas where residents are likely to experience high levels of crime, poor health, poor educational achievement, low income, substandard housing, etc.). Given that such areas are often considered hostile, even by those who live there (let alone the kinds of people charged with developing policy), it is not really surprising that people who live in such areas have a tendency to cluster into communities that provide some sense of shared past, present and future, not to mention security.

However it would be erroneous to suggest that diasporic clustering alone is reason to suggest that international migrants will be cause for further fragmentation of communities in the local area. Many communities have

managed to integrate and be cohesive within broader society without experiencing the kinds of parallel and fragmented lives found by Castel (2001): Greek, Turkish and post-war Polish and Ukrainian communities spring to mind. What seems more plausible is the link between levels of cohesion and levels of deprivation. As international migrants are predominantly employed in low paid work, one might hypothesise that income deprivation will serve to keep them living in areas that experience high levels of deprivation. However this has yet to be proven; it may be that their adaptive and opportunistic relationship with the UK job market will enable them to evolve ways that differ from existing communities within the multicultural model the UK has experienced to date. If this comes to pass then it may be that the relationship between international migrants and the UK has much to teach the cohesion agenda.

## **Methodology**

Finally, the investigation and its methodology can be seen as bridging the gap highlighted by Phillimore and Goodson (2009) that research relating to how international migrants engage, experience and understand education and training, as well as work, employment and the UK job market, is largely missing from the literature. This study, in doing just this, has provided the need for such work with, if not a blueprint, then at the very least an example of how such work can be undertaken and the kinds of findings that may be produced from the mobilisation of such an approach.

## **8.4 Implications of Findings for Further Research**

The findings of this investigation point to the need for a more substantive study of migrants in the UK that focuses around the issues of citizenship and its relationship with the process of integration.

They also have considerable implications for public sector researchers, policymakers, heads of service and managers: firstly, because they demonstrate that international migrants have a great deal to say about their relationships with the UK and its social structures, and secondly, because they demonstrate that such an approach could prove a rich and invaluable source of data for public sector research and engagement activities, such as the assessment of need or the process of consultation relating to changes in policy or provision.

## **8.5 Researching International Migrants and Other 'Hard to Reach' Groups**

The research assayed within this investigation indicates that involvement of, or consultation with, international migrants has not proved to be the norm amongst public bodies. Although it is beyond the scope of this work to determine the reasons why this may be so, it is possible to hypothesise that the reasons will include:

- A failure to recognise or acknowledge international migrants as having significant or lasting relationships with services.
- A set of difficulties attached to the research of 'hard to reach' groups.
- A general shortfall in the analytical expertise necessary to interpret or triangulate qualitative data.
- A fear that such data would both complicate or challenge existing ideas or structures relating to the administration and delivery of provision.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, the continued presence of international migrants in the UK and their relationships with the structures of social provision is not something that public bodies can ignore. However, issues relating to researching 'hard to reach' groups and the use of data that flows from such work are ongoing, not just in policy research, but in social research as a whole.

The public sector at least has been awash with both recommended and prescribed research methods for some time, yet advice for reaching the 'hard to reach' is conspicuous by its relative thinness on the ground. In part this is because the 'hard to reach' are just that, hard to reach, so it would be difficult to prescribe or promote a set of principles or practices that promised an easy fix to the problem. In part the public sector is perhaps guilty of valuing quantitative approaches to data collection and interpretation at the expense of the kind of qualitative approaches that would be suitable for the research of smaller numbers. However, in that the methods utilised in this investigation

may be viewed as having successfully captured the views, opinions and experiences of a group of international migrants, suggestions made on the basis of insights and lessons learnt from undertaking this investigation may prove helpful both for policy and scholarly research of similar groups.

Insomuch as qualitative research is intimately related to the cognitive, cultural and operational world in which it is planned and enacted, proposing a single framework or methodological toolkit for researching international migrants or other 'hard to reach' groups would seem unhelpful, as it is unlikely to accommodate the intricacies of relative relevance in each and every situation. Because of this, the lessons this investigation can offer to other researchers working with hard to research groups will take the form of a set of principles that relate to how they might orientate their study, gain 'entry' to their sample and keep their subjects or participants engaged in the research process. They do not claim to be unique, nor do I expect them to represent a revelation to those already working in the field; they are merely a set of principles drawn from mobilisation of this research that may prove illuminative for other researchers working in this area.

