

The empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees and their integration into society.

Contents

Abstract	2
Introduction.....	2
Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees.	3
Citizenship and the UK’s Hostile Environment.....	6
The UK’s hostile environment	8
Housing.....	10
Social Connections	12
Case Study: The effect of the UK dispersal program on structural and social integration.....	15
Alternative Methods of Empowerment for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.....	16
Examining Modes of Empowerment for Refugees and Asylum Seekers looking at the Afgan Refugees in the UK.	17
Non-formal political bodies.....	18
Viewing the Refugee and Asylum Crisis in Context.....	19
Centralisation of power	19
Economic and Political restructuring.....	22
Global Empowerment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers.....	22
Public Perceptions and Media	23
The influence of migration perceptions on the ‘Brexit’ referendum.....	24
Democracy.....	24
Methodological considerations	25
What needs to be done in the future.....	26
Conclusion	28
References.....	28

Abstract

This report concerns the empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees and their integration into society. Asylum seekers and refugees are often excluded from decision making that effects their well-being and futures. British policy - that emphasises social harmony and participation in a form of consensus politics - fails to open up debates about the integration of asylum seekers and refugees, that might challenge the status quo (Ager and Strang, 2008). This report will use a systems approach, to endeavour to identify the areas asylum seekers and refugees remain highly discriminated against, and crucial links between areas essential to integration and empowerment (Casteles et al., 2001). I have established these boundaries in order to critique these systems, however it is important to acknowledge the effect that drawing these boundaries will have on my analyses (Midgley, 1992). This report also uses statistics to analyse the scale of this issue and the negative impacts of current policies.

Introduction

Refugees and asylum seekers are often excluded from formal systems of authority and as a result use informal networks to establish alternative systems and political communities. This report will outline these alternative modes of political empowerment to demonstrate their significance in allowing refugees and asylum seekers to work outside preconceived notions of what citizenship is and is not. There is a resistance amongst some refugee communities to formalise their networks, as this is seen to cause politicisation and fractionalisation. Consequently, their voices sometimes go unheard. This report will explore what research must be done to explore the significance of these networks, and will suggest ways that they empower the voices of asylum seekers and migrants .

Addressing this issue is paramount in the face of current issues challenging our geo-political climate. First, in order to run an effective democracy all sectors of society need to be empowered rather than being compelled to perform according to a prescribed criteria (Casteles et al., 2001). Secondly, there is a need to understand the complexities of global policies and the effect that they have on the empowerment of individual refugees and asylum seekers. Thirdly, it will explore the effects of political and economic restructuring on those at the fringes of society - often making them increasingly vulnerable in terms of physical resources, and as a

target of hate. Furthermore, the media increasingly paints them as a ‘burden’ on society. Fourthly, the effect of the recent centralisation of power towards bodies such as the Home Office and Statutory Authorities, that arguably have less connection to the voices of asylum seekers and refugees than other Refugee Community Organisations (RCO’s). These factors have determined the transnational movement of peoples an obstacle to social cohesion (Mgriiffiths et. al., 2005). Furthermore, these factors are likely to become increasingly pressing as predicted changes in climate and political and economic conflict increase the numbers of people seeking asylum. It is important to understand where these people are likely to seek asylum, so that communities can combat marginalisation effectively, maximising the integration and contributions of asylum seekers and refugees to local and national communities.

Integration of Asylum Seekers and Refugees.

Integration has long been stressed as foundational to the refugee and asylum problem facing the UK. However, when thinking about integration it is important to ask, who is defining this term? NGO representatives have argued that ‘integration’ now represents a kind of formula that newcomers should follow in order to ‘fit in’. It suggests that people can ‘be integrated’ through various ‘integration programmes’. Integration is imposed on marginalised groups, rather than being a shared process, and consequently acts to undermine positive concepts of empowerment, choice, growth and development (Casteles, 2001). These policy driven approaches to integration, set boundaries that fail to include the voices of asylum seekers and refugees who are often excluded from discussions defining integration. In consequence, although the contested nature of the term is often stressed in literature, policies are primarily focused on the structural constraints to integration. They fail to examine social integration, and ignore discussion on the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers (Steffen Wetzstein, 2019). This is demonstrated in figure 1, a document produced by the government to display the asylum process in the UK. Not only does this diagram fail to contextualise this process, but it also fails to mention integration, demonstrating the neglect of this issue in asylum policy. Using a systems approach this report aims to redefine these boundaries to integration, examining alternative modes of integration and empowerment to understand the multifaceted nature of the issue.

Furthermore, policy often neglects to consider the context of integration, assuming the existence of a harmonious, equal and welcoming society. These conditions do not always prevail in the UK, and the likelihood is that newcomers will enter a situation of inequality, racism, and poverty (Casteles, 2001). This is perpetuated by the ‘soft power’ that many well off communities exercise, that often channel newcomers to poorer and stressed regions. Consequently, this report argues that there is a need to problematize ‘top down’ definitions of integration, exploring the possible benefits of using bottom-up field work to redefine this term - thus giving refugees and asylum seekers a voice in their own empowerment and integration.

