Racism, 'second generation' refugees and the asylum system

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Abstract:

This paper explores 'second generation' refugee experiences of racism in London, drawing on 45 qualitative interviews. The article analyses specific histories of racialisation for three different refugee groups from Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Turkey and the generational shifts in reproducing race. The asylum system is foregrounded as an essential framework in which to analyse experiences of racism. This was most evident for the first generation refugee, however for their children less is known on how these forms of racism shaped experiences. Within our study, 'everyday' mundane forms of racism were recounted by the 'second generation' which were often contrasted to that of their parents in severity. This paper analyses this inter-generational relationship further in relation to racism, through the lens of the asylum system. The paper therefore contributes to a greater empirical understanding on earlier modalities of racism and how they survive into the present.

This paper explores 'second generation' refugee experiences of racism in London, drawing on 45 qualitative interviews. The article analyses specific histories of racialisation for three different refugee groups from Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Turkey and the generational shifts in reproducing race. These three refugee groups and their children are often overlooked within the wider literature on race and ethnicity in Britain, although their histories of reception and settlement are important within a context of tightening immigration controls. Similarly, while there is research on new forms of racism in connection to the asylum system, there is a paucity of research on how these forms of racism impact on the lived experiences of 'second generation' refugees and it is on this intergenerational relationship that this paper will focus (Millington, 2010; Tyler, 2006). The paper therefore contributes to a greater empirical understanding on earlier modalities of racism and how they have survived into the present.

Racism is conceptualised here as a device used in the categorisation and oppression of human beings. As Miles (1989) defined it, racism is an ideology positing that humanity is composed of discrete groups on the basis of biological or inherent characteristics, in order to legitimate inequality between those groups of people. While a creature of slavery and colonialism, this racial ideology is contemporarily institutionalised in Britain through the systematic discrimination which racialised minorities experience in their interactions with the state. This

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is what Goldberg (2002) has theorised of as a 'racial state', a modern state which has always conceived of itself as racially configured. Moreover, this 'racial state' is one where the regulation of immigration and asylum dictate the discursive and practical construction of the nation's otherness (Lentin, 2007). The research in this paper focuses on the asylum system as one part of this state apparatus, an institution that in its very essence is exclusionary. The empirical research is interested in the ways in which the state racism of the asylum system, as an ideological force, cascades downwards into the everyday of people's lives (Smith, 2016; Essed, 1991). It is this relationship between the institutional legislation of borders and the interpersonal experiences of 'second generation' refugees which will be further explored through the interview material; the complex and subtle entanglement of identity processes with the modern state (Goldberg, 2002). Participants for this study experienced a variety of different forms of racism, and while direct state racism was recalled, interpersonal forms of racism from friends and strangers were more commonly discussed. These forms of racism do have a relationship with the racism perpetuated by the state and particularly the asylum system as one strand within this. Rather than simply a question of individual attitudes then, racism is analysed in relation to systematic inequalities stemming from an exploitative social structure. The mechanisms of this exclusion can sometimes be violent, yet such repression is only one effect of this power. Instead it is the 'normalisation' of these everyday disciplinary schemes that is focused on within the paper, the 'warp and weave' of the racial state into the social fabric (Goldberg, 2002; Foucault, 1970).

To investigate this relationship further, the paper first examines the literature on race and the asylum system, stressing the significance of this nexus. The paper moves on to outline the methodology behind the research project and interrogates the racialised aspect of the term 'second generation'. The article then charts the changing UK asylum policy and the legislation which excluded certain groups and later framed the 'asylum seeker' and refugee as new targets. The different receptions the three refugee groups of this study experienced and the racialisation of these responses within government discussions is then examined. The second half of the paper explores how this discourse is absorbed generationally through everyday racism, recounted within a wider project on 'second generation' refugees. Within our study, mundane forms of racism were recalled by our participants that were often contrasted to that of their parents in severity. Despite this, the research also finds that asylum policies impacted on 'second generation' experiences of racism.

The relationship between migration and race.

