Refugee Protection: A Case Study of Refugees in London

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M.Sc. in Global Migration

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Abstract

In migration scholarship discourses on securitization have guided a number of studies analysing the restrictive measures underpinning the United Kingdom’s Asylum Regime (Darling 2011; Huysmans 2006; Squire 2008). These studies have highlighted the role asylum policies have on creating exclusionary narratives, which determine the precarious conditions asylum seekers currently endure in the UK. As such, these studies have convey a monolithic understanding on the subject of refugee protection, where the ambiguous legal status of asylum seekers is seen as the primary determinant that incapacitates protection. This understanding, however, fails to capture the multiplicity of experiences of force migration, and thus the voices of recognized refugees are often absent. Building upon this idea, this research aims to shift the focus from asylum seekers to individuals who have been granted refugee status. Following the predominant discourse, exposed by literature, that the restrictive nature of UK asylum laws, and thus the lack of access, is seen as a primary determinant that incapacitates protection, this research takes a qualitative approach to investigate whether legality (i.e. refugee status) necessarily grants the protection owe to refugees. It examines the development of the UK’s discourse of protection, while it interrogates its effects on the individuals with refugee status.
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Introduction

In the aftermath of World War II, liberal democracies made an unprecedented commitment to the protection of human rights. What followed the post-war period, would establish an international human rights framework that at its core sought to provide protection to those who faced human rights abuses because of their political views, their ethnicity, religion, or nationality (Kneebone 2009). The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol (hereafter: Refugee Convention)—which all Western States are signatories—embodied the commitment of liberal democracies to implement an international protection regime (Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009). However, today, an often reactionary, and communitarian discourse that places national security above human security has replaced the commitment made over 60 years ago.

In the United Kingdom (UK), in particular, this type of discourse has gain great prominence. Over the past two decades, the UK’s asylum regime has seen a gradual, but continuous shift towards restriction. Therefore, the protection owe to refugees\(^1\) has been circumvented by the implementation of asylum laws that seek to deter and negate protection (Back & Sinha 2010). For this reason, the UK’s asylum regime has faced severe criticisms for its policies and has been the study of a vast number of literatures dedicated to understand the development of the UK’s restrictive, and often draconian policies of asylum (Blinder 2013; Gibney 2004; Huymans 2006; Kneebone 2009; Mulvey 2010; McGhee 2005; Rabben 2011; Squire 2009; Thomas 2009). In the last years, larger discourses on securitization have guided a number of studies analysing this shift (Darling

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\(^1\) The use of the term refugee/s throughout this study abides by the legal definition as established by the Refugee Convention. Accordingly, refugee is define as an individual ‘owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself to the protection of that country (1951 Convention, Article 1).
2011; Huysmans 2006; Squire 2008). Highlighting the role asylum policies have on creating exclusionary narratives, which determine the precarious conditions asylum seekers\(^2\) currently endure in the UK. As such, the figure of the asylum seeker has become pivotal in the study of force migration. Albeit, addressing an important issue and providing with a critical analysis of the UK’s asylum regime, these studies, convey a monolithic understanding on the subject of refugee protection, where the ambiguous legal status of asylum seekers is seen as the primary determinant that incapacitates protection. This understanding, however, fails to capture the multiplicity of experiences of force migration, and thus the voices of recognized refugees are often absent. Building upon this idea, this research aims to shift the focus from asylum seekers to individuals who have been granted refugee status.

Following the predominant discourse, exposed by literature, that the restrictive nature of UK asylum laws, and thus the lack of access, is seen as a primary determinant that incapacitates protection, this research takes a qualitative approach to investigate whether legality (i.e. refugee status) necessarily grants the protection owe to refugees. It examines the development of the UK’s discourse of protection, while it interrogates its effects on the individuals with refugee status.

Ultimately, this study will demonstrate that despite their legal status, the current asylum policies have constructed a discourse of protection that institutionalizes socio-economic and political marginalization among the refugee population. In doing so, the refugee population is left unprotected and dependent on the assistance by non-profit organizations. At the same time, it will demonstrate that the protection discourse that has developed has deliberately place demands on refugees to re-construct their identities in order to negotiate belonging to the larger community, and thus be better positioned to obtain protection.

\(^2\) The use of the term asylum seeker/s throughout this study abides by the legal definition as established by the Refugee Convention. Accordingly, asylum seeker is defined as: ‘an individual who is seeking international protection in countries with individualized refugee status determination procedures [...] whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it’ (1951 Convention).
Accordingly, this research is divided into four chapters. Chapter 1 presents a multi-layered literature review to provide a contextual overview and theoretical considerations to frame this research. Chapter 2 presents the methodology undertaken by these research, by including an outline of the methods used and the ethical considerations undertaken. Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the development of the UK’s current discourse of protection, by encompassing a secondary analysis of the development of the current policies that govern asylum adjudication. Chapter 4, the empirical chapter, presents an understanding of refugee protection through the lived experiences of refugees in London.
1 Theoretical Considerations

What is refugee protection? The post-war human rights doctrine led the way for the implementation of an ‘international regime of refugee protection’ (Kneebone 2009 p. 2). Therefore, refugee protection is defined by a variety of international legal instruments, above all, the Refugee Convention. As an instrument for human rights protection, at its core, the Refugee Convention conceives refugee protection as the ‘basic right to flee persecution and to seek and enjoy asylum, and to enshrine the rights against refoulement’ (Article.33.2)’ (Kneebone 2009:6). However, far beyond this definition, refugee protection entails that individuals have access to the rights prescribed by the Refugee Convention. It is here where protection is inherently related to legality. That is, protection, as ascribed by international refugee law, can only be granted once a state grants legal residency, i.e. refugee status. As such, what refugee protection is and what it entails is highly contested. Is it just the right to legal residence or is it a wider margin of protection?

It is here, where understanding what refugee protection becomes highly complex. From scholars to politicians refugee protection is often conceived through multi-dimensional discourses that try to reconcile between human rights and state discretion in managing the right of entry (Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009). Thus, the concept is continuously constructed and contested (Kneebone 2009; Stevens 2013). Although, the concept of refugee protection in this context may seem abstract, the legal dimension of refugee protection and the policy responses it demands, points out that refugee protection be regarded as a discourse rather than just an umbrella term for the rights of refugees. At the same time, the inherent legal dimension that it encompasses, questions how the rule of law affects the development of the discourse.

In this chapter, I do not set out to present a robust conception of refugee protection, neither as a discourse or a policy agenda. Rather, I try to give the contextual background that frames this research through the review of concepts and ideas that can

3 Refoulement as a principle in international describes the act of removal or deportation of individuals who face a real risk of threat to their life in their country of origin (Stevens 2013; Kneebone 2009).
shed light on the interrelationships between asylum law and the development of a refugee protection discourse, and legality and protection. Therefore providing some theoretical considerations for this research.

**Positioning Refugee Protection**

The state of refugee protection today has developed through the often contradictory relationship between the post-war human rights doctrine and sovereignty (Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009). On the one hand, the post-war era saw an outstanding commitment by liberal democracies to protect human rights, leading to the establishment of an international human rights legal framework—including the Refugee Convention. On the other hand, the resilience of the sovereignty doctrine has encroach on the implementation of international human rights within domestic jurisdictions by placing national interests above human security (Gibney 2006; Kneebone 2009). The Westphalian model of the nation-state in relation to human rights has particularly affected the protection granted to refugees. Although protection mechanism are often divergent, particularly between developing and developed countries, refugee protection is subject to state discretion (Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009). As such, implementation within national jurisdictions ‘is being done in such a way as to deny refugees the rights which are due to them under the international regime of refugee protection’ (Kneebone 2009 pp. 1-2). In particular, policy developments in Western Europe demonstrate an often draconian approach to refugee protection (Gibney 2004). Where policies are guided by concerns over national security rather than protecting the human rights of those fleeing persecution (Buonfino & Huysmans 2008; Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009).

It is within this context, that there is an evidentiary shift from states commitment to protect refugees to states implementing stringent measures that prevents refugees from obtaining protection. Although on the outset the shift towards restriction has been explained as a response to a growth in asylum claims, and thus overwhelmed asylum systems, many scholars reject this argument—arguing that it is the construction of asylum as a ‘threat’ that has paved the way for the implementation of asylum policies of
deterrence and restriction to access (Buonfino & Huysmans 2008; McGhee 2005; Gibney 2004; Huysmans 2006; Squire 2009).

Squire (2009) frames the shift towards restriction as a product of a variety of inter-related events that have changed the discourse of refugee protection. During the Cold War a commitment to refugee protection was of ‘political utility’, whereby the protection of those fleeing from communist countries served to enforce the values that liberal democracies were committed to protect (Squire 2009:7). However, by the end of the Cold War, the ideological war was over, and refugee protection became both a ‘secondary concern’ and an opportunity to re-evaluate states’ commitment to refugee protection (Squire 2009:7).

According to Squire (2009) refugee protection from its origins has been used by states as a subject to construct or maintain the values of the political community. As such, refugee protection, or rather the type of refugee protection that states subscribe to, is imbedded within discourses that are highly contextualized to the socio-political and economic changes of the political community (Kneebone 2009; Gibney 2004; Squire 2009). For these reasons events such as the end of the Cold War, the economic crisis of the late 70s, and more evidently the rise in international migration and international terrorism has allowed refugee protection to be re-framed (Squire 2009). It is precisely because of this observation, that Squire (2009) argues that policy developments that deter refugees or negate access to protection cannot be solely understood as a response to increasing numbers of asylum seekers. Rather, problematizing the number of asylum seekers in itself is a construction of the new discourse of asylum. Therefore, understanding the policy developments as just a number problem dismisses an analysis to understand why asylum has been framed as such in the first place. For this reason, Squire (2009) concludes, that any systematic analysis on the emergence of stringent asylum policies needs to be understood ‘in relation to the wider articulation of political community as a territorially defined entity that requires protection from “alien” incursion’ (Squire, 2009: 21).