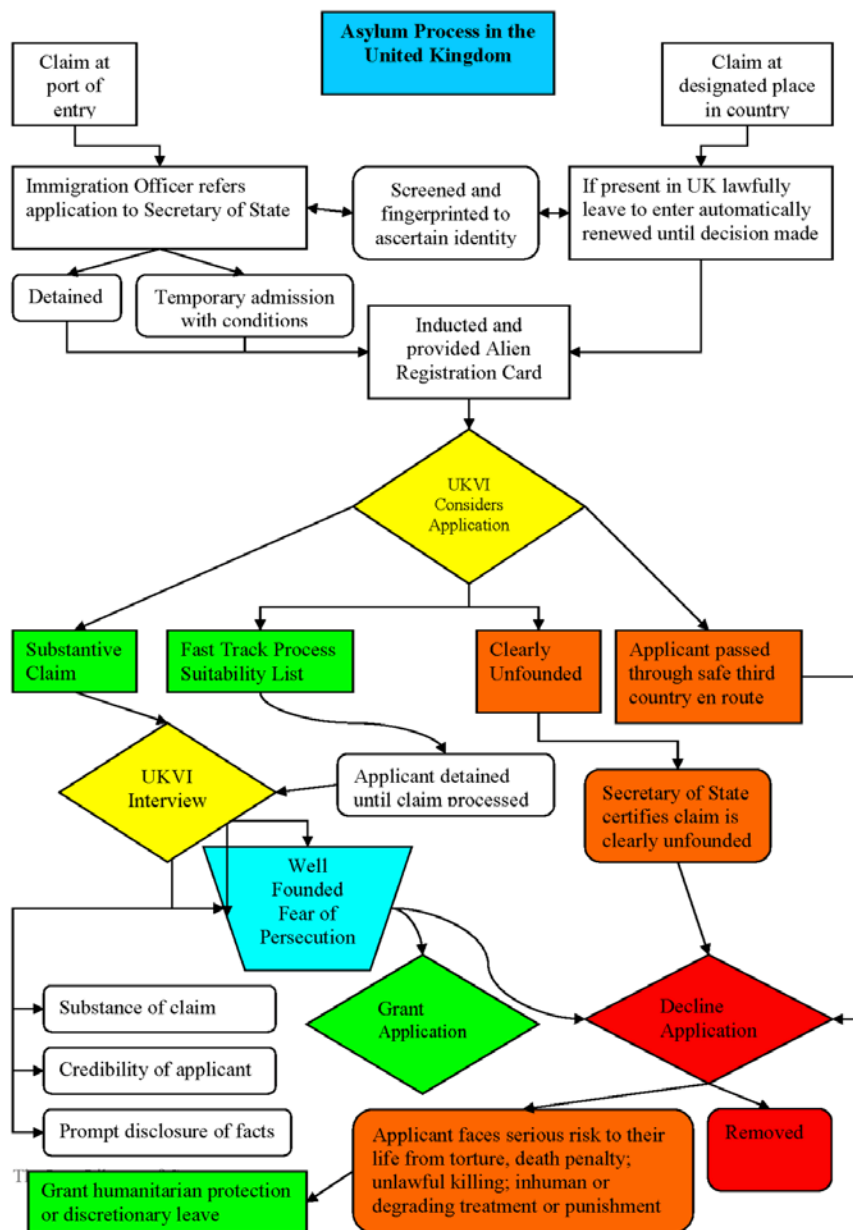


Figure 1 (Loc.gov, 2019). Social scientists also stress the importance of considering alternative terminology to understand the marginalised positions of asylum seekers and refugees. For example, rather than speaking of integration, we could speak of *inclusion*. This is useful for examining areas where refugees and asylum seekers remain excluded, and of importance because refugees may be included in some sectors of society, but remain excluded from others, such as the political system. In recognising this one is able to problematize these boundaries. However, some scholars have argued that this term might simplify integration to a specific sphere, or that it may fail to see links between these spheres of inclusion or exclusion (Mgriffiths, 2005). Alternatively, some social scientists prefer to use the term *participation* as a framework for looking at the access of immigrants and refugees to the various sub-sectors, since it implies a more active role for marginalised groups than the terms inclusion or integration (Mgriffiths, 2005). It is important to understand the effect that the use of terminology has on the 'desired outcome' of integration and how we measure successful integration.

The need for participatory research on the effects and implications of the terminology used in policy is evident. This would not only empower refugees and asylum seekers but might also develop an understanding of the most effective language for understanding the marginalised position of asylum seekers and refugees and exclusionary processes within policy (Castles, 2001).

It is important to distinguish between structural integration -, involving the growing participation of refugees and asylum seekers in main institutions -, and acculturation, implying the evolution of new identities and cultures (Korac, 2003). This article will argue that listening to and empowering refugees and asylum seekers is of paramount importance to obtaining both these forms of integration. The following sections will define and examine the effects of citizenship and the hostile environment on the integration process in order to demonstrate this. It will also look at the effect of structural constraints, in particular access to housing. Finally it will examine the importance of social capital.

Citizenship and the UK's Hostile Environment

The role of citizenship is of paramount importance to shaping spaces of integration and the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers both in the EU and the UK.

Recently Europe has moved away from treating the integration of refugees separately, rather they prescribe a selection of requirements for applicants to fulfil. This results from enlarged European Community boundaries and the increased ability for citizens to travel and work within these boundaries (Strang, et al., 2010). This poses a challenge for nations to assert their national identity, which affects the lives of refugees and asylum seekers trying to get citizenship, despite these nations attempting to welcome and accommodate outsiders.

In the UK this challenge has manifest into a rhetoric of 'social cohesion' that emphasises the rights of refugees, but with specific requirements for citizens to be suitable for an ideal 'British' society (strang et. al., 2010). In recent years this rhetoric has intensified, becoming more explicit within policy as racial tensions in some parts of the country have become apparent. Policy dictates that citizenship is 'earned' by demonstrating cultural knowledge, language proficiency, and commitment to voluntary work, or to be an 'active' citizen. However, this structure neglects the fact that empowerment is gained by having a secure status, which is instrumental to enabling integration. Figure 1 and Figure 2 demonstrates the scale of this problem. Figure 1 demonstrates that every year from 2004 to 2018 the number of applications for regugee status rejected substantially outweighs those that are accepted. Likewise figure 2 demonstrates that every year from 2007 to 2017 the number of appeals dismissed substantially outweighs those allowed. These graphs suggest that a significant number of people struggle to attain secure status and consequently face these boundaries to their integration and empowerment.

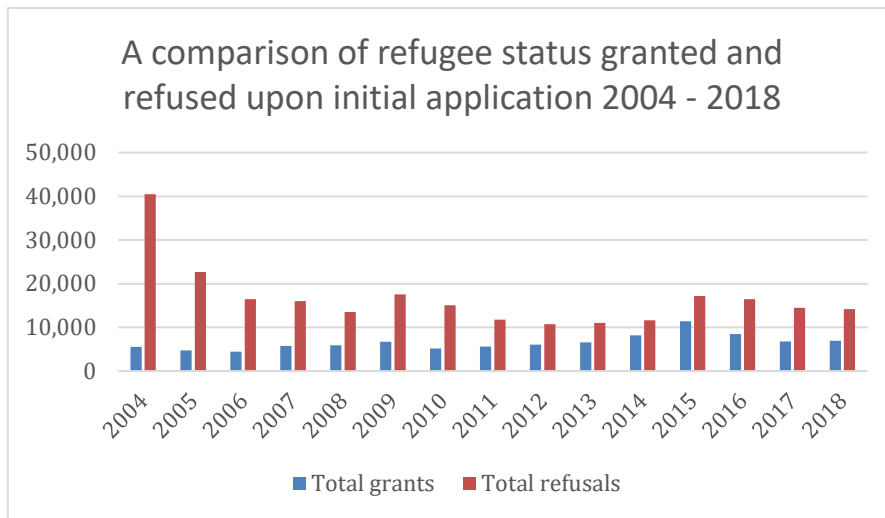


Figure 2 (Home Office, 2018)

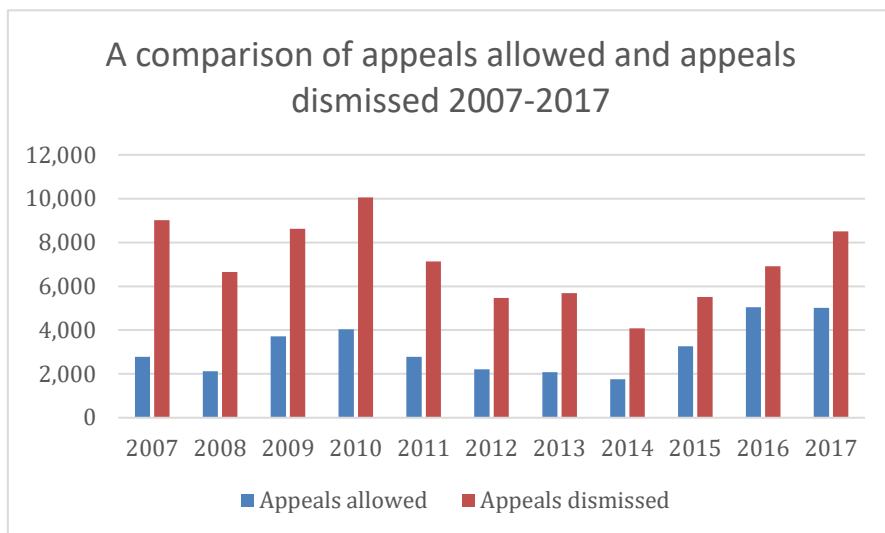


Figure 3 (Home Office, 2018)