The generation of new conceptions of racism and exclusion in the last three decades have been intimately connected to the asylum system and the strengthening of borders. These racialised divisions draw from historical antecedents, demonstrating certain continuities but also showing rapid modification. As Back puts it, racism is a 'scavenger ideology' which draws selectively upon the past, present and imagined future, distilling complex fears and anxieties (interviewed in Meer and Nayak, 2015; see also Solomos and Back, 1996). In this vein, the stigmatisation of those seeking asylum has been an 'open wound' through which racism has 'reinfected' the body politic, combining with and reinforcing other forms of popular racism (Schuster, 2003; Kundnani, 2001). Indeed such anti-asylum politics are not simply played out in the territorial borders of state sovereignty, but are 'multiplied and reduced in their localisation', dividing citizens and migrants, us and them (Anderson, 2013; Yuval Davis, 2013; Balibar, 1998).

The relationship between race and the system of borders controls has often been occluded within academic research (Erel et al, 2016; Schuster, 2012). A recent analysis of highly cited

works on European migration, ethnicity and minorities found that the concepts of race and racism were rarely discussed (Lentin, 2014). This silence is not coincidental, but mirrors a wider political framework in which the British state has pursued a formal policy of separating race relations from immigration policy, exempting immigration policy from the provision of anti-racist legislation (Spencer, 1998). Conversely, this division has also been justified through its connection. From the late 1960s onwards the British political consensus was that stable race relations required an exclusionary and controlled immigration system (Mulvey, 2010). 'If you want good race relations' Thatcher stated 'you have to allay people's fears on numbers' (Margaret Thatcher, World in Action, 30 January 1978). In contrast, this paper argues the opposite conclusion; control over immigration 'numbers' has intensified experiences of racism for settled minorities. Racism and immigration controls are inextricably connected and particularly in the post second world war, states have developed regimes of control that are explicitly racialised. The British state has historically been engaged in an ongoing process of constructing the state's people and the national boundaries, selecting those who belong and rejecting those who do not, and attributing roles and functions to certain groups on the basis of certain 'natural' characteristics (Schuster, 2010). The immigration system has therefore been governed by a racial logic which is often unspoken although it is intrinsic to such a system. As Clifford Geertz (1985: 261) puts it: 'Foreignness does not start at the water's edge, but at the skin's'.

A racialised logic was institutionalised under successive Immigration Acts passed between 1962 and 1988. This gradually eroded the rights of entry to the UK of Black and Asian people from the Commonwealth, 'closing the doors' through new restrictions (Spencer, 2002). Under the 1968 Act, UK passport holders were subject to immigration controls unless they had a parent or a grandparent born in the UK or had been adopted or naturalized in the UK. Subsequent acts in 1971 and 1981 created exclusionary aspects to British citizenship based on concepts of 'patrials' and 'non-patrials', all of which in theory meant that millions of white Commonwealth citizens could enter Britain while almost all non-white commonwealth citizens were excluded. Following the Immigration Act of 1988, immigration from Commonwealth countries was all but stopped and instead asylum seekers became the main category of primary migrants (Bloch, 2000). The Blair administration then turned towards restricting the conditions under which asylum applications could be made while controlling asylum-seekers' movement and settlement by planned geographical 'dispersal' and detention (Gill, 2009).

Reflecting this legislative change, during the 1990s when the cohort for this study were growing up in London, hostility to refugees became a common currency within British politics and refugees have featured more prominently in political propaganda (Garner, 2013; Marfleet, 2006). A study in this period found that British media reporting was characterised by the inaccurate and provocative use of language to describe those entering the country to seek asylum, with derogatory terms such as 'illegal refugee' and 'asylum cheat' used to reference these individuals, with connected images dominated by the stereotype of the 'threatening young male' (Buchanan et al, 2003). The immigration system has therefore constructed new forms of racialised 'Others'; the bureaucratic category of the 'asylum seeker' conjures up negative images of the 'bogus' and 'lazy scrounger', contextualising them as a threat (Sales, 2007). These are often racialized constructions in which the 'asylum seeker' has become a 'catch-all' term for any non-white person, often depicted as an undifferentiated Other group (Lewis, 2006; Hubbard, 2005). As Garner (2013) points out, this racialisation is not exclusively framed in terms of categorising according to appearance, but is also a more abstract process of attributing innate characteristics to a diverse and bureaucratically assigned grouping of asylum seekers.

Hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees has also 'spilled over' such that it affects not just the management of 'new arrivals' but also the rights of settled 'minorities', whose existing vulnerability to racism is worsened (Kundani, 2001). It is the experience of these settled groups which the research is interested in further exploring within this context of anti-refugee hostility. The paper argues that the racism that the 'first generation' experienced found echoes in the experiences of the 'second generation' and interacted with the asylum system more broadly. To further explore this intergenerational relationship, the next section now discusses the reasons for this focus and the methodology underpinning this.