Here, securitization theory highlights the way security discourses enable the problematization of asylum. Huysmans (2006) argues that both in ‘explicitly asserting the threatening qualities’ of asylum and/or by introducing measures of control and
management, asylum is posed as a security question (Huysmans 2006:3-4). Therefore, security discourses not only allow the construction of asylum as threat, but also demand a ‘policy framework that emphasizes policing and defence’ (Huysmans 2006:3-4). Consequently, the securitization of asylum triggers a continued mobilization of ‘governmental security agencies, political rhetoric of insecurity, and popular perceptions of danger’ (Huysmans, 2006:6). While at the same time ‘uphold[s] and reinforce[s] notions about the political community’, such as their attitudes towards refugee protection (Huysmans 2006:31). In the case of asylum, the determination of who will be subject to security practices and how they will be legitimatize relies heavily on the values of the political community (Huysmans 2006:37). Thus, the securitization of asylum establishes a hierarchal model of protection because ‘everyday accounts of unease towards asylum are connected to an existential situation in which political autonomy and unity is constituted by representing a hostile environment’ (Huysmans 2006:51). Consequently, ‘stratifying social relations’ and creating domains of exclusion and inclusion—which mediates who will be subject to protection (Huysmans 2006:55-57).

It is here, where refugee protection has been ‘critically transfigured’ because the securitization of asylum has constructed ‘social relations’ and political mobilization ‘according to a rationality of security’ (Huysmans 2006:7,26). At the policy level, it has ‘fundamentally reframe the understanding of the policy question’, and thus changing the type of protection the state deems acceptable to be granted to refugees (Huysmans 2006:26-31). Thus, the shift towards restriction, as understood as both constitutive and a consequence of framing asylum as a security question, has critically changed states’ responses to refugee protection. Ultimately, today’s state of refugee protection is meditated through policy responses that establish hierarchal responsibilities (Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009). That is, when security concerns are prioritize it legitimizes the derogation of state responsibility to the obligations set out by the Refugee Convention. Placing the protection of its own political community above foreign figures, such as refugees.

Beyond the right to stay: What types of protection are refugees entitled to?

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4 A detailed theoretical framework that further explains the performative dimension of securitization is found in Huymans (2006).
As mentioned in the introduction of this research, the majority of the literature on the subject of refugee protection is focused on the policy developments and its effects on the rights of asylum seekers. Although, access remains an important issue, there is a gap in analysing refugee protection once refugee status has been granted. Although, this gap reflects the dominant discourse that protection is tied to legality, therefore it assumes protection only as an individual’s ability to legally remain in the host country, it dismisses a critical analysis of what type of protection refugees are actually entitled to. Consequently, in this section, I briefly address the legal framework of refugee protection as established by the Refugee Convention. At the same time, I review refugee protection as established by UNHCR guidelines, which reflect a wider margin of protection. Finally, I reflect on Nussbaum’s (2006) theory on human capabilities to encompass a social justice approach to refugee protection.

Refugee Convention

The Refugee Convention outlines a legal framework for refugee protection by establishing the rights entitled to those individuals who have been recognized as refugees. Although, an in-depth review of these rights falls outside of the scope of this research this section will present a review of the overall rights that states’ must accord to refugees. Accordingly, beyond the right to seek and enjoy asylum, under the legal framework of the Refugee Convention, refugee protection can be conceived as:

the right to life; the right not to be subjected to cruel or degrading treatment or punishment; the right not to be tortured or arbitrarily detained; the right to family unity; the right to adequate food, shelter, health and education, as well as livelihoods opportunities (UNHCR 2009:4).

More specifically, the Refugee Convention (1951) mandates refugees, ‘by the least’, be granted the same favourable provisions of protection as established by the convention, exempt national security concerns (Article 5). These provision mandate signatory states to grant, ‘by the least’, the same ‘favourable rights that are given to their nationals ‘with respect to’: freedom of religion (Article 4); access to courts (Article 16); access to public elementary education (Article 22.1), and access to public relief (Article 24) (1951
Convention). On the other hand, refugees shall be granted at least the favourable rights granted to foreign nationals, which are lawfully present within their territories, with respect to: freedom of association (Article 15); access to higher education (Article 22.2); access to housing, and ‘right to engage in wage-earning employment’ (Article 17.1) (1951 Refugee Convention).

Overall the protection framework established by Refugee Convention provides a robust legal protection to refugees. In particular, such rights as access to public relief, which ensures ‘that recognized refugees are entitled to benefit from the national social assistance and welfare schemes enjoyed by nationals’, demonstrates that signatory states have a legal responsibility to provide a wider margin of protection (UNHCR 2009:215) Mandating refugee protection to not be limited to granting refugees the right to lawfully stay in their territories. Although, the Refugee Convention falls short from prescribing targeted assistance to refugees, i.e. the implementation of government agencies that assist refugees to access to these rights, it is important to acknowledge that in order for refugees to enjoy these rights they need to have access. In particular, with the recognition that the circumstances of force migration are abrupt and uproot individuals from their societies. Therefore, lack of knowledge of the host country, language and culture barriers, and emotional distress can hinder the ability of refugees to access these rights (Elford 2014). Consequently, any critical analysis of refugee protection should explore if states actively pursue policies that enable access to these rights.

**UNHCR Guidelines**

On the other hand, despite the robust legal protection that is established by the Refugee Convention there is still substantial gaps that failed to address today’s realities of refugees populations world-wide. These gaps in some ways reflect the lack of re-examination of the Refugee Convention since its 1951 inception (Kneebone 2009). For this reason, UNHCR has provided a variety of guidelines that help the understanding of what types of protection refugees should be accorded. Although, a vast number of the
guidelines introduced by UNHCR are within the context of the developing world, the guidelines do provide key concepts to understand the type of protection refugees are entitled to. Focusing on UNHCR guidelines on refugee protection in urban areas, this section reflects on the concept of protection space and community orientation as notions of a wider margin of protection.

The concept of protection space was introduced by UNHCR guidelines to refugee protection in urban spaces. Although lacking a legal definition, UNHCR (2009: 4) defines it as: ‘the extent to which a conducive environment exists for the internationally recognized rights of refugees to be respected and their needs to be met’. As UNHCR highlights protection space is contingent to changing socio-political circumstances of the host country, therefore it should not be measured but rather assessed ‘in a qualitative manner on the basis of certain indicators’ (UNHCR 2009:4-5). These indicators include not only how much access refugees have to the rights accorded by the Refugee Convention, but also include the ‘enjoy[ment] of adequate shelter and living conditions’, ‘access to public and private services such as healthcare and education’, and ‘enjoy[ment] of harmonious relationships with the host population, other refugees and migrant communities’ (UNHCR, 2009: 4-5).

Despite the above considerations, and in consideration that the UNHCR does not consider protection space as a policy framework, scholars have often try to find a better articulation of what a protection space is (Stevens 2013). As such, scholars suggest that protection space be understood as mode of governance, which delivers protection ‘through positive action’ (Stevens 2013:22-23). More precisely Barnes (2009), as cited in (Stevens 2013:23), has conceptualized protection space as ‘humanitarian space’. Identified by a ‘physical space’, where the territorial space allows for the protection to take place, and an ‘action space’, where an ‘an individual has the possibility of moving and making decisions’. In other words, protection space is understood as: ‘an environment which enables the delivery of protection activities and within which the prospect of providing protection is optimized’ (Barnes 2009, as cited in, Stevens 2013: 23). Similarly, UNHCR has introduced the notion of community orientation to

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5 Due to the lack of institutional and structural capacities, as well as the absence of national asylum policies, of many developing countries, the UNCHR uses its mandate to collaborate with governments to adjudicate refugee recognition and establish practices that enable the refugee protection (Elford 2014)
encompass the type of refugee protection refugees should be entitled to (UNHCR, 2009). Largely encompassing the notion that refugees should be allowed to be in an environment that constructively ‘preserves and promotes their dignity’ community orientation regards protection as mode of governance that allows for refugees to flourish as both social and economic actors in the host society (UNHCR, 2009: 7). Here, both the notion of protection space and community orientation emphasizes that refugee protection entails that states actively provide an environment in which refugees can not only have access to their rights, but also pursue a life with dignity. Under this framework, in order to provide refugee protection, states must ensure that refugees do not face a continued state of marginalization because of their legal status. Consequently, any study of refugee protection must encompass an understanding that refugee protection cannot only be met by allowing refugees the right to remain.

**The Law, Legal Statuses, and Social stratification**

*The Law as Discourse*

Traditionally, ‘the law’ has been conceptualized as an autonomous and objective system that lies outside both ‘social and political life’ (White 2002:1057). However, as many scholars contend the law is not constructed in a vacuum, rather it reflects and legitimizes the socio-political order (Akinwumi 2012; Herbeck 1995; Martin et al. 2009; Menjívar 2006; White 2002). Under this premise, the law can be understood as a discourse that conveys the values of the political community (White 2002). At the same time, the role of the law, itself, reformulates the values of the political community, and therefore, also constructs and informs other discourses (White 2002). Huysmans (2006) has conveyed, that while on the onset a law can reiterate the ideals of the political community once a law has been established under a particular discourse subsequent laws will continue to evoke the same policy responses. In this sense, the law establishes a self-fulfilling cycle, whereby the law continuously reiterates a discourse that demands a constant policy response. Using this framework, then the analysis of asylum laws is crucial to understand the type of discourse that it presents as it suggests that laws, such as asylum laws, can construct a discourses without discursive political actions. Suggesting,
that an analysis of asylum laws can position this study to interrogate what type of refugee protection discourses have been developed, in light of the continuous implementations of restrictive measures.

Segmented Assimilation Theory

Building upon the framework presented above, critical legal studies frames the role legal discourses have in informing the social position of individuals within the political community. Chouninard (1998), as cited in, (White 2002:1057) argues, that as a discourse, the law serves to ‘(re)construct and (re) shape people’s legal identities and their capacities to enter into and act within the formal legal system. In doing so, legal discourses become a constitutive element in the construction of spatial and identity boundaries (White 2002). Whereby, the legal discourse directly impacts how individuals interact with legal institutions, and how they interact within the political community, both spatially and discursively (White 2002). In this framework, then belonging is often negotiated through the value each legal identity has within the political community.

In line with the above argument, Portes and Rumbaut (1996), as cited in, Menjívar (2006:1002) note that ‘in the context of reception […] extrapersonal factors such as immigration laws […] shape opportunity structures’. Consequently, if the law is understood as constructing or contesting identities, then legal statuses inherently create new understandings about one’s social positioning (Menjívar 2006). In this sense, she argues that differentiated ‘legal statuses creates classes of immigrants’ (Menjívar 2006: 1000). Therefore, those statuses that are valued more than others by the political community constructs domains of inclusion and exclusion, which ultimately creates social stratification based on your legal identity (Menjívar 2006). Menjívar (2006:1003) adds,

‘Citizenship as legal status—whom the state recognizes as a citizen and the formal basis for the rights and responsibilities of the individual in the state—shapes the immigrants’ membership in society and their understandings of their place in it’

In this sense, different legal statuses negotiate between their exclusion and belonging, in opposition to the value of citizenship (Menjívar 2006:1003). In this context, the
citizenship establishes hierarchal categories of belonging and at the same time places demands on the individuals to strive to belong on the notions its value. At the same time, the value of a particular legal status informs the social standing of an individual, and thus informs their ability to become integrative members of society.