In the UK, refugees are subject to competing discourses, presenting them as either ‘helpless and incompetent’ (referring on the whole to asylum seekers) or ‘active and empowered’ (generally applied to recognised refugees). However, the trends shown in these graphs suggest that UK policy poses significant barriers to moving between these states. Arguably, these competing discourses have created contradictions within the UK’s immigration policy. Although the legal framework

in relation to asylum and refugee status is designed to give effect to the United Kingdom's international legal obligations, this is not necessarily apparent from Government policy and the rhetoric deployed.¹

The issue with this participatory model of 'active citizenship', is that it acts to marginalise those refugees and asylum seekers who do not maintain this ideal. Mulvey argues that the language of 'Britishness' has become so prominent that it has led to the 'othering' of refugees and asylum seekers. For example, the voices of refugees are increasingly silenced due to not being native English speakers and thus not fitting into this category of 'Britishness'. By 'othering' refugees and asylum seekers they are labelled as a 'problem'. This is especially the case for those in destitution – the state of asylum seekers whose application and appeals have been rejected. These individuals are silenced because they do not possess the rights attached to citizenship. These individuals may be not only 'othered', but also criminalised; their voices are assumed to be untrustworthy until proven innocent (Strang, 2005). The effect that living in this environment has on asylum seekers will be explored in the following case study examining the UK's 'hostile environment'.

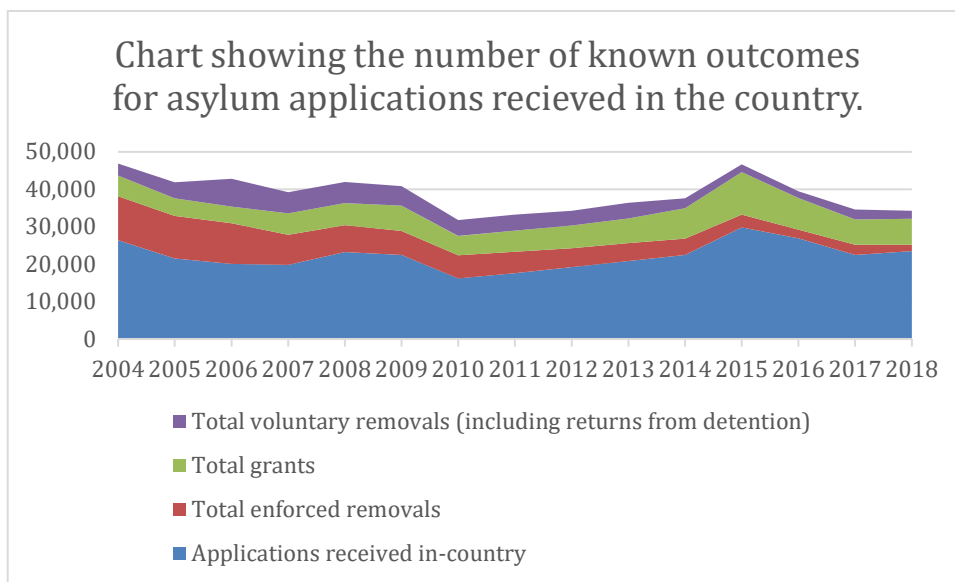
The UK's hostile environment

The 'hostile environment' was first used by Theresa May in the 2014 Immigration Act. It refers to a range of measures that restricts access to civil services for those in the UK without the correct immigration status. By reducing the 'pull factors' to the UK, the idea was that immigrants would leave the country voluntarily and that it would discourage others considering coming (Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration, 2016). Theresa May backed this policy arguing that it wasn't fair that people should continue to exist in the UK, with the benefits this gives them, without the rights to be here (House of Lords, 2018). This report argues that this policy has had a detrimental effect on the lives of asylum seekers, focusing on limiting the number of people allowed into the country, rather than the need to comply with international legal and moral obligations. Furthermore, it

¹ Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 25 states "Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and their families, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services" (Article 25 Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

will argue that the policy has failed to encourage refugees and asylum seekers to leave, resulting in thousands of asylum seekers living in destitution.

This is demonstrated by figure 3 that shows the large discrepancy in the number of applications received in the county and the number of known outcomes that we have for refugee applicants. This means that an increasing number of asylum seekers are living in insecure positions either appealing their asylum application or worse living in a state of destitution. This graph also demonstrates that following the 2014 hostile environment policy there was in fact a significant increase of applications received in the country. These levels then dropped to numbers similar to 2014, however it is clear the policy has not resulted in a significant decrease in applications to the country as intended.



(Figure 4) (Home Office, 2018)

The Refugee Council argue that the ‘hostile environment’ is responsible for structural constraints faced by refugees and asylum seekers, particularly for those in destitution (Phillips, 2006). When an application for asylum is denied the individual is evicted and all other support is removed, they are unable to work or get a room, and every legitimate means of survival is removed. These structural constraints make it nearly impossible for them to integrate and gain any form of social connection. This process acts to silence them, removing any legitimate means of empowerment (Bristol.cityofsanctuary.org, 2019).

This hostile environment creates what Mulvey describes as degrees of ‘unwantedness’. He cites how asylum seekers are allocated lower levels of financial support than that provided through the national income support systems (already

deemed to be the minimum necessary to prevent poverty). The asylum period is often lengthy and exclusion from ‘integration’ services will impair the prospects of long term integration, damage morale and increase skill depletion. The impact may endure after ‘leave to remain’ status has been obtained. Furthermore, the policy places the burden of proof on the applicant, thus increasing the burden on the applicant, especially on those for whom compiling appropriate evidence may pose a daunting task, especially so for those who lack expert legal support. Asylum seekers have described refusal of applications and the refusal to be believed as mental torture (Bristol.cityofsanctuary.org, 2019). However, due to the voices of asylum seekers and refugees being silenced they lack the power to highlight the negative consequences of this process.

Studies that have involved the voices of asylum seekers and refugees have suggested that integration, of whatever form should begin at the moment of entry to the country. This research suggests that this hostile environment perpetuates a process of ‘alienation’ rather than integration. Furthermore, it concludes that early integration of asylum seekers is essential for successful long-term incorporation into the cultural, economic and political institutions of host countries (Alison and Ager, 2010). Upon arrival, identity should be established as soon as possible in order to better assess the credibility of the application. Those most in need should be fast tracked. The digitisation of data and the use of new technologies should improve feasibility. There also needs to be more effective communication of the asylum procedure in order to prevent unintentional misuse of this system (Rankin, 2019)

Housing

Structural constraints often manifest as a matter of resource allocation. There is a need for adequate resources and social infrastructure for all residents in order to reduce community tension, particularly in areas of high deprivation. This has been recognized in recent UK policy that has moved away from competitive, culturally specific funding towards community and neighbourhood partnerships. However, research shows that the empowerment of new and ‘less visible’ groups is needed to prevent their being blamed for resource depletion and marginalization in these partnerships, in favour of more dominant and established groups. Therefore in order to tackle these structural constraints effectively, community engagement and

education is needed to challenge the stereotypes and misconceptions, preparing communities for new arrivals (Daley, 2019).