Discussing migration and race; methods

This article attempts to focus attention back on the often disguised or ignored role of racism in producing and reproducing race and shaping formations of identity. Categories of the 'immigrant', 'race' or indeed 'ethnicity' can often appear to be neutral, descriptive categories because of the evasion of racism through which acts of discrimination disappear and then reappear camouflaged as the victim's alleged difference (Fields and Fields, 2012). For example, there is a significant and burgeoning literature on the 'second generation' immigrant which almost completely ignores racism as shaping experience (Levitt, 2009; Portes et al, 2009; Crul and Vermeulen, 2003). Much of this literature runs the risk of reifying the very categories we are seeking to deny; the 'figure of the immigrant' provides a key political and intellectual mechanism through which our thinking is held hostage and this can be similarly reproduced in researching the children of immigrants (Back and Shamser, 2012; Gilroy, 2005). Within the French context, Delphy (2015) notes, the children and grandchildren of immigrants from North Africa, born in France and French, gradually started to be called 'second (or third) generation immigrants'. Not French, but immigrants; the 'true' French were the white French. Later, these 'second generation' immigrants were then perceived as and named as 'Muslims' in France. These top down impositions of identity need to be further interrogated. The term 'second generation' is critically used within this paper as a way in which to examine the refugee specific processes of identification which linked participants to the experiences of their parents. In focusing on racism, the paper hopes to challenge the problems of reification inherent in the term 'second generation'.

The article draws on interview material with three groups of 'second generation' refugees; 45 qualitative interviews were undertaken in London as part of a cross-national project. Numerically, this group of 'second generation' refugees are an increasingly significant part of Europe's ethnic minority communities. As Bloch (2000) highlights, in the UK up until the late 1980s the numbers of asylum seekers arriving each year was consistently less than 4,000; by 1991 the number of new arrivals had increased to 44,840. This increase has resulted in more UK born children with parents who are refugees. The individuals interviewed for this project were all born in Britain and grew up in London and all had parents who had gained refugee status in Britain either as Vietnamese refugees, Tamil refugees from Sri Lanka or Kurdish refugees from Turkey. The three countries of origin were chosen as they were among the top five countries of origin of asylum seekers in the UK between 1980 and 1995 (www.unhcr.org/statistics/populationdatabase). Given the lack of a sampling frame, we used multiple starting points with an attempt to ensure a diverse range of experiences were included, with interviewees accessed through personal contacts, social media, refugee organisations, university societies, politicians and cold calling. The interview questions were framed around family networks, education, employment, social networks, identity and with one question which directly asked if interviewees had experienced racism. There were eight individuals out of the 45 interviewees in total who clearly stated they had not experienced

any racism, although out of that number, two later in the interview recalled experiences which could be described as racist; in contrast, the majority of interviewees recounted clear experiences of racism.

Despite this focus, the problems of articulation on the subject of racism were noticeable. Harries (2014) argues that it is not easy to name racism in a wider context in which race is almost entirely denied. In a number of the interviews, when directly asked if they had themselves experienced racism, interviewees responded they had not although it then became clear that it was only more physically violent forms of racism which were included in their definition. For example, Sophia responds to the question of racism:

> Erm, no. I don't think I ever have… Erm there's like really random comments, as in it wouldn't be serious or deep. Like for them it would be for fun, but I'm sure there'll be other people out there who take that really seriously …But I never got picked on, it wasn't a big deal where I was originally from...I obviously got name calling, you know Ching Chong, whatever you can think of really (Female, Vietnamese heritage).

Naming racism was also sometimes done in an inverse sense, with a feeling of guilt attached to co-ethnic friendship networks:

> The fact that I'm Kurdish, it means doing certain things and being around certain people, and not that I'm a racist or anything like that, but it's just being comfortable (Aram, male, Kurdish heritage).

In this sense, it is the racialised subject who feels pressurised to defend themselves against accusations of racism. In contrast, discussing the real pressures of racism was clearly difficult to express for a number of interviewees. Rachel is asked about experiences of racism and she responds:

> Am I supposed to be completely honest even if it sounds wrong?...People can't hear us can they? So when I was growing up I feel bad saying this but my dad actually changed his name…He did that for us to have a shorter surname so it was easier for us to get jobs. And from a young age, I feel bad saying this, but he would say to us that you always have to be one step ahead of the English people because you're different and it's gonna be harder to achieve and do well in this country because you're different. But yeah I feel bad saying that (female, Tamil heritage).