This notion in particular helps understand why individuals who have ‘uncertain legal categories’, such as undocumented migrants or asylum seekers, suffer from social marginalization (Menjívar 2006:1003). For example, an individual with a work visa in opposition to an asylum seeker may denote two different values for the political community. In a country that welcomes high-skilled migrants their legal status inherently places them in a better social position than an asylum seeker, whose ambiguous legal status, places them under government surveillance. In fact, Cebulko (2014), argues that the relationship between legal statutes and social stratification needs be understood under the framework of immigration laws. It is immigration laws which determines who and under what circumstances an individual enters the territory, consequently ‘the nation-state’s immigration and citizenship laws produce categories of legal membership that confer political and social rights that are unevenly distributed across legal status categories’ (Cebulko 2014:146). Therefore, it is through the differentiated rights where the relationship between legal statuses and social stratification can be understood. As Celbuko (2014:146) argues, the type of rights accorded can ‘affect economic mobility, but also identities, familial relationships, and one’s vulnerability to being a victim of a crime’. Ultimately, one’s social position is established by where the legal status falls within the immigration spectrum (Cebulko 2014). Therefore, it is no surprise that those who have an ambiguous legal status are at the low-end of the socio-economic spectrum, as their statuses often do not accord any rights at all (Cebulko 2014).

Under this framework, segmented assimilation theory highlights the role legal status has in informing an individual’s social position. In this context, social position does not only affect socio-economic opportunities, but also affects the ability to negotiate belonging, political participation, and access to formal assistance. Consequently, this theory can help understand the relationship between legality and protection and how the ambiguous legal status during the process of seeking asylum may affect the protection received after an individual has been granted refugee status. Equally, it can reflect upon the
effects a discourse of protection can have in re-frame the value of ‘refugee status’, and thus how it affects social stratification.
2 Methodology

Subscribing to Finney’s and Rishbeth’s (2006) assertion that combining one’s expertise to build the research design introduces new ways to understand a particular topic, my approach to the research is undertaken with a creative scope. While I do not claim to approach this research with new creative methods, such as photo diaries, I do undertake an inter-disciplinary line to qualitative research. Where I reconcile between my expertise as a policy and legal oriented researcher and as refugee support volunteer. That is, while understanding the importance of policy/legal developments, and thus wishing to address them within a discussion of refugee protection, as a refugee support volunteer, I recognize that the lived experiences of refugees are crucial to understand how protection is addressed in the UK, and of utter importance to not underestimate the agency of refugees in actively participating in their own protection. Therefore any research relating to refugees must encompass their experiences.

Consequently, I approach this research with the aim to expose a policy understanding that includes, the often, absent voices of those individuals whose lives are affected by the same policies. Indeed, often absent within policy oriented understandings of immigration are the lived experiences of those who are govern by immigration laws. Similarly, qualitative empirical research in migration studies can often neglect a wider understanding of policy development. Accordingly, migration studies often expose fragmented perspectives, producing monolithic understandings of a particular subject. Evidence to this argument, as mentioned in the introduction of this study, has been the predominant understanding that issues of refugee protection are by large encompassed by the lack of access to asylum. Certainly, I do not claim that my approach leads to a comprehensive understanding of refugee protection in the UK, but I do hope, by the least, to provide a wider understanding of the topic.

Positionality

As presented above, my personal background has informed my approach. Therefore it is important to recognize the inherent subjectivity of this research, in particular, with regards to my position as a refugee support volunteer for the past 5 years.
As a refugee support volunteer, I also consider myself an advocate for refugees’ rights. In fact, refugee support volunteers alongside social workers ‘have been part of publicly contesting the responses of government and other social and political institutions to the plight of refugees and asylum seekers’ (Hugman et al., 2011:1273). While my self-representation as an advocate has granted me access to participants—which allowed for a level of trust—permitting participants to tell me about their experiences, it would be naïve to claim it did not affect my role as a researcher. Although, all qualitative research carries inherent subjectivities (Silverman 2011). My particular position as an advocate for refugee rights and as a researcher interrogating about refugee protection can present issues of bias. For this reason, it is important that within the research design various methods of inquiry are utilized in order to present a robust methodological practice. Similarly, is important to acknowledge that my position has influenced the data collection. Particularly when mediating the level of trust I have with each individual, concerns expressed over their anonymity, and with carrying out a thorough data collection. Furthermore, the case study, which focuses on refugees in London, was deliberately chosen because my position established a gateway to access participants and conduct observations.

Methods

Secondary Analysis & Grounded Theory

This research utilizes secondary and primary research with the aim that the triangulation of sources will not only reflect my approach to the subject, but also respond to some of the issues that may arise out my position as advocate. Accordingly, this research uses secondary analysis to discuss and analyse the discourse of refugee protection that has emerged over the last twenty years. The length of the period reflects the aim to understand how the discourse of protection has been developed throughout the introduction of most of the legislation that encompasses the current legal framework of the UK’s asylum regime, and thus serve to analyse how the type of measures and/or provisions introduced by the new legislation presents the discourse of refugee protection. Additionally, it serve to contextualize who and under what circumstances individuals are
granted refugee status, therefore, better positioning the objective to interrogate whether legality grants the protection owe to refugees.

The use of secondary analysis rather than other methods such as discourse or content analysis comes from two realisations: (1) while methods of discourse analysis, which often approaches the study of legal documents by understanding how they function in arranging or representing the socio-political order or values, present a thorough methodological strand to understand the development of the UK’s discourse of protection, it also entails a critical outlook at the use of language by those making the laws (Silverman 2011). Therefore, it often encompasses a robust analysis of the law, political speeches or parliamentary statements—which the researcher selects (Silverman 2011). However, in recognition that my own position as an advocate, can influence the selection process and the analysis, the use of secondary analysis was thought to be more suitable. While secondary analysis often faces substantial criticism because it utilizes data without understanding the context under which the data is collected (Silverman 2011). In this case, it allows for a presentation of the asylum legislation through a continuity that has been found in other literatures. Therefore, it provides more an evidentiary track record and substantiates the objectivity of the analysis; (2) while primary content analysis could have also been a suitable method the limited time under which this research takes place, limited access to original legislative documents, and limited expertise in UK law, could not present an intelligible or comprehensive outline. Here too, secondary analysis serves to present the main provisions of each legislation in an intelligibly manner and within a continuity found among other literatures.

On the other hand, this research also utilizes grounded theory methods (GMT) to analyse the data collected through primary research. The use of GMT is taken under two considerations: (1) the continuous focus by the literature to represent issues of refugee protection as the lack of avenues to claim asylum has not allowed for a robust theoretical understanding of refugee protection once individuals have been granted refugee status. Equally, while some empirical studies have focused on the lived experiences of refugees and the socio-economic conditions they endure. There is no equivalent in the subject of refugee protection, at least under the objective of this research. Therefore, there is no tangible theoretical strands to build from. Consequently, as GTM allows researchers ‘to
develop inductive theoretical analyses from their collected data’ it presents a suitable analytical method to meet the aims of this research (Silverman 2011:292); (2) reflecting on my approach to include an analysis of refugee protection through the lived experiences of those who are recognized refugees GMT allows for an analysis that includes a portrayal of the agency of refugees to actively participate in their own protection.

**Participatory Observation**

Participatory observation grants the researcher the opportunity to understand human experience in a ‘particular context’ (Jurgensen 1989:75). Thus, this method was crucial to analyse the agency of refugees to actively participate in their own protection. Furthermore, understanding that refugee protection is not limited to formal protection, i.e. protection mechanism implemented by governments, participatory observation served to understand under what context refugees seek informal assistance, and if that further illuminates the types of formal protection that are in place.

Accordingly, throughout the research, I conducted participatory observation while volunteering as a welfare adviser in an organization dedicated to provide assistance to refugees in London, i.e. refugee centre. Although, initially, within the research design there was the aim to also conduct observations of the same individuals that were interviewed when they sought formal (e.g. job seekers allowance) and informal assistance (e.g. refugee centres), ethical concerns hinder the ability to carry out such observations. For this reason, I continued to engage with methods of participatory observation only through my already established position as a refugee support volunteer. The participatory observations took place 4 times between the periods of January and June, and consisted of 5 hour sessions each (See Table 1). Consequently, the participatory observations were divided into two phases: (1) preliminary observations—which encompassed note taking of the surroundings, behaviours, group activities, and my interactions (2) secondary observations—encompassed note taking of more structured interactions with refugees and staff, including small semi-structured interviews with staff members (in both phases and after each session, expanded notes were immediately incorporated). These phases informed the study in two dimensions. First, the preliminary observations help
‘established topics of inquiry’ that informed the other methods used in this research (Jurgenson 1985:81). Second, the secondary observations provided the opportunity to integrate the perspectives of individuals that have been providing assistance to refugees in London.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time Span</th>
<th>Categories of observations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>07.02.2014</td>
<td>5 hour sessions</td>
<td>Organisational structures; support services; demographics; group interactions; verbal behaviour; personal interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.03.2014</td>
<td>5 hour sessions</td>
<td>Organisational structures; support services; group interactions; personal interactions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.06.2014</td>
<td>5 hour sessions</td>
<td>Semi-structured interviews with staff; personal interactions; attitudes and approaches to the services provided.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>02.07.2014</td>
<td>5 hour sessions</td>
<td>Coordination of services; demographics; personal interactions; semi-structured interviews with staff.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews**