Housing is identified as integral to the physical security of asylum seekers and refugees by both governments, NGO's and community organisations. Refugee integration and empowerment is multifaceted, and housing conditions have a bearing on access to healthcare, education and employment. Housing also shapes social relationships, such as community relations and the ability to live independently, and is instrumental in creating a sense of security and belonging. However, many asylum seekers and refugees experience housing deprivation and insecurity, particularly those who's application for asylum and appeals are rejected. As with many aspects of integration, asylum seekers are often excluded from discussions about how integration should be achieved and measured, (Phillips, 2006).

A report using qualitative research across five English localities, explored what local housing providers and community development workers feel are the prerequisites for successful housing integration. The report focuses on the induction process, on-going support, 'move-on' support for new refugees, and the need to combat racist harassment. It concluded that despite good intentions and some localised successes, there remained many obstacles to integration, arising from multiple gaps in provision, choices and support (Steffen Wetzstein, 2019).

The housing issue demonstrates the importance of holistic, community-centred inter-agency approaches, adequately resourced, and supported by political commitment. This is often attained when partnerships develop with voluntary organisations that have specialist knowledge, skills and experience of greater interaction with marginalised communities. This is more likely to lead to culturally sensitive mainstream provision for asylum seekers and refugees (Phillips, 2006). This study demonstrates the benefit and need to redefine the boundaries of analysis beyond policy, in order find resolutions for these problems

Asylum seekers and refugees are often excluded from conversations about housing as it is a very politicised issue. However, this report argues that to undervalue the voices of asylum seekers and refugees when making housing policies, given its integrity to their own physical security, is a huge oversight by researchers and

practitioners, with detrimental consequences. The large numbers of refugees and asylum seekers living in housing deprivation suggests that different approaches to full housing integration should be taken. Consultation with asylum seekers and refugees is needed to evaluate the impact of unsatisfactory housing arrangements in this sector, and to create innovative solutions (Steffen Wetzstein, 2019). This can be illustrated by examining how other minority groups have influenced housing policies. One example of this is the black and minority ethnic housing associations 'Housing Plus' and community development initiatives (Harrison, 1995).

Social Connections

This report aims to challenge the boundaries in policy, that focus on the structural constraints faced by asylum seekers and refugees. It will endeavour to redefine these boundaries to include the connections between structural constraints such as housing healthcare, education and employment and social connections. These factors all affect an individual's ability to live independently and their sense of security and belonging. The importance of social capital has been well established by policy and academic literature as integral to the integration and empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers (Beirens et al. 2007, Korac 2005).

A commonly used framework called the 'Indicators of Integration' framework (Ager and Strang, 2010) applies Putnam's social capital formulation to distinguish between three forms of social connection: social 'bonds', 'bridges' and 'links' (Mgriiffiths, 2005). These forms of social capital contribute to the integration and empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers. Putman's theory can be summarized as:

- Social bonds (connections within a community defined by, for example, ethnic, national or religious identity);
- Social bridges (with members of other communities); and
- Social links (with institutions, including local and central government services).

The creation of 'bonding' relationships is often a priority for refugees. For many it is an urgent need to be united with close family members. These kind of connections were seen to empower and affect the lives of migrants in three ways.

They provide information and material resources, emotional resources that enhance confidence and capacity building resources (Mgriffiths, 2005).

The empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers also depends on the development of 'social bridges'. Without these social bonds will lead to separate disconnected communities, with limited power in the face of policy decisions at a local and national level. These social connections are beneficial as they create mutual understanding amongst different groups within the community. There is evidence to suggest that if non-refugee communities understand the cultural traditions of migrants they will recognize their value (Ager and Strang, 2008). This demonstrates the importance of communities listening to the voices of refugees and asylum seekers. However, due to the structural exclusions embedded in the prevailing legal frameworks, their movements and ability to frequent the same spaces as neighbours from different groups is often limited (Mgriffiths, 2005). Notably, the lack of rights to work and language skills restricts interactions. These factors interact to limit empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers (Ager and Strang, 2008).

The final form of social capital identified in Putnam's theory is social links. This term implies broader community and political participation, and is perhaps the most influential factor in determining how the 'voices' of refugees and asylum seekers might be elevated. One process scholars note as limiting the voice of asylum seekers and refugees, particularly in the broader community and political spheres, is attachments to local environments. Research suggests that individual and group identities are often constituted and reconstituted in a particular place, as they develop feelings of belonging through their everyday experience (Threadgold and Court, 2005).

Consequently, social bonds with immediate neighbours become significant in defining the boundaries of integration and empowerment. This has been highlighted by asylum seekers who speak about caution in travelling to and within adjoining neighbourhoods which they perceive as excluding them. Their experience is that when they leave areas where social bonds exist they feel disempowered in neighbourhoods where there is an absence of social bonds. Understanding how these attachments are extendable to other localities or to a national scale is perhaps a neglected area of study. In particular, these patterns of

inclusion and exclusion should be acknowledged by the UK dispersal programme and used to inform decisions as to where asylum seekers and refugees should be placed – it is desirable that these should be the places where they are most likely to be heard and empowered (Threadgold and Court, 2005).

Examination of the role of bridges links and bonds demonstrates the importance of ensuring that those who develop policy do so on a properly informed basis. Scholars have highlighted the need to look beyond a binary choice between either theoretical formulations (that might have high-level policy implications), or local research (without the power to make policy changes) (Lavis et al. 2008). For example, whilst the clarity and simplicity of the Putnam formula is effective, to the extent that it provides an overarching theory that resonates with the everyday challenges of supporting asylum seekers and refugees, it is arguable that it oversimplifies the true position and fails to take account of the voices of individual asylum seekers and refugees. Taking account of the voices of asylum seekers when validating policy provides an important means of ensuring that policy is effective.

For example, research in community organizations in Islington involved participants (refugees) placing ‘post-it’ notes on domains that they considered their employment most significantly impacted. Results demonstrated that whilst work strengthened bonding social capital, it also promoted bridging capital between ethnic communities, thus creating wider social connection. This project was designed to critique current theorization on the integration process taking account of the voices of migrants, but also aimed to make this research accessible to local actors and policy makers. More research of this nature should be conducted in order to empower migrants and improve policy. This is highlighted by Temple and Moran (2005) whose studies of cohesion initiatives demonstrate that although there is knowledge concerning social relationships at a local level, this often remains unpublished and does not reach those designing policy.

Case Study: The effect of the UK dispersal program on structural and social integration.

The UK dispersal program was implemented in 1999. It was designed to reduce the concentration of refugees and asylum seekers in London, spreading them to other parts of the UK.

A study of this dispersal program examined its effects and suggests methods that could be used to improve it (Mgriffiths, 2005). It concluded that the program had a large effect on social connections, particularly formations of 'social bonds'. The communities refugees and asylum seekers are moved too, often have minimal history of inward migration, and so no pre-existing, co-ethnic groups to join. Several UK writers report on the consequences of this policy. There have been several reports written on the benefits of social bridges towards effective integration, and their ability to provide a 'voice for refugees', contact points for isolated individuals, expertise in dealing with refugee issues and flexible and sensitive responses to the needs of their target populations (Duke et al. 1999).