Finding a language in which to make sense of these experiences was clearly problematic for our interviewees, with Rachel going so far as to ask permission before she explained the adaptive strategies her father has undertaken in an attempt to mitigate labour market racism. Part of this uncertainty lies in an intergenerational contrast; while their parents experienced racism which was notable in its severity, the racism experienced by their children was often more mundane and interpersonal. To examine this relationship further and the experiences of racism described by the 'second generation' the paper first turns to the arrival of their parents in Britain to further contextualise this intergenerational dynamic.

The identification of the 'first generation' refugee

For the parents of individuals researched in this study, their arrival to Britain was publically scrutinised, with a highly racialised reception from the British government which explicitly

questioned their refugee histories and focused on distinguishing the 'genuine' refugee from the 'bogus'. The three refugee groups included in the research came to the UK at different times, in different circumstances and through different processes (for a longer comparative report, see Bloch et al, 2015). The first of the three groups to arrive in the UK were Vietnamese refugees; the government resettled 10,000 refugees from the camps in Hong Kong as part of a refugee programme in the late 1970s and early 1980s. They were publically represented as refugees escaping Communist rule even though the reality was more complex. Being part of a resettlement programme meant that the Vietnamese had refugee status on arrival, giving them security and access to most UK citizenship rights, including family reunion, equal access to welfare support and other resources which asylum-seekers do not benefit from (Sales, 2007). They were then dispersed across the country, although dispersal as a policy was not successful as many Vietnamese refugees were isolated and lacked support services in the areas where they were resettled. The pattern thus became secondary migration to urban centres (Robinson and Hale, 1989).

Kurds from Turkey started arriving as spontaneous asylum-seekers from the early 1990s, in response to ongoing political repression and bombing of villages in eastern Turkey; it is estimated that more than 50,000 Kurds from Turkey have settled in the UK (Demir, 2012). Seeking asylum meant that Kurds had to go through the asylum determination process, which can result in insecure situations while cases are considered and little or no support on arrival or during the asylum process (Knox and Kushner, 2012). Unlike the Vietnamese, who were placed in reception centres and offered language and orientation to assist with integration, asylum-seekers can struggle to access services and, incrementally, have been entitled to fewer services and less financial support while going through the asylum determination process (Bloch et al. 2013). Finally, refugees from Sri Lanka were predominantly Tamils, seeking refugee status on the basis that their ethnic group had experienced persecution as a minority. The majority of Tamils who came as asylum-seekers to the UK arrived during the civil war of 1983–2002, though Tamils also entered the UK as students and on other visas and, once in the UK, claimed asylum, generally settling in London (Cowley-Sathiakumar, 2008). This was the first group from a Commonwealth country in 1985 to be entered on the UK visa list, regardless of the colonial ties with Britain (Flynn, 2005).

These differences between the three groups shaped the ways in which the British government framed their arrival. The Vietnamese 'boat people' were officially welcomed by the British government, and there were many political discussions which selectively praised these refugees. For example, in 1979 Lord Segal spoke in a House of Lords debate on the 'boat people' and the importance of allowing their resettlement in Britain. He argued:

> Why I am so desperately anxious for far more refugees from Indo-China being admitted into this country is not only on urgent, humanitarian grounds, but because they are a most diligent, honest, hardworking people who will more than repay any helping hand that we can hold out to them... They will prove themselves a steady, hard-working labour force, especially if recruited to work in our hospitals, where I am sure they would never go on strike (Hansard 14 February 1979 Col 1376).