## **Principles for Research of 'Hard to Reach' Groups**

- (i) Think critically about who the research is seeking to engage with**

It is important to be able to identify the group of people the research is seeking to engage with because the term 'hard to reach' is too vague, and

too easily interpreted as a description of a homogenised grouping of people that are 'out there, somewhere', too difficult to engage with. It will be more productive to identify a target group based on some form of structure, activity or circumstance that serves to group people together (such as ethnic heritage, drug dependency or homelessness for example). This will have the effect of allowing the researcher to disaggregate the target group from the homogenised mass, and allow him or her to start thinking about ways in which the group may be engaged.

**(ii) Think critically about why such a group is considered hard to reach**

Having identified a target group it is important to consider why this group is considered to be hard to reach in the first place. It may be that they are so because the researcher, or the organisation he or she is working on behalf of, has little or no contact with the members of the group. Perhaps they do not access the services the organisation provides (e.g. they don't access education), perhaps they are hidden by other groups (e.g. illegally trafficked sex workers), or maybe they themselves wish to hide from unwanted attention (e.g. illegal immigrants).

**(iii) Think critically about how such people might be reached**

The easiest way to access people is through the structures they inhabit or mobilise. However, the problem with the hard to reach is that these structures are likely to be either outside those provided by the public sector or that the researcher has little or no knowledge of what structures they utilise, or if they



do, little experience of how to navigate them. There are of course structures that the vast majority of people mobilise at some time (e.g. those that administrate and organise the body after a death, or a public toilet), however looking for a small number in a universal service can be very time consuming and costly with little guarantee of success. The approach used by this study was to determine a structure that the target group might inhabit or mobilise, look for evidence of them doing so, then network toward that structure.

#### **(iv) Find the gatekeeper**

The issues connected to the gatekeeper will be related to the kind of structure that has been identified. If it is an informal structure (e.g. a group of Bangladeshi men who come together after every Friday prayer to eat 'desi' food and talk politics) then it will probably be that the target group themselves are the gatekeepers and that the researcher will have to convince them to let him or her be there and explain what the nature of his or her participation in that group will be. If it's a formal structure (like the one mobilised by this investigation) then the researcher will need to mobilise the formal processes and procedures that underpin the operation and administration of that structure.

It is also likely that the researcher will have to mobilise the informal structures that underpin the main formal structure. If the research has managed to find a structure that is inhabited or mobilised by people deemed to be 'hard to reach', then it is also likely to be occupied by a group of people who work, run or manage that structure, who may be for or against the idea of a

researcher working within that structure. Getting the right people 'on side' will be crucial to the success of the research; the problem is that it won't always be obvious who the right people are. A front line worker may be in favour of the research, but have no power over a manager who is not interested. Alternatively the manager may prove enthusiastic, but be blocked by a front line worker with the power to block or undermine the study at grass roots level.

This investigation was able to network with an officer, an administrator, who could explain the political situation within the organisation, facilitate introductions to key personnel and mobilise the appropriate procedures to get the study legitimately up and running in the organisation.

**(v) The issue of credibility**

Assuming the research has been successful in finding a sample, it is crucial that the researcher considers what credibility he or she can offer that sample as a witness and recorder of what they have to say. If the sample is considered to be hard to reach then it is likely that the researcher will inhabit and mobilise different social systems, frames of reference and life experiences to those people he or she is seeking to sample. Because of this the issue of credibility is likely to be a tricky one, for which no single approach can guarantee success.

When I initiated contact with the participants of this study I had no credentials as an international migrant. I had not been a refugee, I had not worked

abroad, nor could I claim ethnic minority heritage, and as such I never expected to achieve credibility by claiming similar circumstances, experiences or life chances. In retrospect I think that given the sheer array of different backgrounds and situations the participants of this investigation brought to this study, this was a good thing, as the set of lived through experiences and internalised meanings that might make me seem credible to an asylum seeker would have appeared completely alien to a participant with a different set of circumstances (e.g. the spouse of a UK citizen).