Major changes in the ethnic composition of predominantly white areas requires a sustained and co-ordinated effort by a multitude of agencies. The report stresses the importance of careful planning and consultation with numerous bodies before the implementation of policies. For example, in Leicester, a multi- agency group, which included the council, refugee organisations and the police, engaged in 12 months of consultation, media briefings and other preparatory work before housing asylum seekers on the predominantly white Northfields estate. An evaluation of this scheme was generally positive. It concluded with new housing opportunities for asylum seekers in this area. This study demonstrates the benefits of defining broad boundaries around issues of marginalisation in order to create effective resolutions.

This study demonstrates that positive initiatives are underway in this area. However, the complexity of this issue should not be underestimated, especially in terms of the wide range of agencies involved and the uncertainties consequent upon rapidly changing policy and difficult funding environment. In this context the exclusion of asylum seekers from the integration process becomes increasingly detrimental, as gaps in provision and support develop. For example, this report

concluded that there were gaps in the coordination of housing services, inadequate communication between community organisations and mainstream providers, discontinuous funding, and disparities between the priorities and expectations of asylum seekers and refugees and those of service providers (Duke, et al. 1999).

Alternative Methods of Empowerment for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

In the face of the boundaries discussed previously, asylum seekers and refugees often utilise these forms of social connections to act as important political actors, able to strategically mobilize resources, claims, networks, and develop political strategies.

Ataç, et al., (2016) discusses how political struggle amongst different groups can challenge dominant systems of authority in order to promote alternative systems and political communities. This contradicts the consensus politics often promoted by UK policy that emphasises harmony. These groups often use alternative methods, such as campaigns and demonstrations, to highlight the struggles of refugees and migrants. Within these movements refugees and asylum seekers can work outside preconceived notions of what citizenship is and is not.

There is a possibility here to create a new form of citizenship around ‘relationships of solidarity’ a term promoted by Foucault in his discussion of an ‘international citizenry’ -

“There exists an international citizenship, which as such has its rights and duties, and which is obliged to stand up against all forms of abuse of power, no matter who commits them, no matter who are their victims. After all, we are all governed, and, by that fact, joined in solidarity” (Foucault, 1984).

Empowering refugees and asylum seekers outside the confines of the state, gives them the opportunity to voice their concerns without restriction. This form of contentious politics is useful as it doesn’t separate the structural constraints to activism, such as resource mobilization and organization, from those such as borders and the rights of these groups. This context is important for asylum seekers and refugees and also represents the targets of their activism. This is highlighted by asylum seekers in Vienna who state, ‘We are the experts of the asylum policy since we are directly affected by these policies. So we have a solution for you’ and thereby reverse the position of the actors in the asylum process (Ataç, this issue).

Examining Modes of Empowerment for Refugees and Asylum Seekers looking at the Afgan Refugees in the UK.

These refugees are deprived of the right to vote in both their host countries and countries of origin, for at least seven years before they can apply for British citizenship. Surprisingly, considering the UK's restrictive citizenship and voting policy, requirements to join political parties are surprisingly minimal, with any resident being able to join political parties or form political groups. Even the more 'nationalistic' parties appear to be open to foreign supporters. For example, the Scottish National Party, the UK Independence Party, the Green Party and the Liberal Democrats, allow potential members living anywhere in the world to join, regardless of citizenship.

This is significant as it provides a basis for refugees and asylum seekers to exercise their political rights. An Afghan refugee and member of the British Labour Party explains this significance when he states *'I may be deprived of my right to vote but as an active member of the party of my choice whose manifesto has been discussed with me, I campaign and earn so many votes for the party. The main goal is to make the party win'* (Sharifi, 2018, p 14). However, the fact that the UK does not currently have any Afgan-born members of parliament or elected local councillors perhaps suggests there is a limit to the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers in this context. Questions need to be asked about what limits these members of political parties reaching these high power positions.

One Afghan female refugee, a former Labour Party candidate in London 2017 notes how trends might be changing within communities. One reason she notes for this is the effect of seeing other Afgan people getting involved in politics, she states *"Five years ago, when I was running for local council elections in this borough, people were not even prepared to listen to me when I knocked on their doors. Although I did not earn enough votes to win that time, my appearance changed their minds. . . . The second generation of Afghan refugees is far more vibrant and interested in politics now"* —Afghan female refugee 2, former Labour Party candidate, London, 2017 (Sharifi, 2018, p 13).

Asylum seekers and refugees have also found alternative ways to make their voices heard and participate in political life. These commonly took the form of informal civil society and political gatherings in the form of cultural and literary associations, refugee rights advocacy groups, charities and ethnic associations (Adan, et al, 2018).

Non-formal political bodies

The three main forms of non-formal political bodies are consultative bodies; Civil Society Organisations (CSO's); and protests and grassroots initiatives.

Consultative bodies were originally set up to compensate for the absence of formal means of political participation for resident non-citizens in the EU. This was primarily in response to the Council of Europe 1992 Convention on the participation of Foreigners in Public Life at a Local Level, which determines that states should 'encourage and facilitate the establishment of consultative bodies or the making of other appropriate institutional arrangements for the representation of foreign residents by local authorities in areas with significant numbers of foreign residents' (Council of Europe 1992). The primary aim of these bodies is to foster structured dialogue between immigrant groups and governments. Although these bodies are found at local and regional levels in many EU states such as Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland and Spain (EU FRA 2017), they are not found in the UK. This is perhaps a consideration that should be taken into account, if the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers is going to be successfully fostered in the UK. For example, interviews with Afghan and Syrian refugees in Germany revealed that engaging in consultative bodies, such as migrant advisory committees and integration or migration councils, ensured their political representation at the local and regional levels (Adan, 2018).

The second mode of participation common for refugees and asylum seekers is participation in civil society organisations. These were common for Afghan refugees in the UK, who engage heavily in CSOs and charities, as well as cultural and literary associations. These offer common spaces where refugees and asylum seekers can take part on the same platform irrespective of their legal status. Trade Unions can also act as a platform for refugees to support their professional needs. Often trade unions will have relaxed acceptance policies letting in asylum seekers even though they are not legally allowed to work. However, the power of these associations is often limited by funding due to the fact they are not backed by public and private donors and have not been officially recognized as an important aspect of integration. Despite this, a number of CSOs have emerged that provide important avenues for refugees to engage in the civic and political life of their host countries, make their voices heard, strengthen the links with the native-born population and feel part of the host society.

A third mode of participation is through protests and grassroots initiatives. These activities are important as they can be exercised regardless of the legal status of asylum seekers and refugees. and can thus provide ways to express the challenges faced by communities in making their voices heard. However, it was noted that asylum seekers were reluctant to partake in this form of political activity, as they fear they might be arrested or that their presence might affect the Home Office decision on their asylum application. Consequently, although these protests happen outside the confines of the state they are still limited somewhat by these systems.

In order to understand the significance of these informal grass routes networks, the voices of asylum seekers and refugees need to be heard and empowered. Studies examining these networks have noted a resistance to being absorbed into formal fund-driven channels of the political economy. They argue that by naming an activity it gives it political connotations, the politicisation of these activities it is argued causes fractionalisation. Rather, in these informal organisations that speak on behalf of a community a multiplicity of ‘communal options’ are suggested. There is perhaps a question as to how the voices of these groups might be heard to have an impact at a policy level without politicising them.