As mentioned above the preliminary participatory observations informed the subsequent methods of data collection. As such, after a brief overlook of the observations and reflecting on key questions that emerged, semi-structured interviews with refugees were found to be the best method to further explore the aims of this study. The preliminary observations also helped structure the interview schedule (See Appendix 3). Accordingly, I conducted ten semi-structured in-depth interviews of individuals who have or have been granted refugee status by the UK government in the past five years, currently lived in London, and at least have been in London for 3 months. These time limits were put in place to facilitate a systematic analysis. A narrower time frame provides a consistent sample group that can provide a continuity in experiences (King
and Harrocks, 2010; Silverman, 2011) It also reflects a sample group that has been granted refugee status under the current asylum laws. Therefore, facilitating the triangulation of sources and positioning the analysis of the empirical findings within the analysis of the secondary research. Participants ranged from the age of 24-36 and originated from Afghanistan, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, Somalia, and Sudan (See Table 2 for a summary of the interviews). Finally, the data collected was primarily recorded via written form. Although audio-recordings were continuously sought out, only 1 of 10 participants consent to it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Interview No.</th>
<th>Method of Recording</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Legal Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.07.14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Audio-Recorded</td>
<td>H.S.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>British Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.07.14</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>A.M.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.07.14</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>J.R.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.07.14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>A.D.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.07.14</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>D.H</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>British Citizen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.07.14</td>
<td>6-7 (Joint Interview)</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>J.O.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>F.Z</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.07.14</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>A.B</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.07.14</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>A.Z.</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.07.14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Written interview</td>
<td>D.E.</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Refugee Status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Addressing the Challenges of Written Interviews

It must be noted that the lack of audio-recording did hinder the accuracy of the data as it interrupts the flow of conversation and can miss elements of participants’ answers (King and Horrocks 2010). Consequently, presented with the challenge to record interviews through written form, and after a third participant withdrew consent to audio-record, I mechanise a system that would allow a faster form of note-taking and thus enhance the accuracy. Here, the interview schedule was utilised to format the written record. Accordingly, from interviews 4-10, the written material did not include a written account of the questions, with the exception of those questions that were not included in the interview schedule. Abbreviations to common words (e.g. government as ‘gov’t.) were used throughout the written record in order to facilitate fast note-taking. Also asterisks, (*), were used when a particular word was inaudible due to language constraints or pronunciation. These mechanisms facilitated the process of writing down the participant’s answers as accurately possible and helped to continue the flow of the interview, without the interruption of any delays to write down participants’ answers. In addition, all written accounts tried to include notes on non-verbal communication and ‘paralinguistic aspects (voice intonation, volume, and the use of non-linguistic utterances such as laughter, sighs, and pauses)’ (Kings and Horrocks 2010:146).

Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to interpret the data collected through interviews and participatory observations. This was chosen to reflect the use of GTM, as thematic analysis allows the research to see patterns revealed by the data, which allows the construction of themes or category that can shed light on new theory (King and Harrock 2010). Accordingly, the data analysis was undertaken through a three-step process: (1) descriptive coding, (2) interpretive coding, and (3) overarching themes (King and Harrock 2010). Descriptive coding was used to draw out ‘relevant features of participants’ accounts’ (King and Harrocks 2010:154). This first step was of particular importance because it created codes that describe the content, rather than set meaning to the content, which allowed for a more objective analysis. Following, this first step,
descriptive codes were merge into codes that provided an ‘interpretation of their meaning’, these codes were then utilized to construct overarching themes (King and Harrock 2010:154). The themes were selected based on degree of repetition and a continuity within the patterns that were adapt to understand the research question (King and Harrock 2010).

**Ethical Considerations**

The ethical approach undertaken in this research reflects a continued attention to place ‘participants’ interest ahead of the researchers’ interest’ (Hugman et al. 2011:1275). This approach required a continued contestation of the research design to reflect upon issues of disclosing sensitive data, while at the same time ensured that the project would contribute to promote the welfare of the participants (Hugman et al. 2011). The former was undertaken with the recognition that force migrants often endure life-threaten circumstances in their country of origin, therefore thorough attention must be given to ensure that through the re-telling of their experiences their anonymity is ensured (Hugman et al. 2011). In this regards, anonymity does not only mean the use of pseudonymous to change the name of all participants, but also that data such as the country of origin, age, and particular accounts that can established their identity cannot be used (Hugman et al. 2011). Here, I previously identified the countries of origins and age of participants without distinction, while at the same time have used random initials to identify participants (See Table 2). The use of initials as pseudonymous rather than full names was chosen to not inadvertently use pseudonymous that could reflect a name that can be tied to a country of origin (Hugman et al. 2011). Equally, attention to anonymity also demanded that the methods of how data was collected reflect any concern over the disclosure of their identity. In this case, recording interviews through written form, was used to ensure participants of their anonymity, when concerns over their voice identification emerged. On the other hand, ensuring that this research reflects a project that promotes the welfare of participants demanded that both the methods of data collection and the findings of the research would not harm the participants (Hugman et al 2011). For example, during an interview it was important that if the questions presented
made participants’ uncomfortable, then the structure of the interview should adapt to put participants at ease. Equally, in the original research design there was an aim to observe participants who had been interviewed while they sought informal or formal assistance, but this was taken out of the research design due to concerns that my presence, as a researcher, would hinder their abilities to obtain assistance or that it would disclose information that the participants would not like to have shared otherwise. Overall, this approach required constant attention to ensure the welfare of participants and respect for their privacy.

**Gaining Consent**

In regards, to the participatory observation, consent to record observations was established very early on (December). This was facilitated through my position as refugee support volunteer for the organisation and it consisted in a verbal agreement and a continuous report of the research progress. Once the research aims were finalized, the organisation was approached once again to established consent in light of a more substantive idea of how it will be utilized in the research (February). Here again, verbal consent was given and verbal progress reports were given through-out. Here it is important to note, that due to the funding sources of the organisation, and with the aim to not cause in adverted harm to their funding, anonymity of the organisation is crucial. For this reason, when presenting findings emerging from observations, the organisation has been coded as ‘org. 1’ or reference to interviews held with staff-members will be categorizes as ‘expert’ interviews.

On the other hand, participants for interviews were either approached through key informants or through established connections made while working as refugee support volunteer. Key informants were contacted through e-mail or phone informing them of the study taking place and asking them for help in recruiting participants. Consequently, participant information sheets (See Appendix 5) were given to key informants and also to individuals who had expressed interest in participating during the participatory observations period. Subsequently, with the exception of one participant—which did not require a preliminary meeting, individual preliminary meetings were held with those who expressed interest in participating. Here, the participant information sheets were
explained, a copy of the interview schedule was given, and consent forms were given. Those who expressed interested after the meeting, were then contacted by e-mail or telephone to establish the date of the interview. All interviews took place in an open public space of their choosing, must often in a local coffee shop. In addition, when appropriate individuals were reimbursed for their travel costs. After the interviews, there has been subsequent contact with participants letting them know the progress of the research and to thank them for their participation.
3 Mapping the Discourse of Protection: The UK Asylum Regime

Since the end of the Cold War the UK’s Asylum Regime has drastically reform its policies of asylum by introducing a vast number of legislations that restrict access to refugee protection. Although highly politicize, restrictive measures have been implemented under both conservative and liberal governments. As many scholars suggest, rather than a reflection of a particular political agenda, the bipartisanship in asylum reforms denote that the securitization of asylum has demanded a continuous implementation of restrictive measures (Darling 2010; Gibney 2005; Huysmans 2006; Squire 2009). As such, it suggests that these restrictive measures not only represent the construction of asylum as a threat, but also has re-frame the value the UK gives to its commitment to provide protection for refugees. Accordingly, undertaking some of the theoretical considerations presented in the previous chapter, this chapter presents the development of refugee protection through the presentation of the key provisions that have been implemented in the past twenty years.

1990-1992, the Beginning of A New Discourse

‘...An increasing number of would-be immigrants from Eastern Europe and other parts of the world seek to abuse our openness to genuine refugees … In the new Parliament we must therefore reintroduce the Asylum Bill, … to create a faster and more effective system of determining who are genuine political refugees, and who are not’ (Conservative Party Manifesto 1992).

The opening quote is an excerpt taken from the 1992 Conservative Party Manifesto. It reflects the political environment in which marked the beginning of the overhaul of the UK’s Asylum Regime. While the excerpt is just a small insight into the type of political discourse that accompanied the introduction of new legislation during John Major’s government, it is telling of a new disposition to understand the concept of refugees within a ‘genuine’ versus ‘bogus’ dichotomy. Although, the legislations introduced during Major’s government followed previous legalisation that established
structural barriers for those seeking asylum (e.g. 1987 carriers liability act), both the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act and the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1996 instituted measures that while making the process of seeking asylum more difficult, it also began to construct asylum as a threat (Bloch 2000; Gibney 2004; Kneebeeone 2009; Squire 2009; Zetter and Pearl 1999).

Largely encompassed in establishing notions of illegitimate asylum seekers, these legislations implemented a wide array of provisions that sought to manage and control access to asylum. The 1993 Act instituted a system of detention and fingerprinting. Implemented as a mode of management both policies sought to control the movements of applicants ‘during the decision process’ (Rabben 2011:83). It also implemented ‘fast-track procedures’ to deal with asylum applications that had ‘no foundation’—this procedure allowed decisions to be returned without delay in order to enable removals and deportations (Rabben, 2011:183). The 1996 Act, alongside the introduction of complementary legislation, the 1996 Housing Act, introduced new reforms to the welfare benefits received by asylum seekers (Zetter and Pearl 1999). Encompassed by a new system of welfare allocation, the 1996 Act granted benefits based on how quickly asylum applications were lodge (Gibney 2004). Meanwhile, the Housing Act denied asylum seekers access to housing benefits (Lomba 2010). According to Zetter and Pearl (1999) the new rules on welfare support established ill-informed distinctions on who was deserving of support and who was not. As McGhee (2005) argues, these rules explicitly reiterated notions that not all asylum seekers deserved equal protection, grounded on notions of bogus versus genuine refugees, these rules moved the attention from the figure of the refugee to the figure of the asylum seeker. As such, refugee protection was problematized. On the one hand, the UK continued its commitment to protect those fleeing persecution, however, conversely the protection of refugees was presented at risk because of abuses of the asylum system. This onset construction also suggests a new disposition towards refugee protection—which emphasized that refugee protection should not only be undertaken at full discretion of the state, but also began to established notions of refugee protection as a privilege and not a right.

This type of discourse was explicitly at work with introduction of the ‘white list of safe countries’ within the 1996 Act. The ‘white list’ determined that asylum seekers
originating from any country included in the list had no substantial grounds for claiming asylum (Squire 2009). Therefore, their claims had to be rejected without review. The premise of this measure was based on the idea that these countries could not produce legitimate refugees because there was no evidence to support that these countries policies presented a real risk to their citizens (Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees 2013; Squire 2009). As Squire (2009) notes the ‘white list’ represents an incongruence with having an individual asylum determination process. If asylum claims are being rejected on the basis of nationality, rather than the individual’s circumstances, the whole system is failing to abide by its own concept of having an individual review of asylum claims (Squire 2009). The ‘white list’ in some ways remark the foundational elements of the UK’s discourse of protection. Whereby, protection was seen as privilege of the few.