Lord Segal presented a colonial depiction of Vietnamese refugees as obedient, servile workers at a time of industrial militancy in Britain. The Lord's discussion focused on defining the legitimacy of Vietnamese refugees within a ruling class, racialised gaze. Tamil refugees were also scrutinised on their arrival to the UK, although in less positive terms, often portrayed as dangerous 'terrorists' (Knox and Kushner, 2012). In a Parliamentary discussion on a new Immigration Bill in 1987, the debate centred on the case of 64 Tamils

from Sri Lanka who had arrived in Heathrow without the correct legal documentation. The Bill was promoted as a means of stopping 'bogus' asylum seekers from entering the country, through stricter restrictions on the airlines involved. The claims of the Tamils for refugee status were, according to the Minister of State, 'manifestly bogus'. Other MPs agreed, with their migration routes questioned: 'If they are good and genuine refugees, and they were in the north or the east, why did they not go to south India, as the majority of Tamils in their situation have done?' The Tamils were presented not as a group needing protection, but as a group worthy of suspicion and were compared negatively to the Vietnamese refugees, with one Conservative MP arguing that while the Vietnamese were 'welcome to stay here… the nearly 2,000 temporary asylum seekers from Sri Lanka do not, by any yardstick, fall into that category… I will go a long way to support any genuine case, but I doubt whether there are any genuine cases among the 64 Tamils. I doubt also whether there are many genuine cases in the 2,000 or more temporary asylum seekers' (Hansard 16 March 1987 Col 746).

Turkish Kurds seeking asylum in Britain were treated with the same suspicion in Parliament. In a 1989 Parliamentary debate initiated by the MP Jeremy Corbyn calling for more support for Kurdish refugees, the Conservative Minister of State Tim Renton responded by arguing that 'Kurdish people who come here do so for simply economic reasons rather than through fear of persecution'. A 'surge' of Kurdish refugees arriving from Turkey was invoked, Renton stating: 'In one instance they almost filled an entire charter flight of over 100 passengers.' It was concluded that

> That is not the action of people who fear imminent persecution. We are seeing a gross and transparent abuse of the asylum procedures as a means of obtaining jobs, housing and perhaps social security benefits in the United Kingdom (Hansard 26 May 1989 Col 1264).

Both the Kurdish and Tamil refugees were thus presented by the government as illegitimate abusers within the asylum system, posing a direct threat to the hardworking public. The government response towards the three different refugee groups focused on publically sorting the 'genuine' from the non-genuine asylum seeker, to ideologically categorise who should and significantly who should not be permitted entry in Britain, creating clearly marked spaces in which the refugee was expected to conform. Refugees were either welcomed in ways shaped by colonial era stereotypes of submissiveness, or were viewed suspiciously and publicly denounced.

This political hostility shaped the experience of the refugee settlement in Britain. 'Second generation' refugee participants for this study often noted that their parents had experienced more overt and often violent forms of racism on arrival to Britain, as these two excerpts demonstrate:

> And for them [parents] it's different because you can tell that they're foreign unlike with me. And as much as you don't want to say, there is still racism out there.

> Q: Did they experience racism?

> A: Yes they experienced a lot of racism I remember. When my dad first moved here he was robbed and knifed and they could tell he was foreign he was targeted and abused. (Leyla, female, Kurdish heritage).

> In Liverpool they've [parents] been discriminated a lot, they've had fights, they've been in the newspaper for being attacked, like racially…Cos it's obvious that they're not of English descent, cos they come with the beard and darker skin. (Agir, male, Kurdish heritage)

There was a general awareness by the children of refugees that their parents had experienced more 'extreme', violent forms of racism which were also often experienced in relation to their right to refugee status and accessing of welfare provision. Interviewees often stressed the generational divides which shaped experiences of racism in Britain; for the 'second generation' they were sometimes able to assert their rights as British citizens in ways that were impossible for their parents. In contrast, non violent racism was mainly recounted by the 'second generation' and their direct contact with the state did not involve their right to British citizenship. However, the language, arguments and policies which the British state led in shaping the reception of refugees did interact with the experiences of the 'second generation', albeit in more subtle ways as will now be discussed.

Everyday racism of the refugee 'second generation'

De-familiarising the familiar forms of everyday racism is often challenging within an interview format, and almost by definition the quotidian can be easily overlooked (Neal and Murji, 2015). For John, racism is woven into his recollections of growing up, and is not viewed as abnormal:

> Even growing up, even with your friends, it ends up becoming like a joke, even amongst your friends, they even make racist comments, so yeah, definitely. I would say growing up, it happens nearly on a daily basis. But actual malicious racism, then it would happen every so often. But it definitely, definitely happened. Walking down the street, or you get into a little argument with someone, they'll throw out a racist comment, that sort of thing. It gets to a point where it becomes kind of normal... (Male, Vietnamese heritage.)