The approach I utilised was to seek to gain credibility through the organisation that I represented (the university) and through explanations of what the research was about, why it was important and what participation would involve. I also explained that participation would be an opportunity for individuals to tell their stories in a safe and anonymous space and that their views, opinions and experiences would contribute to a body of knowledge that was to date pretty thin on the ground. Basically I offered them the opportunity to have some stakeholding in the investigation, to become witnesses called on to provide critical insights and crucial evidence in an arena of which they had both intimate and expert knowledge through their own experiences.

#### **(vi) Encouraging ongoing participation**

Of course there is an interviewer-interviewee dynamic, a rapport, that is built by and between both interviewer and interviewee that can make the event a positive, and hopefully repeatable experience. However a good dynamic is

not in itself enough to keep 'hard to reach' participants participating in research.

We live in an age where we place increasing importance on what we do with our time and see ourselves as leading increasingly busy lives, despite spending less time at work or doing household chores than previous generations. Outside our working obligations we expect to be able to choose when or whether we do something, even if it's doing our shopping or paying our bills at four in the morning. It should come as no surprise to find that such influences will also affect hard to reach participants in research.

In terms of this study it soon became clear that if I had sought to regiment their interviews into a schedule, determining a day and a time for each, then it just wouldn't have happened: some were busy, some were working and some weren't feeling like getting out of bed. I realised that if I wanted to collect their data I had to be prepared to meet them at a time when they felt able or willing to participate and in a place they felt comfortable.

In a world where many people working in the public sector still expect to work Monday to Friday, 9 to 5, such an approach might seem alien. Private sector market researchers wouldn't bat an eyelid if they were commissioned to conduct their research when their subjects were available, be it in the evening, weekend or a bank holiday. If a researcher has managed to access a hard to reach group, has managed to come across as credible and been successful in giving participants some feeling of personal stakeholding in the

process, then he or she just has to step outside the box and accept that if he or she really want to collect the data then he or she will have to make it easy for the participants to provide it; be their coffee break, be their lunch meeting or their opportunity to just talk, whatever they want the event to be, be it.

## **8.5 Postscript**

It seems to me, as I finish this thesis, once again sat having coffee overlooking Nottingham's Old Market Square, that much has changed. The international migrants I see around me are no longer the uniformed baristas of coffee commerce; they are the managers, the trainers, the customers. They seem to have moved onward and upward, creating space for another group of people, predominantly white, with what I recognise as working class accents. It makes me consider the idea that the only thing that is truly constant in our lives is change. Everything changes, for all we seek to hold on to, to maintain and defend from changes. So it should not really be surprising that the operation and organisation of the coffee house has in some way changed. Nor should it be surprising that the social, economic and political climate in which the data for this investigation was gathered, analysed, interpreted and discussed has also changed. The global financial crisis that came to our attention as the 'credit crunch' in 2007 continues to unravel in both public and private spheres and the Cameron-headed coalition government has tasked itself with a very different mandate from those of high spending Blair and Brown New Labour governments. Health, education, adult

social care, housing, community safety, the libraries service: all areas of public provision face significant reductions in funding that will inevitably and radically reduce non-targeted services.

The implications of such changes to international migrants are interesting. The economic model of migration suggested that as economic migrants the vast majority of international migrants would move elsewhere when opportunities in the UK job market declined. If this has not happened then it might be that the economic model of migration failed to factor in the idea of a global recession, nor the idea that international migrants would prove more able to react and adapt to shifts in the UK job market than the domestic workforce. Either way, it continues to appear that international migrants are people who are here to stay.

If policymakers, heads of service and service managers appear to be no further in considering migrants' needs in their list of priorities, then it may be that their tendency to be largely self sufficient (mobile, in employment and renting private housing) has kept them off the radar. It could also be said that in an age of austerity they are too busy trying to maintain some level of service to existing services rather than contemplate any larger constituency.

The challenge to this is of course the Equalities Act, which, although passed in 2010, became a legal obligation for public bodies in 2011. The Act brings equality into law and charges the public sector with an obligation to ensure that access to services is not restricted by age, gender, ethnic heritage,

religious belief, sexual preference, etc. It should determine that international migrants have equal access to services in the local communities they live and work within, and equal voice about how those services should be run. The public consultations that preceded the first significant cuts to services in early 2011, as a legal requirement of policy change, should have presented the Equalities Act with its first test. However, it is still unclear whether the legal duty posed by the act had any success in extending the consultation process to international migrants.

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