Overall, these legislations began to present asylum as a problem. As securitization theory highlights policies that are framed to institute measures of policing and defence, inherently frame the subject of the measures as a security issue. As such, it problematizes the subject of the policy therefore exposing a new discourse that frames the policy responses. In this regards, these legislations seem to problematize asylum by presenting the figure of asylum seekers as a threat to the UK’s commitment to protect refugees. Consequently, this threat must be contained by implementing restrictive measures that allowed the UK’s government to ensure only genuine refugees are protected and thus an exclusionary narrative of protection is constructed. While these legislations do not explicitly convey this type of discourse of protection, instituting measures that are meant to help distinguish between legitimate and ‘fake’ claims employ notions that only those who will be able to overcome the structural barriers to access asylum will then be understood as being ‘genuine refugees’. At is core, these legislations expose a discourse that refugee protection must be undertaken at the full discretion of the state, undermining notions of responsibility to international obligations to protect human rights.
1997-2009, Establishing today’s Discourse on Refugee Protection

The type of discourse of refugee protection that began during Major’s government was explicitly conveyed during Tony Blair’s government. By 1997, the concept of refugees had been largely excluded from discussion on asylum (Maughan 2010). Under discussions of welfare abuse, secure borders, and national security the UK moved further away from a discourse that still portrayed refugee protection as an important value. Rather during Blair’s premiership, using the figure of the asylum seeker as a pivotal figure to legitimize restrictive measures, the discourse of refugee protection was explicitly entangled within discourses of protection of national interests (Maughan 2010).

The introduction of five new legislations (Asylum Act of 1999, Asylum Act of 2002, The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act of 2004, Asylum and Nationality Act of 2006) established unprecedented changes to the UK’s asylum regime. The 1999 Act extended controls over the right of entry. It included wider sanctions to carriers and extended the power of immigration officers (Squire 2009). Equally, it transfigured the rights of asylum seekers that were already in the country. Asylum seekers had to now meet a six-moth residency requirement before given a work permit. While the introduction of the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), a new social security system, asylum seekers were removed from mainstream benefits (Gibney 2004; Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). Through NASS asylum seekers received welfare provisions that felt below poverty levels, ‘just 70 per cent of Income Support’, and established a division between the rights accorded to refugees and those accorded to asylum seekers (Mulver 2010:441). In addition, NASS support replaced cash payments with a voucher system--which require asylum seekers to use them in exchange for goods in specific stores affiliated to the program (McGhee 2005; Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). As such, it established a blatant differentiation between the rights accorded to asylum seekers and those given to refugees.

As scholars argue the new social system established by NASS explicitly constructed domains of exclusion (Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). First the establishment of NASS conveyed ‘an explicit formulation of “deserving” and “undeserving”’ (Mulvey 2010:441). The fact that the income support granted was below the levels giving to
citizens (35 GBP per week), portrayed the figure of the asylum seeker as less deserving of formal protection (Liebaut 2000; Thomas 2009). As such, it marked a blatant differentiation of who the UK saw as legitimate for protection. Equally, the introduction of the voucher system deliberately created distinctions and was used as a mechanism to exclude asylum seekers from being able to establish a sense of belonging. As Squire (2009) argues, through a simple act of buying groceries, the voucher system demarcated the legal status of individual seeking asylum within the larger community. While the voucher system was later abolished, for those who had applied for asylum during its implementation they saw the disclosure of their legal status by simply attempting to buy goods (Lomba 2010; Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). As scholars have argued, understanding that the circumstances of force migration are incredibly difficult, through the introduction of the voucher system, the government saw no issue in disclosing the legal status of an individual (Gibney 2004; McGhee 2005; Squire 2009). As Mulvey (2010:441) conveys, ‘these developments signified a problematization of asylum seekers as they were explicitly constructed as not being “one of us”’.

In the same manner, the implementation of a no-choice dispersal policy, moving asylum seekers from highly concentrated areas (e.g. London) to the North of the UK, further established domains of exclusion (Gibney 2004; McGhee 2005; Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). As Darling (2010) argues, the dispersal system denotes a mode of management that ‘reiterate[s] the position of the asylum seeker as a figure demanding discipline and subject to moments of managerial and “resurgent” sovereign authority’ (2011:269). Consequently, it places the figure of the asylum seekers outside the domain of protection given to other legal statuses. Therefore, making it incredibly difficult for their accepted by the larger community, and thus dividing social relations, which can account for continued reports of violence against asylum seekers (McGhee 2005).

The Nationality, Immigration, and Asylum Act of 2002 further this notion by implementing the most restrictive measures, which curtailed most of the rights asylum seekers previously had. Asylum seekers no longer had the right to work or ‘pursue vocational training’, while at the same, it re-introduced a time contingency to receiving welfare support, this time under NASS (Mulvey 2010:461). Extending on the provisions established by the 1996 Act, the 2002 Act removed welfare support for asylum seekers
that have failed to lodge their applications within three days of arrival (Mulvey 2010; Rabben 2011). Despite this provision being later abolished, the premise of allocating welfare support to ‘deserving individuals’ would continue to be implemented in subsequent legislations (Mulvey 2010). It also removed all NASS support for ‘failed asylum seekers’—individuals with unsuccessful asylum claims (Mulvery 2010). Lastly, the 2002 Act also continue to extend controls over movement. Biometric and Application Registration Cards (ARC)—‘first non-voluntary ID card to be used within the UK’—were instituted (Mulvey 2010:441). Equally, the time contingency placed to receive welfare revealed the incongruences between asylum laws and ‘the realities of asylum seekers situations’ (Rabben 2011:175). It disregards the difficulties force migrants have in presenting their claims (Rabben 2011). As Rabben (2011) argues, when the asylum application includes a nine-teen page form that must supply supplementary documents translated into English, it is certain that a large majority would not be able to submit their claim in time. This type of structural barriers placed by 2002 Act demonstrated the UK’s astound commitment to circumvent its international obligations under the Refugee Convention. It furthers the notion that UK’s discourse of refugee protection was continuously moving away from principles of human rights.

The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act of 2004 further this type of discourse, by establishing wider structural barriers. It implemented a ‘single-tiered tribunal for the assessment of claims’ and introduced a ‘statutory review as an alternative to judicial review’ (Squire 2009:55). The latter established that all asylum claims should be ‘heard by Asylum and Immigration Tribunal’ and only allowing the review of asylum claims when there has been issues with the application of the law, rather than reviewing evidence (Mulvey 2010:461). The 2004 Act also furthered curbed on the rights of asylum seekers to obtain welfare support, by refusing asylum seekers with dependents access to welfare (Mulvey 2010). Finally, illegal entry was criminalized, as well as the criminalization of non-cooperation with removal orders (Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). Once again the provisions set out by the 2004 Act demonstrated an incongruence with the realities of force migration. In particular, the criminalization of illegal entry disregarded the fact that to seek asylum many would have to enter the country illegally (Squire 2009). However, according to Mulvey (2010) the use of
detention needs to be understood as a symbolic tool that establishes the ‘Othering’ of asylum seekers. As such, it serve as a symbolic mechanism that placed asylum seekers outside a protection framework, therefore legitimating restrictive polices (McGhee 2005; Mulvey 2010; Rabben 2011).

Within the vast introduction of new legislations, during his Premiership Tony Blair also continuously sought out to reform the Refugee Convention and pushed to harmonize European asylum policy (Gibney 2004). While Blair’s push to reform the Refugee Convention in order to implement overseas asylum process centres failed to gain grounds, Blair led a multilateral EU policy that sought to actively intercept asylum seekers at the Mediterranean sea, and thus prohibiting their entry into the EU (Gibney 2004). Control over borders to prevent asylum seekers from entering the UK became a priority agenda during the Blair era. In 2005, a new point system for immigration controls was implemented, while rules on the right to remain were reformed (See Controlling our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain 2005) (Mulvey 2010; Squire 2009). Here, individuals with refugee status no longer were granted indefinite leave to remain, instead a 5 year residency period was granted (Gibney 2004; Kneebone 2009). Blair’s adamant pursue to transform the type of protection the UK was obligated to give to refugees further reflects the erosion of the value given to refugee protection. Within his own pursuit of hostile measures outside the UK alongside a continuous implementation of restrictive measures Blair’s government presented refugee protection as insignificant principle. The removal of indefinite leave to remain, in particular, highlights that problematization of asylum not only legitimised measures to restrict access to asylum, but it also significantly change the UK’s stance to a long term commitment to protect refugees.

By the end of Blair’s Premiership the UK’s asylum regime had undergone critical transformation, encompassed by provisions that established an array of structural barriers to seek asylum, by 2007 there was a set agenda to further pursue measures of control and deterrence. The UK Borders Act of 2007 further extended the powers of immigration officers to detain, and ‘introduced reporting restrictions on those granted leave to remain in the UK’ (Mulvey 2010:462). The former, allowed immigration officers to ‘search and arrest without warrants, on reasonable grounds of suspicion, those suspected of offence in
relation to asylum support’ (Squire 2009:55), while the latter demanded recognized refugees to continue to report to the Home Office on interval periods (Mulvey 2010). In 2007 the New Asylum Model (NAM) was also implemented. It extended fast-track procedures already in place by putting asylum applicants who had failed to lodge their application at port of entry in an accelerated process (Refugee Council 2007; Squire 2009). By the time Gordon Brown came into power, the salient problematisation of asylum pushed the introduction of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act of 2009. The 2009 Act allows asylum seekers to be detained for unspecified periods of time and be held in new detention facilities (Refugee Council, 2009).