John's reflections drew a division between 'malicious' racism which is less common, and 'normal' racism which was almost part of the background to everyday life, integrated into his encounters with both strangers and friends. The everyday racism became what he describes as 'like a joke', and small arguments would invoke a racist response which was mundane in its regularity. Familiarity with racism was noted in a number of the interviews, however the ordinariness of these experiences did not prevent these everyday encounters flaring up into events which were recalled as unusual. Indeed, Paul also remembered racism which was violent, with grown men attacking him and following him home from school in Dagenham. Describing an adult man's racist violence towards him as a child he noted 'not only the fact he was trying to hurt me physically but the words were quite cutting too snake eyes slit eyes all this stuff...' As Fields and Fields (2012: 37) argue, everyday classifying routines which organise racism do not always, but always can, explode.

For other participants, underlying experiences of racial hierarchies emerged sometimes in passing. For example, Quan is a 'second generation' Vietnamese male, who worked as a general assistant at a large supermarket chain for four years. After he graduated from university he described how he was promoted within the supermarket to team leader immediately. He explained this promotion and how others viewed him in the workplace:

> I think in terms of, not being racist or anything like that, but my manager she saw that I was a kind of hard working ethics kind of person in terms of being Oriental and stuff, and probably I get that from my dad because he's always been hard working…So yeah I think it's down to my hard working ethic, also maybe the managers they knew they could trust me with stuff cos of my culture and stuff and my background (Quan, male, Vietnamese heritage).

Quan was one of the participants who stated he had not experienced racism and even within this excerpt he was clear to point out that his example was free from racism or 'anything like that'. The story could in some ways be understood as a positive experience, since he was promoted within the supermarket and for Quan, the characteristics which his employers associated with him were simply inherited and part of Quan's culture. However, it is the racial ordering that is interesting here; Quan's background and his 'hard working ethic' were celebrated and trusted, in a surprisingly similar manner to rhetoric evident in Lord Acton's speech discussed earlier which identified the 'first generation' Vietnamese refugee cohort. The very way that Quan was recognised within the workplace, and the way he self-identified, is part of a wider and historical racialisation, in which a hierarchy of good and bad migrant, genuine and suspicious refugee is reproduced inter-generationally.

This generational racialisation emerged in a number of interviews and both Tamil and Kurdish 'second generation' refugees reported a focus on 'terrorism' expressed by others:

> I'm more aware of my culture, and I know what other people think of us as well. Because since I'm Tamil it's automatic oh you're part of Tamil Tigers, you're terrorists, it's automatic people say that. I've heard people say that (Abi, female, Tamil heritage).

These external responses therefore mirrored earlier government discussions which shaped the refugee reception in Britain. Racism experienced by participants was closely connected to a wider framework of anti-refugee racism led by the state.

One direct impact of the state asylum policies on the 'second generation' was that of dispersal (on the educational impact of dispersal see Bloch and Hirsch, 2017). Although dispersal only became official national government policy in 2000, the Vietnamese cohort for this study were the first refugee group on which the policy of forcible dispersal was tested (and failed) and a number of Kurdish participants also describe dispersal in their early years (Robinson et al, 2004). This policy meant that refugees were unable to draw on local networks of community support, and could also mean a lack of protection against racist violence (Hynes and Sales, 2010). For example, Rojda's family were first sent to Glasgow where they were able to access housing, but Rojda describes early memories of isolation, of being the only non-white person in nursery and her mother constantly anxious of the racism around her. The family then moved to London as they had family members there, her father could more easily find work and they felt more connected to a wider Kurdish community. Similarly, Paul's family had first been dispersed to Scotland following the refugee dispersal programme. They then moved to Manchester, where Paul was born, and finally moved to London to connect with a wider Vietnamese and Chinese network where Paul's family could find restaurant work in China Town. Paul described the shock of his first day of school in London having attended nursery in Manchester. He recalled 'trying to beg my mum not to leave me there. I can remember the day I was crying my eyes out not wanting to be in school.

I think I didn't speak the language and even if I did I'm assuming I had an accent because I was raised in Manchester...' He described being bullied in his first few days at school because 'maybe I mixed the languages up or something. So yeah obviously when you're a kid they pick on you and tease you so yeah it wasn't really the greatest experience'. Refugee status and dispersal connect, in this example, as Paul described both the insecurity of being in a new city and his own first language provoking fear and bullying within the school setting.