This more inclusive approach would need to engage the principal components of community rather than just fractions of it. This would increase the likelihood of fostering cross-national and inter-ethnic activity amongst these groups, that rather than being nationality based are based on allegiances that break away from restrictive representations of ‘refugee identity’ promoted by the state. For example, they can focus around gender or human rights or other forms of development issues. Although fieldwork has suggested that these multi ethnic and gender based groups are well established in areas like London, further research needs to be done in other places in the UK, especially after the dispersal program (Mgriiffiths, 2005). However, despite the significance of these forms of non-formal political representation these should not replace formal engagement in political life but rather should be complimentary of it.

Viewing the Refugee and Asylum Crisis in Context

Centralisation of power

The division of power amongst organisations has a defining effect on whether the voices of asylum seekers and refugees are heard. Recently the power between various actors working with refugees and asylum seekers, notably the Home Office, NGOs and Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) has been

centralised. A systems approach emphasises the importance to understanding which organisations have power to set agenda and make decisions and which organisations are listening to the voices of marginalised communities. This is particularly important with regards to reception services and dispersal processes (MGriffiths, 2005).

There is a distinction between different kinds of power. It is argued that when marginalised groups gain power through institutions, although they provide 'opportunity structures' for action, they also act to constrain mobilisation through decision making and agenda setting using institutional bias (MGriffiths, 2005). This is further impeded by a lack of coherent policy framework that uses hard to decipher language.

For example, when examining the supposed prominence of participatory development in asylum policy, in the context of highly organisational politics and managerial approaches to development, they are in fact dependent on simplistic notions of community, that act to erase internal differentiation and power relations within social groups. Rather, what this rhetoric actually does is masks the increased centralisation of systems dealing with marginalised groups. A similar trend has been observed by Clevaver (2001). He argues that radical notions of empowerment have been depoliticised and individualised as a result of being incorporated into the policy sphere.

There have been significant changes in the dispersal of power in the UK. Significantly, the 1998 White Paper and the subsequent 1999 legislation removes the statutory requirements to house asylum seekers from local authorities and moved the powers of administration and budgetary control to the Home Office. These reports also embedded in British policy the presumption that all asylum seekers are potential 'economic migrants', with the justification that this ensures 'fairness' to those who are in 'genuine need' (Home Office, 1998).

Griffiths et al.'s (2005) study observes that RCOs were regarded by policy makers as the ideal infrastructure to deliver government supports to dispersed refugee communities. However, the centralisation of RCOs within the conflict of the migration-asylum nexus creates an uncomfortable ambiguity between representing the best interests of asylum seekers and refugees and representing government

policy on the control of immigration. Furthermore, they often suffer from structural constraints. As Cleaver notes *“Even where a community appears well motivated, dynamic and well organised, severe limitations are presented by an inadequacy of material resources, by the very structural constraints that impede the functioning of community-based initiatives”* (2001, p 46). This is a clear barrier to the empowerment of asylum seekers.

A study argues that these patterns have resulted in the increasing marginalisation of RCOs. It makes several conclusions summarised below:

- There has been a transition from the development of important networks between RCOs based in London and other regions, to being absorbed into the organising agendas of the main NGOs involved in dispersal.
- RCOs are now dependent upon Home Office funding, often channelled through NGOs. This sets limits on their room for manoeuvre and control.
- RCOs have limited resources to contribute to the long term integration and empowerment of refugees. As a result their current role is primarily filling in gaps made by rapidly changing policy.

It is important to consider the consequences of the position of RCOs on the empowerment of refugees. These trends perhaps explain why the empowerment of refugees remains so limited, as the organisations that listen to them are primarily overstretched with limited power. As such, their role in the integration of refugees is perhaps overstated in literature especially in comparison to other economic activity. It is essential to highlight these discrepancies in literature and reality, to understand where refugees and asylum seekers are listened to and where they are silenced.

Arguably a more nuanced approach is needed. For example, whereby RCOs adopt a *“genuinely intermediary rather than marginal”* position, that strengthens the identity of refugee communities empowering them whilst also challenging the resistance of *“groups and institutions within the so-called ‘mainstream’”* (Tomlinson and Egan, 2002, p 1041). It has also been argued that informal networks are now often viewed as more effective in creating social bonds.

It is also important to recognise positive trends that occur in this landscape. For example, Werbner argues that competition for state resources isn't always negative, rather it acts to open up channels for ethnic mobilisation and advancement. Likewise, the partial incorporation of refugee organisations in the dispersal arrangements, even though they might be uneven, does increase the potential for

networks or refugee groups to develop in a way that will reflect their emerging needs in the face of rapidly changing policy. However, in order to empower refugees and asylum seekers, it is important to understand who has the power and capacity to give them a voice. This report argues that a systems approach is an effective way of identifying this.

[Economic and Political restructuring.](#)

Vertovec (1997) highlights that the biggest threat to the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers stems from economic and political restructuring. A paradigm example of this is the austerity programs led by the neoliberal agenda, that have undermined welfare provisions and increased global poverty leaving asylum seekers and refugees increasingly vulnerable and their empowerment increasingly unattainable. This poses a contradiction between the promotion of individual choice and an attempt to create cohesive communities. Both these processes marginalise refugees and asylum seekers, as they are not given the power to make individual choices, for example through voting, but are also ‘othered’ and excluded from communities.

[Global Empowerment of Refugees and Asylum Seekers.](#)

Taking a systems approach to examining the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers requires an examination of processes at a multitude of scales.

Currently, there is limited literature on how policies are developed at a global level and the way these policies affect the individual lives of asylum seekers and refugees and others perceptions of this marginalised group. I argue that a systems approach might help to answer two questions. What is the effect that global refugee policy has on the empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees? And how much of a voice do asylum seekers and refugees have in the making of this policy?

An article by Milner concludes that a more focused and systematic study of global refugee policy is needed to understand the impact it has on those it claims to help. This is increasingly true in the face of the growing pressure that climate change might place on the refugee crisis. There is a growing need to move from the ad hoc responses currently prevalent in asylum policy globally to a more future-proof solution (Easo.europa.eu, 2019).

There is some research that is already attempting to establish this. For example, the Refugee Studies Centre in December 2012 called for the establishment of a network of researchers working on various aspects of global refugee policy to be

hosted by the Refugee Research Network. However, due to its research based focus there is often the exclusion of asylum seekers and refugees in setting up these organisations. Consequently, despite being effective in fostering community and collaborative research investigating global policy in a variety of contexts, there remains a failing to give refugees and asylum seekers a voice in this context (Milner, 2014)

It is possible to view the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers as illustrative of a globally emerging trend around rights to movement often termed a 'new era of protest' (Atac, et. al, 2016). Despite many acts of solidarity amongst the European community welcoming newcomers into European communities, these have occurred with the backdrop of a growing populist and right-wing sentiment towards migration. This climaxed at the end of 2015, when a climate of fear, perpetuated by right wing media spread throughout Europe as a result of terrorist attacks in Paris and violent attacks in Cologne.

Public Perceptions and Media

A systems approach to the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers stresses the importance of viewing this issue in the context of other national and global challenges and trends.