2010-2014, From Asylum to a Migration Overhaul

In past four years, no new asylum legislation has been introduced, however David Cameron’s government has repeatedly demonstrated a commitment to continue to pursue restrictive measures. However, the salient discourse on the asylum problem has shifted and is now encompassed within a larger anti-immigration discourse, particularly targeted against irregular migrants. In line with this discourse, the Immigration Act of 2014 was passed in May of this year. Largely encompassing measures that implement structural barriers for irregular migrants. The 2014 Act does not implement new measures for asylum (Home Office 2014). However, the measures implemented, particularly the provisions that require banks, NHS doctors, and landlords to conduct immigration checks, are highly restrictive. As the Refugee Council (2014) conveys, despite the fact that these measures do not directly affect refugees, they can further obstruct ‘access to housing and bank accounts for those with a right to live in the UK, due to confusion about unfamiliar identity documents and fear of sanctions’. Equally, at a policy level the introduction of the 2014 Act could have large repercussions for refugees. Having including asylum provisions within all the legislations introduced over the past twenty years, the absence of new provisions within the 2014 Act suggest that the notions of refugee protection has eroded to such an extent that it no longer warrants policy responses.
Understanding today’s Discourse on Refugee Protection

As presented above, overall the legislations introduced since 1990s has constructed the UK’ asylum regime as a system that guards the UK against asylum seekers. Undoubtedly the legislations introduced over the past twenty years have severely restricted access to asylum and established a variety of structural barriers that affect the conditions of reception for asylum seekers. While these have had grave effects on the lives of asylum seekers, and thus warranted much of attention by both human rights organisations and migration scholarship, the continuous implementation of restrictive measures seemed to also have had more profound effects on the UK’s overall approach to refugee protection. That is, it both informs who and under what circumstances individuals can enjoy access to asylum, and the type of protection the UK grants to those who have already been granted refugee status.

Accordingly, what is the UK’s discourse on refugee protection? Here, if the law is understood both under the framework that it is both constitutive and performative of the socio-political order. That is, it can reflect and re-formulate the values of the political community. Then the continuous restrictive nature of the UK’s asylum laws present refugee protection as a principle that cannot be valued above the protection of the state. Consequently, these laws demonstrate that rather than taking an approach to refugee protection by establishing an asylum system that provides sanctuary to all those fleeing persecution, the UK has continuously shown a commitment to circumvent any legal or moral obligations to protect refugees by presenting the protection of political community as an unalienable right.

Consequently, the role these laws have had on the development of the UK’s discourse of protection demonstrates a conceptual move from framing refugee protection as a cosmopolitan principle to a matter that must be taken under a communitarian response. In other words, rather than encompassing notions of allegiance and/or responsibility to the international community, it presents refugee protection as a responsibility that can only be considered if it is optimal for the political community. As presented in the first chapter this type of discourse underlines the often contradictory relationship between the human rights doctrine and the sovereignty doctrine. As such,
refugee protection will continuously warrant a policy response that permeates the safety of the state and its citizens above the safety of foreign nationals. In doing so, this type discourse positions protection as a privilege not as a right. Therefore, the type of protection given to refugees is tied to their abilities to negotiate for protection. As such, a key question is to interrogate whether once asylum has been given, if the UK subscribes to this discourse or if it actually provides implements a wider margin of protection.

4 From Discourse to Lived Experiences

As presented in the previous chapter, the mode of restriction represented by today’s asylum regime has established a new discourse of refugee protection. Whereby protection is conceived as a privilege that demands a continuous agency from individuals to negotiate their protection. This type of discourse suggests that the type of protection given to refugees is limited. However, understanding whether this discourse actually informs the type of protection mechanism granted to refugees cannot be analysed without the inclusion of the experiences of refugees. Accordingly, through the analysis of key findings from observations and interviews of refugees in London, this chapter sets out to interrogate the legality-protection nexus. That is, does having a refugee status grant refugees a wider margin of protection, including access to the rights prescribed by the Refugee Convention and an environment that enables refugees to flourish in the host society through the maintenance of their human dignity?

Assessing Protection, Does the UK provide a Protection Space?

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the UNHCR (2009) conceives refugee protection as a mode of governance which provides an environment where refugees are guaranteed rights prescribed by the Refugee Convention, can have access to those rights, and can pursue a life with dignity. Under this framework, refugee protection entails that refugees do not face a continued state of social or economic marginalization because of their legal status. Consequently, it requires governments to ensure, that at least, the minimum basic
needs of refugees are met. Undertaking this understanding of protection this section presents an assessment of protection through key indicators.

The right to life

Undoubtedly, the highest form of protection granted to those who hold refugee status is the right to life. Although the narratives encountered in this research indicate a complex understanding of the protection given to refugees in the UK, a common thread was the recognition that being granted legal residency protected refugees from returning to life-threatening circumstances. Even though, participants did not present substantial accounts of their lives prior to arriving to the UK, it was evident that being granted refugee status afforded them a chance to move on from a state of insecurity. One participant stated what it meant to be granted refugee status:

*I am always refugee, no asylum seeker, always refugee. Now, but with the papers now refugee and it helps you to be protected, to move to know you will be safe from going back to your country.*

A.D

It was also found, however, that under the current laws—which only grant a 5-year residency period—the time limit presented an inadequate form of long-term protection. For the exception of two participants whom have already been naturalized as British citizens, all the other participants have been granted refugee status under this 5-year limit. Consequently, most often participants cited the 5-year limit as a huge barrier to feeling protected. While many hope to eventually be awarded indefinite leave to remain and later be able to apply for British citizenship, the process of applying for an extension to their legal residence often posited a large sense of insecurity. One participant stated:

*I mean it is good. I am alive. I am happy for that, but too many rules, laws, you feel like they don’t want to safe you, and happy to have refugee status, but without more time, I not know where to go what to do.*

This sense of insecurity, was also expressed by one participant whose 5-year permit was about to expire. He stressed the difficulty in feeling safe because he was unsure about the outcome of his application. In his words,

*When I apply for asylum it was very hard I was very very stress, I always sick of the stress and now I have to do again. I go get the form to apply they tell me is easy, but no easy. I see many people*
Evident, not only in his account, but among the responses from other participants, was the lack of knowledge of who and under what circumstances do current refugees qualify for an extension. Many expressed hope to be safe by being able to stay in the UK more time, but never explicitly expressed any knowledge of the process of extension.

Equally, while carrying out participatory observations few cases emerged where refugees were seeking help to extend their refugee status. It was observed that in those few cases they had a continued correspondence with the Home Office and found themselves without a clear understanding of the outcome of their applications. In some ways, this lack of knowledge can be attributed to the participants’ unease with the limited legal residency the UK awards them, and thus can be accounted for the perspective that the UK does not afford the type of protection refugees deserve. Here, perhaps the type of protection that is granted can be understood under the current discourse of refugee protection that has developed in the UK. Whereby, refugee protection is conceived as a privilege and therefore legitimatizes any measures, such as the 5-year limit, to review if protection should continue to be awarded. In some ways, the 5-year limit is a reflection of the ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’ categorization that has been constructed by current asylum laws. Evidently, this has transcended into the forms of protection that the UK give refugees. While the 5-year limit does not derogate from the type of protection prescribe by the Refugee Convention, it does however, present that even in regards to the highest protection necessary, i.e. the right to life, legal status only affords temporary protection.

Meeting Basic Needs

As mentioned in Chapter 1, under the Refugee Convention, protection should not be conceived as limited to awarding legal residency, rather it prescribes states to guarantee rights that enable refugees to meet their basic needs, and thus provide a wider margin of protection. Essentially, this demands that individuals have access to the rights accorded through their refugee status. However, in examining these indicators of protection in the case study, both the accounts of refugees living in London and the observations made while they sought assistance in ‘org. 1’ demonstrate that despite their
legality, refugees face inadequate protection because they are unable to meet their basic needs, such as secure housing, food, or employment.

Among all the participants, access to housing was continually cited as problematic for protection. Several accounts reported that once refugee status was granted they had problems understanding if they could remain in the housing provided during the asylum process. One participant noted when asked about his experience after being granted refugee status:

*At the beginning I did not believe it ... then it was okay, so now what I do, you know. I was with housing then I got remain to stay and I was told I had 20 days to get a new house. I was very confused. I say wait now I am refugee finally and the government does not protect me?*

This type of account is particularly evident in the experiences of refugees who have been moved away from London through dispersal policies. All refugees who only moved to London after being granted refugee status reported problems of homelessness and problems with understanding the process of getting housing benefits or obtaining secure housing. One participant recalls the problems in obtaining housing once he was granted refugee status and could move to London,

*I move here and no house. No money nothing, it was very hard—you know I had no place to stay. I go to get money [speaking of mainstream welfare support] and they say I need a house. I go get a house, but no money ... I come to London, but no money, no house, no protection.*

This type of account reveals that while refugees are guaranteed equal rights to welfare support, they are not granted equal access. In this sense, there seems to be a lack of formal protection through mechanism that implement targeted formal assistance in order to respond to the particular needs of refugees. In fact, participants often cited that they received no assistance from government agencies, and it was only through the help of non-profit organisations that they were able to find secure housing or file housing support claims. On the other hand, those participants that did not encounter problems with housing, stated that it was through the help of their family or friends that protected them from homelessness. Overall, in particular relating to housing in London, participants reported that being able to afford secure housing was a key issue incapacitating protection, due a continuous threat to homelessness.
In line with the anecdotal evidence, access to secure housing can also be linked to economic deprivation. Here, issues of economic deprivation was often cited as an effect of long-term unemployment and/or barriers to access income support. Out of the ten participants, only two, who also had now become British citizens, did not present accounts of economic deprivation. On the other hand, the rest of the participants were enduring forms of long-term unemployment and problems in obtaining income support. To highlight these issues, when asked about what protection meant to them, participants stated that while the protection of their lives was important, the right to have equal opportunities to a ‘decent life’ was also the type of protection that the UK should give refugees. One participant stated:

*I think protection helping people to have a normal life. What is the word? Dignity. You know to work, to have a good house. Not to give, government to help people have. Rights very nice, but they have to get it you know.*

This type of account was similar to all of the responses by other participants. The inclusion of the right to access ‘livelihood opportunities’ or ‘life with dignity’ reflects a continuous emphasis by participants, that despite their refugee status, they are still unable to meet their basic needs, such as food, because the government does not facilitate access to the job market or public services. Here, many participants stated that even though they knew they had the right to same welfare benefits as British citizens, they receive no government assistance to help understand—which benefits they qualified for or even how to apply for them. Therefore, until they are able to access welfare assistance, they have to endure severe forms of economic deprivation. One participant stated on the difficulties to access employment and income support:

*I come to London and I do everything, but no job. I also do job seekers benefits, is hard you know... not just paper work. No one listens to you. I go there, they say they find me a translator, but takes long time. I go to office they say no you have to call us, but I call they don’t understand. Me you know my English not so good.*

This type of circumstances also seem to contribute to refugees’ continuously seeking services that provide basic support. In the period that the observations were carried out, the same group of refugees who sought assistance in January were still seeking assistance in July. Here, the majority of refugees had been living in London for a substantial length of time, and sought food services, essential items (e.g. clothing),
assistance to find housing, and filing income support claims. The continuity in attendance alongside the services they used demonstrate that despite their legal status refugees would not be able to obtain basic needs without the support of non-profit organisations. Equally, the diversity of demographics revealed that meeting basic needs was a problem not just for a particular group, such as the individuals’ interviewed, but also for many refugees living in London. Suggesting that there is a definite protection gap that facilitates these forms of economic deprivation to prevail among the refugee population.