For Anton, language similarly became a clear signifier of an immigrant past within the school environment: 'some words I couldn't pronounce, as in I do remember I used to get bullied for that...' He explained that in response to mixing up words he was called a 'freshie': 'they call it a freshie, as in a guy fresh off the boat, from another country, they used to say that. In my school that was a big thing.' This insult, which is referred to within three of the interviews, centred on the differences between 'first' and 'second' generation immigrants, and it was clearly more desirable to be a 'second generation' immigrant than a 'first generation' new arrival (Charsley and Bolognani, 2016). Although Anton was born in Britain, there was a blurring of 'first' and 'second generation' categories as Anton's positioning is challenged. In addition, Anton experienced school bullying that focused specifically on his lack of British citizenship status:

> For some reason I had a Sri Lankan passport for some years. My dad wanted to keep it cos he might go back to Sri Lanka, I don't think he was really serious, but even in school I had only a Sri Lankan passport, I got a British passport later, when I was in year nine or something. So I had to apply for visas for school trips and stuff. I got a little bit bullied for that I'm not gonna lie.
>
> Q: What did they say?
>
> A: You're from Sri Lanka, you're a freshie, you're fresh off the boat. I didn't really know why I had this passport, I just told them look I was born here, I got a Sri Lankan passport I don't know why that is (Anton, male, Tamil heritage).

In this example, immigration status interacted with racism within the school context. Citizenship and secure British status were valued and made aware of between young people in the school environment, and a hierarchy was created in this interaction between individuals with permanent, British status and recent immigrants with papers that connected them to a country outside of British borders. The passport served as validity in constructions of identity, a marker of what is attested to be 'true' and in the everyday it emerged as a tool in which to establish identification by others. As Saunders (2016) argues, identification is established by documenting and fixing the socially significant and codifiable information that confirms who you are. Contemporarily, forced migration is controlled by biometrics and passports and visas and other measurements, reformulating identity as collectable, readable, exploitable data (Aas, 2011). The example above demonstrates how these documents which control the boundaries of the nation state emerged within the everyday experiences of the 'second generation' refugee. These examples have therefore demonstrated the everyday nature of racism experienced by the 'second generation', yet also at times the specific nature of racism connected to a refugee past.

Self identification

Once this racial classification is applied to people, ideas about what it refers to come to have both social and psychological effects, shaping the ways in which people conceive of

themselves through the referencing of available labels and available identities. As Appiah (2000) argues, the effects of this racial ascription – especially, but by no means exclusively, the racist ones – are hard to escape. In our study this self identification process was both constrained and negotiated within this insistent racial framework.

For a number of 'second generation' Kurdish participants, an oppositional and clearly defined 'ethnicity' was expressed, in response to the silencing of their refugee histories and the impositions of inaccurate categories which did not reflect these experiences. However, for others, the construction of self-identity was more unsettled. In Abi's case, growing up in Walthamstow, where she had experienced recurring racist abuse by strangers on the street, she described at first negatively internalising the racism she had experienced:

> So yeah at the time it really hurt. And I used to feel embarrassed about where I was from, I used to think oh my god it's because I'm brown that's the problem, I wish I was a different colour. My mum would say it's nothing to worry about, if people aren't open minded, if they're narrow minded that's their fault, you can't do anything about it, you just have to put it in one ear and take it out the other. But definitely yeah, at the start it was there (Abi, female, Tamil descent).

Within our study, participants were often subject to a pre-emptory imposition of racial identity in highly forceful ways. Many Kurdish and Tamil interviewees noted the more recent racism they had experienced was connected to their identification by others as Muslim, regardless of whether they were practising Muslims (Tufail and Poynting, 2013). Kim, like others from a Vietnamese background in this study, described being placed into a more visible and well-known Chinese bracket in school: 'There was this one Chinese boy, and the other children, they just assumed we were together for some reason, because we're both Oriental, so they called us Chinese pandas' (Kim, female, Vietnamese heritage). Rachel attended a number of schools as her parents moved and divorced. It was at a Catholic secondary school in Luton that she experienced racism:

> And at that time, because I've got a twin brother, they made us sit next to each other in the class because of alphabetical order, and he got bullied a lot. I'm not sure if it was racism it might of been. But mainly they'd be implying that we were Muslim, that we weren't actually Catholic, things like that. It felt uncomfortable. I felt uncomfortable going to church in Luton in that area...And at that time I definitely noticed the colour of my skin a lot. Maybe because they were noticing it. Whereas when I was little I didn't really notice it as much. (Rachel, female, Tamil heritage).