The media's large influence over public perceptions, means that negative media of the asylum crisis plays a large part in undermining their empowerment. Restrictive and racialized immigration controls also have significant negative effects on public perceptions of immigration. The rise of the far right fuels the language of 'acting tough on asylum'. This perpetuates negative public perceptions propelling it into the mainstream media where refugees and asylum seekers are presented as potential 'terrorists' and 'criminals' (Mgriiffiths, 2005).

Elevating the voices of asylum seekers and refugees could be integral to transforming media coverage of this issue (Rossi, and Rogers, 2016). One suggested way of doing this is to facilitate honest conversations about attitudes to recent migration with the public, especially in communities that have been subject to rapid change. The role of these conversations would be to understand what the real issues and impacts are, increase transparency, and also to promote understanding and trust between different groups involved (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2018)

The influence of migration perceptions on the 'Brexit' referendum

The result of the Brexit referendum highlights some worrying trends occurring in the UK and perhaps Europe more widely. A survey concluded that 88 percent claimed that immigration was a significant reason for them voting to leave and that 90 percent claimed that sovereignty was significant (Ebead and McDonough, 2017). These people were recorded feeling that immigration has negatively affected Britain, and believed Brexit would lower immigration, positively influencing the economy and strengthening security (Swales 2016). Due to these trends being evident before the referendum, it spurred the leave campaign to adopt a more anti-immigration rhetoric. The lack of factual information about immigration presented to the public, left many people vulnerable to believing the 'facts' presented by right wing media.

Because refugees and asylum seekers are silenced in these debates, they have little influence over public opinion. Due to the referendum being ballot based and refugees not having the right to vote there was little incentive for politicians to listen to the voices of asylum seekers and refugees.

Despite this, the facts are that there is no conclusive evidence that on average refugees consume more social services than they pay in taxes. Despite first generation migrants often needing a degree of support, subsequent generations often become net contributors. There thus needs to be a wider proliferation of fact based debates on migration particularly refugees and asylum seekers. Consequently, in order to tackle the negative public perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers the disconnect between citizens and political institutions needs to be addressed. This will encourage public attitudes towards immigration to lead to better governance (Ebead and McDonough, 2017).

Democracy

Another challenge posed by the failure to empower refugees and asylum seekers is the threat it has on democracy. The challenge for integration policies is that marginalised groups need to be empowered as part of a democratic society, rather than having to perform according to a criteria for integration determined by what the government regards as appropriate. This is made even more prominent when marginalised groups are excluded from the processes that determine these integration measures. This can be argued from the theoretical standpoint of 'politics of presence'. This theory determines that the identity and experiences of elected representatives matter, as they bring new perspectives to democratic

decision making (Bloemraad, 2013). According to this theory the legitimacy of a democracy is undermined when those in decision making bodies fail to mirror the population.

Current trends in refugee political participation are hard to decipher due to lack of data. Electoral administrators often don't disaggregate ballots cast by voters from refugee backgrounds and local, regional or national parliaments don't usually record the previous legal status of candidates. This is a notable gap in data collection is essential to plug if the empowerment and political participation of refugees is to be measured.

The threat of the position of asylum seekers and refugees to democracy will become increasingly pressing in the face of increases in globalization, climate change, and state failure. Consequently, methods need to be put in place so that states have the capacity to effectively integrate asylum seekers and refugees into political life. For example, there is a need to increase an awareness amongst refugee communities on the importance of democracy and the need to vote.

Education in host countries political systems is of integral importance and should begin soon after entering the country. Individuals often have little experience of participating in democratic processes and need educating on different parties in order to make an informed decision. This will also increase interest in participation in the decision making processes in host countries, combating the marginalization and isolation of these groups (Adan, et al., 2018). There is a fundamental need to extend voting rights to non-citizen residents in order to maintain the basic rules of democracy as no one should be subject to political decisions without being able to influence them in some way (Pedroza, 2014). Integration programmes should not be used as a substitute for this right but rather should be combined in a policy that departs from citizenship as nationality but rather based on democracy.

Methodological considerations

This section summarises the importance of taking a systems approach to understanding the empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees. Studies have suggested that the integration of new groups into existing communities, should be measured by the groups influence in relation to others rather than only length of stay. Consequently, refugee integration should be studied together, with the study of other groups, especially in areas of rapid cultural change, such as those affected by the dispersal program. There is thus an urgent need for the UK's central and local governments to develop overarching and 'integrated' integration and

empowerment policies and services. These should include the needs of new migrants and existing residents, in order to facilitate equality of voice and empowerment to all. This is increasingly true in the face of rapidly changing policy (Daley, 2009).

When researching marginalised groups there is also a tendency to be complicit in cultural foundationalism, masking the diversity and conflicting interpretations of identity and belonging of these groups, many of which cross both territorial and cultural boundaries. By using a systems approach one might detect variations within these marginalised groups, such as the heightened vulnerability of those living in destitution. One is also more likely to detect informal networks. Formal organisations are assumed to be more accountable and transparent than informal networks, however arguably informal institutions represent the voices of asylum seekers more accurately and should thus be equally included in policy making decisions. A systems approach would also reduce the current over reliance on ‘solidarity models’ of community that neglect to recognise the overlapping and diverse forms of social networking based upon family, religion, locality and other factors (Mgriffiths, 2005)

In taking this systems approach this report has highlighted several important considerations for the future, summarised below.

What needs to be done in the future

- Electoral rights in local and regional elections need to be extended to refugees who are long-term residents. This would enable refugees to participate in electoral processes and political decision-making at the local level, promoting respect for individuals choice and increasing motivation to be politically active citizens if they obtain this status.
- CSOs should be promoted to enable the self-organization of refugees.
- National governments should enhance the support provided to migrant representative bodies and refugee-led organizations. This would incentivise the integration of refugees into host societies, creating opportunities for interaction between refugees and the settled population. However, there should be caution when distributing this funding as to not corrupt the focus of these bodies on the interests of migrant.

- There should be a focus on educating refugees, providing information on mechanisms for formal and non-formal political participation in the host country and the various avenues for contributing to peace and democracy-building in their countries of origin. There is no use in having structures of empowerment if people aren't educated on how to use them.
- State and local governments should conduct consultations with refugees and asylum seekers and community organizations that represent them. These consultations should be used to inform decision-makers of refugee needs. This is particularly needed in the face of rapidly changing policy environment. This would combat the sense of these groups being 'pushed out' of the mainstream community encouraging refugees to participate in local political structures increasing opportunities to create social links.
- Individual political parties should increase engagement with refugee groups. They should promote diversity and equal opportunities by nominating more candidates from refugee backgrounds and placing them in positions on party lists where they have a genuine chance of getting elected. This would put empowered individuals in places of visibility for other refugees thus encouraging more political participation
- Measures need to be taken to counter negative perceptions of migration especially asylum seekers and refugees. This can be done by increasing the transparency of policy and increasing public consultation on migration policies.
- Democracy should aim to increase public confidence in the government's ability to manage migration. Political parties should engage in fact-based democratic dialogue on refugees and asylum seekers.
- Empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers should be recognised by Global Regional, national and local organizations, as fundamental to reaching the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly Goal 16, to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. As a result, more attention should be paid to the political representation of migrants.
- In order to understand the effect that individual policies have on the lives of asylum seekers and refugees there is a need to collect more numerical and empirical data.