Responding to the Needs of Refugees

Throughout the narratives, it was found that despite their legality, refugees often felt a sense of social dislocation. That is, once refugee status was granted, refugees continued to endure conditions of instability, which created a sense of powerlessness, insecurity, and emotional hardship, which often positions refugees to feel their lives are on hold or without direction. As such, social dislocation can be seen as having a direct consequence on their ability to actively engage in their own protection. Moreover, it can affect their access to protection mechanisms in place. However, it is important to understand whether social dislocation is a consequence of the conditions endured during the asylum process, if so, whether the government should implement protection mechanisms to alleviate it?

Here, segmented assimilation theory—which conveys the role legal statuses have in constructing social stratification—would point out that social dislocation is a consequence of the type of reception accorded upon entry. As Portes and Rumbaut (1996) argue, the legal status upon arrival shapes the opportunities available to individuals, and thus it influences their social position. Under this framework, then it could said, the process of seeking asylum has deep effects on refugees’ abilities to become integrative members of society due to the lack of rights and opportunities accorded on the basis of their status. As such, the current social dislocation that refugees endure can be attributed to socio-economic marginalisation endured through the process of seeking asylum.

In fact, participants’ accounts revealed their status as asylum seekers, which excluded them from accessing public services, employment, and education, affected their ability to engage with government institutions and participate within the larger community. Therefore, affecting their ability to start building a new life in the UK. As
many accounts expressed, without the opportunities to gain knowledge or skills to participate within the British community during the asylum process, their ability to meet their basic needs, as recognized refugees, have been gravely affected. As one participant states when asked about the effects of the asylum process on his current conditions:

*Then you cannot work, so you wait, you listen to solicitor, to caseworker, then you have to pay solicitor. But then you have wasted time. No time to get new skills for jobs here. It hurts refugees because then you have remain to stay, but in the street.*

J.O.

This type of account continually emerged within the narratives and further highlighted the role the asylum process has had in informing their experiences.

Notwithstanding, it was also found that social dislocation was a consequence of the forms of protection received after refugees status was granted. Many participants expressed, they were no longer qualified to receive assistance from solicitors or caseworkers. Therefore, without government assistance to help them transition into their new lives—which included finding housing, employment, and navigating the social security system—they felt a greater sense of social dislocation. As one participant recalls the transition to refugee status:

*It was very hard for me to understand some stuff without the help of the caseworker or solicitor. I would call them, but then they told me that they no longer my case. I had to go to the internet try to find organisations to help me ... I did not get my benefits for a long time. It was hard to find a job. I did not feel like I was living you know ... You know no job, no money, no family, no house. It was like I was just walking and nothing to go to.*

Here, social dislocation seemed to present an even greater hurdle to meet their basic needs and re-build their lives. In the observations carried out it was evident that despite the substantial length of time of living the UK the continued used of informal assistance revealed that many refugees endure long periods of social dislocation. This was understood by the types of services they used, but also by the fact that refugees sought assistance during week-days and working hours (12-3pm). While language barriers can be accredited as a mediating factor to social dislocation, in fact a common thread among the experiences of the refugees reflected this as a factor, it was observed and through the interaction with refugees, most of the young refugees spoke English. Consequently, a continuous question that emerged from the observations was why did they continuously
sought assistance in this organisation? When posited this question to the staff, they reported that despite the rights accorded to refugees, shortcuts in funding, such as free vocational training, and the removal of government led refugee assistance programs often left refugees without knowledge or skills to fully integrate. Consequently, the staff claimed that problems with integration positioned refugees to endure social and economic marginalization, which constructed a cycle of continued instability that pushed them to seek protection from outside sources, such as non-profit organisations.

Evident from the anecdotal evidence is that social dislocation is both a consequence of the process of seeking asylum and the lack of targeted assistance to refugees. While organisations, such as the one observed, do aim to tackle this issue. In regards to formal protection the UK’s government has either failed to respond to this issue or is not aware of the realities refugees face in their transition from seeking asylum to being granted refugee status. In some ways, this type of protection gap falls in line with the type of protection discourse established by the current restrictive asylum laws. Whereby, assuming protection as a privilege continuously mediates protection through the construction of ‘deserving’ and ‘underserving’. Consequently, this discourse has established a protection framework that while falling in line with the UK’s international legal obligations, by guarantying the rights prescribed by the Refugee Convention, it demands that refugees own responsibility for their protection through an active pursuit to access the rights afforded to them. Undoubtedly, these demands could be achieve if the conditions of reception would accord them the rights and opportunities to pursue a new life in the UK from the onset of their arrival. However, the on-ground realities remark that the effects of the asylum process deeply informs the day to day experiences of refugees. As such, the lack of policy responses to fill this protection gap suggest that the UK fails to pursue protection policies that enable the sustenance of protection space that can allow refugee to overcome the type of social and economic marginalisation that is established in their arrival. In some ways this type of protection received can be described as benign neglect.
Negotiating Protection

As presented above legality does not necessarily grant the protection owe to refugees. In particular, because despite the fact that refugee status guarantees a variety of rights the lack of targeted formal assistance hinder refugees’ abilities to access these rights. Equally, the lack of government responses to alleviate social dislocation revealed that legality did not afford refugees a type of protection that would help them meet their needs or provided them with a protection space that enabled them to pursue a life with dignity. Consequently, when there is a lack of formal protection how do refugees obtain the protection they deserve? Here, both in the narratives and the observations it was evident that informal assistance via non-profit organisations helped to fill protection gaps under two dimensions: (1) organisation have a pivotal role in granting the protection refugees deserve by providing basic support to meet the basic needs of refugees, and (2) they provide refugees with tools to construct their own protection space. Equally, the primary research revealed that refugees actively negotiated their own protection through the re-construction of their identity. This dimension is understood under the premise that while the government does not accord the type of protection necessary, refugees often seek to establish themselves as ‘model migrants’ to be better situated to obtain protection. In this section, I will explore both of these elements and reflect on how this further highlights the type of protection the UK grants refugees.

Constructing a ‘Protection Space’

Both through the narratives encountered in this research and the observations carried out, it was found that non-profit organisations play a pivotal role in providing protection when formal protection is not available. Far beyond providing basic support, such as food services and essential goods, through the observations carried out it was evident that non-profit organisations, such as ‘org. 1’, provided a safe space through a community oriented approach to their services. That is, through their services ‘org.1’ provides an environment that constructively ‘preserves and promotes their dignity’ in order to enable refugees to flourish as both social and economic actors in the host society (UNHCR, 2009:7).
First this is encompassed by a policy framework that distances from defining those who seek assistance as refugees. Throughout the observations it was noted that the staff often referred to refugees as ‘service users’, and it was also emphasized to refugee support volunteers that they refrain from calling those in attendance refugees. Although, this may seem abstract. This policy reflects the organisations approach to provide a space were community links can be formed without exerting notions of ‘Othering’. When posited with the question of why did their policies emphasized the use of ‘service users’, a staff member stated that it was crucial that all those who sought assistance feel a sense of belonging as a member of the London community, rather than through exerting their refugee identity. In fact, it was noted that for the exception of newly arrived refugees, those who had continually sought assistance never describe themselves as refugees.

Secondly, beyond the services provided the organisation had implemented a system in which those who actively participated in delivering services, such cooking meals or writing for the weekly newsletter, could enjoy a wider range of services, including internet use. This system not only enable a sense of community, but also allowed refugees to build new skills, and thus better positioning to flourish as social and economic actors. While this was not yet evident in the refugees that have recently been granted refugee status or young refugees, those individuals who seem to have had refugee status for longer often took roles as leaders and assisted other refugees.

Lastly, through the support provided in finding housing and filing benefit claims, ‘org. 1’ not only alleviate social dislocation, but also position refugees to be able to access the rights afforded through their refugee status. Although, short staffed and often facing insecure funding the services provided often sought to alleviate economic deprivation endured by refugees. This was particularly evident in the cases of those who sought assistance for the first time. Many of the attendees noted that assistance received established a greater feeling of protection.

Undoubtedly, these findings emerge from observations of only one organisation, however, among all the participants interviewed, the important role organisation played in providing them with the protection necessary was cited continuously. Moreover, many participants related that it was only through seeking this type of informal
protection that they were able to build a network of friends and felt a sense of belonging through the community ties that many non-profit organisations provided. As one participant stated the sense of belonging that non-profit organisations provided help him understand that you can ‘make your own community’. In his words,

*I feel like you can make your own community ... I live in a studio flat is not very big but sometimes 8 people come we make food we are from different countries ... And I told them this is my community center.*

If was also found, however, that without recourse to formal protections, refugees are often too dependent on the protection space provided by non-profit organizations. While organizations, such as ‘org 1’, do aim to provide a form of protection that can enable refugees to not only meet their basic needs, but also flourish as integrative members of the larger community. Too often barriers to access employment, educational opportunities, and economic deprivation positions refugees to be dependent on the services provided and thus continually endure exclusion from the wider community.

*Model Migrant*

In light of the lack of protection afforded to those who hold refugee status, the narratives encountered in this research presented important findings on how refugees negotiate protection. Here, the accounts of the lived experiences of refugees revealed a complex understanding of the protection received by refugees. On the one hand, within all the responses most often refugees conveyed their anger and disappointment at the lack of protection received. On the other hand, however, these type of accounts subsequently followed statements in which refugees recognized that if they follow all ‘the rules’, and if engage in activities that proof their willingness to follow ‘the rules’ it will demonstrate their active engagement to integrate, and thus be better positioned to received protection. As one participant noted:

*Many people suffer here as refugees, but there are the laws and you have to help yourself and to the way of the system ... and yeah it is hard when you can’t have the same life of regular people, like British people, but you have to be good because here you have safety.*
This type of accounts was resilient among all the narratives. Often portraying the importance to being ‘good’ and abiding to the laws, most refugees expressed this as a formula to be able to enjoy long-term protection, positing that this type of behavior will enable them to one day become a citizen and then enjoy full protection.