Rachel in this quote described this suspicion within her school community in Luton in connection with becoming aware of 'the colour of my skin a lot'. In this sense, her race was imposed onto her through a racism she experienced. For Rachel she later described how she felt uncomfortable describing her identity:

> A: But it's strange, in some ways I've always felt like I don't have an identity.
> Q: What do you mean by that?
> A: Just that I'm not any of the things really

Identity in this example was given as a fixed and clear object which could fit into a classification system of borders and controls, but also other people's understandings of Rachel through a limited and forceful conception of race. Rachel's real experiences did not fit

into this reification process and in this way she stated 'I don't have an identity'. The forcing of people's identities into wider categories they did not control clearly impacted on individual's own sense of self and response to others. Sophia also illuminated this point in the following discussion:

> Q: Do people often ask you where you're from?
>
> A: Yeah all the time.
>
> Q: And how do you answer?
>
> A: OK so there are obviously a lot of horrible racist people out there. So I remember growing up and people calling me horrible names, or doing funny voices as if they're trying to speak Chinese, or doing the funny eyes, or saying like *Konnichiwa* even though I'm not Japanese. But not as a joke, like being racist, not people I was close to but sometimes just kids being racist. But I'm not even Japanese so I'd be thinking if you're gonna be racist at least get it right. So then now when I get asked that question I can't help but feel bitter. Because I'm like what do you mean where am I from? Like ethnically or what? So then they have to rephrase it to be like where are your parents from, so then I'm like oh ok. But actually regardless of that, even if they ask me properly like what's your ethnicity, it still annoys me actually, and I'll always start with 'well I was born and raised here but...' (female, Vietnamese heritage).

Sophia's own experiences of racism then created unease when asked about her origins. External constructions of race and ethnicity were imposed onto Sophia and her own public expressions of self-identity were interwoven into these experiences.

Conclusion

This paper has argued that an anti-refugee rhetoric and policy in British politics has necessarily impacted on forms of racism experienced by the children of refugees. An elaborate system has been developed to control entry into the British nation, including passports, entry permits, visas, refusals, dispersal, detentions and deportations (Marfleet, 2006). These mechanisms of the state measure and define who is 'desirable' and who is 'undesirable' who is alien and citizen (De Genova, 2013). A scale of desirability of migrants is constructed, with asylum seekers and refugees placed at varying points on the unwanted side of the spectrum (Mulvey, 2010). The paper has given examples of how this racism is adapted into the experiences of the 'second generation' refugee; the racialised immigration regime and the borders of the nation state are absorbed into people's lived experiences in varied ways. Specifically targeted refugee state policies emerged through the experiences of everyday racism, most notably through dispersal with participant recollections of insecurity and isolation. The echoes between the anti-refugee hostility experienced by their parents with that of their children have therefore been demonstrated. In this vein, the theory which explains prejudice simply through 'fear of newcomers' is challenged; as Hall (2017 [1978]) argues, racism is not simply a set of false pleas which swim around in the head. Instead, it has been argued that state led immigration controls produce and are critically absorbed within everyday forms of racism.

Alongside these attacks connected to refugee backgrounds, less targeted conceptions of race were also externally forced upon interviewees which did not reflect the individuals own sense of self, but sometimes impacted on self-identity in negative ways. Islamophobia, for example, was often experienced by Tamil and Kurdish participants, despite their religious practices.

The hostility towards refugees and migrants in general cannot be kept in discreet compartments and instead this paper has argued that such hostility spills over to wider groupings. Even the 'good refugees' welcomed by the government, in this research the Vietnamese refugees, experienced racism on their arrival to Britain alongside their British born children. Focusing on these refugee specificities has therefore offered new insights into the everyday realities of racism in British society, yet there were longer histories of race and racism which interacted with this new ordering process.

As the 'thickening' of borders continues, with increased enforcement budgets and new and more invasive surveillance technologies, the state continues to publically define and separate the verified from the unverified. We cannot understand these processes as removed from the lived experiences of settled minorities, and recent news shows the pernicious development of this process, with schools requesting non-white students provide legal documentation, following the Department for Education new measurement guidelines (see *The Guardian* 26 September 2016). This racialised scrutiny is shaped by immigration controls; the inextricable relationship between racism and the asylum system should not be ignored.

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