Conclusion

Success following these objectives will enhance the empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers. The political and social empowerment of refugees and asylum seekers is arguably paramount to their successful and sustainable integration, as the most effective integration policies will be achieved if the voices and needs of asylum seekers and refugees are heard. This will reduce feelings of being 'left out' and will thus encourage refugees and asylum seekers to make social connections and integrate into communities more. If it is recognised that the empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees might be integral to achieving community integration rather than causing it, it might help combat the negative perceptions of refugees perpetuated by the right wing media. In conclusion, it is evident that for sustainable integration, the empowerment of asylum seekers and refugees is of paramount importance. This is particularly true in the face of possible increases in those seeking asylum as a result of increased political instability and climate change.

References

- Adan, T., De Casanova, J. T. A., El-Helou, Z., Mannix, E., Mpeiwa, M., Opon, C. O., Ragab, N. J., Sharifi, S. and Zakaryan, T., (2018). 'Political participation of refugees: Bridging the gaps.'
- Ager, Alastair, and Strang, A., (2008) 'Understanding integration: A conceptual framework.' *Journal of refugee studies*. 21(2), pp. 166-191.
- Atac, I., Rygiel, K. and Stierl, M., (2016) 'Introduction: The contentious politics of refugee and migrant protest and solidarity movements: remaking citizenship from the margins', *Citizenship Studies*, 20(5), pp. 527-44.
- Beirens, H., Hughes, N., Hek, R. and Spicer, N., (2007) 'Preventing Social Exclusion of Refugee and Asylum Seeking Children: Building New Networks'. *Social Policy and Society*, 6(2), pp. 219-229.
- Bloemraad, I., (2013) 'Accessing the corridors of power: puzzles and pathways to understanding minority representation', *West European Politics*, 36(3), pp. 652-70
- Bristol.cityofsanctuary.org. (2019) '*Dignity Not Destitution*.' [online] Available at: <https://bristol.cityofsanctuary.org/dignity-not-destitution> [Accessed 31 Jul. 2019]
- Casteles, S., Korac, M., Vasta, E. and Vertovec, S., (2001) 'Integration: Mapping the Field.' Report of a project carried out by the Centre for Migration and Policy Research and Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford.

- Daley, C., (2009) 'Exploring community connections: community cohesion and refugee integration at a local level.' *Community Development Journal*, 44(2), pp. 158–171, [online] Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsm026>
- Duke K, Sales R, Gregory J, Bloch A, Levy C. (1999) 'Refugee Resettlement in Europe' in *Refugees, Citizenship and Social Policy in Europe*. Basingstoke Palgrave Macmillan pp. 105-127.
- Phillips, D., (2006) 'Moving Towards Integration: The Housing of Asylum Seekers and Refugees in Britain.' *Housing Studies*, 21(4), pp. 539-553, DOI: [10.1080/02673030600709074](https://doi.org/10.1080/02673030600709074)
- EASO., (2018). *EASO Annual Report on the Situation of Asylum in the EU 2018*. [online] Available at: <http://www.europeanmigrationlaw.eu/documents/EASO-annual-report-2018.pdf> [Accessed 26 Jul. 2019].
- Ebead, N. and McDonough, P., (2017) 'Migration, social polarization, citizenship and multiculturalism', in *International IDEA, The Global State of Democracy: Exploring Democracy's Resilience*, Stockholm: International IDEA.
- Easo.europa.eu., (2019) *1.1.1. Reform of the Common European Asylum System | European Asylum Support Office*. [online] Available at: <https://www.easo.europa.eu/easo-annual-report-2018/111-reform-common-european-asylum-system> [Accessed 29 Jul. 2019].
- Foucault, M., (1984) '*Face aux gouvernements, les droits de l'homme*', *Liberation no 967, 30 June/1 July, p. 22, Dits et écrits IV p 707-8 (355), Gallimard 1994*. Translated by Colin Gordon, October 2015. Available at Open Democracy: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/michel-foucault/rights-and-duties-of-international-citizenship>.
- Home Office., (2018) Immigration Statistics. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-september-2018/list-of-tables>
- House of Lords., (2018) *Impact of 'Hostile Environment' Policy Debate on 14 June 2018*. London: House of Lords
- Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration., (2016). *An inspection of the 'hostile environment' measures relating to driving licences and bank accounts*. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/567652/ICIBI-hostile-environment-driving-licences-and-bank-accounts-January-to-July-2016.pdf [Accessed 5 Aug.2019].
- International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (2017). *Migration, social polarization, citizenship and multiculturalism*. [online] Strömsborg: International IDEA. Available at: <https://www.idea.int/gsod/files/IDEA-GSOD-2017-CHAPTER-7-EN.pdf> [Accessed 26 Jul.2019].
- Korac, M., (2005) 'Creating Solutions: The Role of Social Networks and Transnational Links in Shaping Migration Choices of Forced Migrants from the Former Yugoslavia' Paper presented at the 9th International Conference of the International Association for the Study of Forced Migration (IASFM), Sao Paulo, Brazil, January 2005.

- Loc.gov., (2019). *Refugee Law and Policy: United Kingdom*. [online] Available at: <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/refugee-law/unitedkingdom.php - Chart> [Accessed 7 Aug. 2019].
- Mestheneos. E., Ioannidi, E., and Gaunt, S., (1999) 'Bridges and Fences: Refugee Perceptions of Integration in the European Union', OCIV Belgium. http://repository.forcedmigration.org/show_metadata.jsp?pid1/4fmo:1891.
- Mgriffiths, D., Sigona, N. and Zetter, R., (2005) 'Refugee Community Organizations and Dispersal: Networks, Resources and Social Capital.' Bristol: Policy Press.
- Midgley, G. (1992) 'The sacred and profane in critical systems thinking.' *Systems Practice*, 5(1), pp. 5-16.
- Milner, J., (2014) 'Introduction: understanding global refugee policy', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 27(4), pp. 477-94
- Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (2018). *Integrated Communities Innovation Fund July 2018*. London: Integrated Communities Innovation Fund July 2018.
- NACCOM The No Accommodation Network., (2018). *Annual Report 2017-2018*. [online] Available at: https://naccomm.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/NACCOM-AnnualReport_2017-09-19_final-EMAIL.pdf [Accessed 5 Aug. 2019].
- Nash, M., Wong, J. and Trlin, A., (2006) 'Civic and social integration: A new field of social work practice with immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.' *International Social Work*, 49(3), pp. 345-363. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0020872806063407>
- Pedroza, L., (2014) 'The democratic potential of enfranchising resident migrants', *International Migration*, 53(3), pp. 22-35
- Rankin, J. (2018). 'Sharp fall in number of people seeking asylum in EU.' *The Guardian*. [online] Available at: (<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/18/sharp-fall-in-number-of-people-seeking-asylum-in-eu>) [Accessed 22 Jul. 2019].
- Steffen Wetzstein., (2019) 'Comparative housing, urban crisis and political economy: an ethnographically based 'long view' from Auckland, Singapore and Berlin.' *Housing Studies*, 34(2), pp. 272-297.
- Strang, Alison, and Ager., (2010) "Refugee integration: Emerging trends and remaining agendas." *Journal of refugee studies*, 23(4), pp. 589-607.
- Threadgols, T and Court, G. (2005) 'Refugee Inclusion: A Literature Review', *Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies*.