Within this context, it was evident that refugees expressed that re-framing their identities as a model migrant was crucial to reverse the power structures, and allowed them to access better forms of protection. These accounts are underpinned by the theory that exposes the role valued legal statutes have in informing belonging. In this sense, while the discourse of protection has constructed an exclusionary narrative of deserving versus undeserving, these accounts reflect that the representation of the model migrant would allow the political community to re-evaluate the value of their legal status. It is with this hope, that then refugees felt better positioned to negotiate protection. As such, the construction of a model migrant identity empowered these individuals to feel a sense of belonging, which both enabled them to gain greater access to protection and help them mediate any exclusions that have were established because of their refugee status.
5 Conclusions

With the premise that the restrictive asylum policies often portrays the lack of access to asylum as the primary determinant that incapacitates protection, this research aimed to interrogate whether legality grants the type of protection owe to refugees. Within in this research objective this research also sought out to explore the effects restrictive asylum policies have had on the type of protection received in the UK. Accordingly, the narratives encountered in this research indicate a complex understanding of the protection given to recognized refugees.

The analysis of the role asylum laws have had in the development of the UK’s discourse of refugee protection revealed that protection was mediated by competing values, the safety of the political community versus the safety of foreigners. Consequently, it constructed a discourse that frames protection as a privilege and not a right. This notion has then exerted an exclusionary narrative that has affected the type of formal protection received by refugees. In this context, while the primary research demonstrated a mixture of experiences, a common thread was understanding protection through a dichotomous relationship between the right to legal residence as granting the necessary protection to keep them from life threatening circumstances, and as also insufficient to protect them to pursue a life with dignity. While refugee status does grant protection to refugees through the guarantee of rights the absence of a protection space denotes that despite their legal status, the policies institutionalizes socio-economic marginalization among the refugee population. In doing so, the refuge population is left unprotected and dependent on the assistance by non-profit organizations, and at the same time, it places deliberately demands on refugees to re-construct their identities in order to negotiate belonging to the larger community, and thus be better positioned to obtain protection.

Ultimately, this suggest that access to asylum, while an important marker to better position individuals to obtain protection, does not actually grant the forms of protection that refugees are entitle to and deserve. Consequently, legality grants protection only to
the extent that temporary legal residence allows refugees to be safe from life-threatening circumstances.
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International Treaties

Appendix 1: Research Proposal

Working Title:
Urban Refugees in London: Problems of Protection, Integration, and Poverty

Aims and Objectives:

Over the past two decades the United Kingdom’s asylum regime has seen a gradual, but continuous shift towards restriction. In the last years, vast amounts of research within force migration studies have been guided by analysing this shift within larger discourses on securitization and exclusion. Often this focus has conveyed the role asylum policies have on creating exclusionary narratives, which determine the precarious conditions asylum seekers currently endure in the UK. As such, the figure of the asylum seeker has become pivotal in the study of force migration. Within in this context, problems of protection have been conveyed in a monolithic understanding, where the ambiguous legal status of asylum seekers is seen as the primary determinant that incapacitates protection.

It is through this contextual backdrop that this dissertation aims to shift the focus from asylum seekers to individuals who have been granted refugee status, with the purpose to interrogate whether legality necessarily grants the protection owe to asylum claimants. It is from this starting point that this dissertation has the following objectives:

- To conceptualize protection through a social justice perspective, i.e. protection as an integrative part in providing not only surrogate protection, but also in providing spaces of belonging and tools for social and economic mobility.
- To investigate the effects restrictive asylum policies have had on the rights of refugees, and the type of formal assistance granted to refugees.
- To explore and analyse the transition from asylum seeker status to refugee status.
- To explore and analyse frameworks of exclusion in light of legality.

Provisional Research Questions:
1. To what extent does refugee status warrant legal protection, integration, and economic mobility, and how does this impact the day to day experiences of refugees in London?

1. If there is a lack or insufficient formal protection what type of informal assistance do refugees seek and what are its effects?

2. To what extent has the day to day experiences of refugees been informed by their experiences lived through the process of claiming asylum?

3. Does the type of protection received by refugees fit into wider exclusionary narratives underlined by securitization theory?

**Relevant Literature:**

The literature on forced migration within a UK perspective, although vast, has continuously focused in outlining the policy developments in regards to asylum and the treatment of asylum seekers in the UK (Gemme, 2009; Gibney, 2004; Lecours & Nootens, 2011; Liebaut, 2000; McGhee, 2005; Rabben, 2011; Thomas, 2009). Consequently, the focus on asylum seeker has undermined analysis of the current situations that refugee face in the UK. However, the literature as whole, does presents an in depth analysis of the UK’s asylum regime over the past twenty years. Accordingly, this study is able to position itself within an already large array of legislative analysis of asylum policies from the 1990s through 2011, which grants much of the secondary literature necessary to explore the effects asylum polices have for the rights and formal assistance given to refugees.

In terms of analyzing the core of this research, however, are very few. For a few exceptions (such as Huysmans 2006; Squire 2009) the on ground realities that are produced by the current asylum regime have been rarely explored through a conceptual analysis of protection and within larger discourse of exclusionary narratives. Even in this small instances (Huysmans 2006; Squire 2009) the focus has been asylum seekers. Notwithstanding, the conceptual underpinnings of these literatures do provide the foundational groundwork for this research. The exploration of securitization theory in contrast to legality and in the construction of exclusionary narratives both by Huysmans and Squire provide much evidence to qualify the premise that questions whether legality
does necessarily grant protection to those individuals that hold refugee status. Similarly, literature on citizenship and integration underline theoretical considerations that question the depth that formal legal statuses can provide protection, create spaces of belonging, and give substantive tools for social and economic mobility, as well as introduces the role formal legal statuses have in exacerbating exclusion (Bauböck (ed.) 2006; Castles et al 2002; Favell 2001; Joeppeke 2007; Guild et al [eds.] 2009; Yurdakul and Bodemann [eds] 2007).

Methodology:

This research will employ qualitative techniques comprised by semi-structured interviews and participatory observation, undertaken through narrative and thematic analysis. The semi-structured interviews will have as its respondent’s individuals who have refugee status and are currently living in London. These same respondent’s will be observed in circumstances where they are seeking formal and/or informal assistance, e.g. refugee centres. Due to the nature of this research and the ethical implications it entails in conducting research with individuals who are part of a vulnerable group, the research design aims to use participatory action techniques and snowball sampling.

Individuals will be contacted through ‘gatekeeping’ organization in London, where the organizations will give verbal and written acknowledgement to all services users of the research taking place. This acknowledgment will facilitate informal consent of the participatory observation that will take place. In addition, the disclosure of legal status will only be gathered from data already obtained by the organization. Individuals will be contacted through snowball sampling techniques and have a first informal meeting in which the aims of the research, qualitative techniques, and procedures of consent will be outlined. Participants who consent to being interviewed and observed will be given written consent forms that will detail the aims of the research, consent to be audio-recorded, assurance of anonymity, and affirming that consent can be withdrawn at any point of the data collection.

This stage of the research will consist of 15-20 in-depth, semi-structured interviews and the same participants will be part of participatory observation. Although
the structure of the interviews will encompass key themes within the theoretical framework of the research, the interview will largely follow an informal process of storytelling about their experiences.

**Timetable for Proposed Research:**

Due to the dynamic objectives of this study there is a necessity to divide the research in six phases:

*Phase 1 (February-March) – Literature Analysis & Conceptual Framework:*
  - Contextualize overall areas that need to be understood to pursue this research.
  - Analyse pertinent secondary sources to assess current legislature that informs the rights and formal assistance granted to refugees in the UK.
  - Build conceptual framework on: (1) protection through a social justice perspective, and (2) exclusionary narratives.

*Phase 2 (April) – Literature Review & Methodology:*
  - Write literature review.
  - Confirm methodology.
  - Preliminary visits to gatekeeping organisations.

*Phase 3 (May) – Oral Presentation & Groundwork for qualitative data:*
  - Prepare oral presentation of research proposal.
  - Preliminary contact with participants.

*Phase 4 (June) –Gathering qualitative data:*
  - Conduct Interviews.
  - Conduct participatory observation.

*Phase 5 (July-Mid August) –Data analysis and Write up:*
  - Transcribe data.
  - Data Analysis.
  - Write Dissertation.

*Phase 6 (Mid-August-September) – Revision, Final Write up, & Feedback:*
  - Revise first draft of dissertation.
  - Final draft of dissertation.
  - Feedback to participants.
Potential Outcomes, Rationale, Value of Research:

Considering the continuous shift to restriction within the UK asylum regime alongside a wider anti-immigration trend is important to position the figure of the ‘refugee’ within analysis of the effects of such phenomena. It encompasses a larger question if legality is actually providing the type of protection that is owed by the 1951 Refugee Convention, and it can provide a larger understanding of the social realities of contemporary surrogate protection. It is an understanding that is necessary to contemplate whether the UK is abiding to its human rights obligations, particularly in light of refugees who continually find themselves in protracted situations.

References:


**Appendix 2: Research Diary**

**Preliminary Research Notes 12.13/01.15:**
Informed by my experience working with refugees and in refugee centres - why so many refugees continuously utilize services provided by refugee centres. Begin to think of asking consent to record observations during my volunteer time.

**03.01.14** Speak to coordinator about beginning to record written observation during my volunteer time (I obtain consent).

**07.02.14** First entry in observation diary

**13.02.14** Discussion of research topic with MSc Global Migration convener Dr. Claire Dwyer:
- Discussion if to focus on the role of refugee centres that would solely focus in interviewing people who work or run refugee centres or on the experiences of refugee themselves.

**24.02.14** Research Proposal is presented

**15.03.14** Second entry in observation diary

**26.03.14** 1st Meeting with Supervisor
- We go over my research proposal
- We speak about any concerns over obtaining data. I tell him I have already have been granted consent to record observations and hope I could have a good sample for interviews.
- Suggestion -- media analysis at least to inform my interview schedule and a grounded theory approach and let the data speak for itself.
- We go over the meeting schedules and says that he is available throughout the process if I have any concerns.

**08.04.14** Working on oral presentation of research proposal.

**28.04.14** Email contact with supervisor to re-schedule meeting for 05.01.14

Notes:
I am still having trouble to really ground the theoretical framework and methodologies and difficulty in modifying the research questions to better fit the focus of the research. Personal issues has also made it very hard to go through all of the literature I wanted.

**01.05.2014** 2nd Meeting with Supervisor
- A run through of my oral presentation of the proposal (approval of proposal)
- I raise some questions about the use of the methodology.
  - We discuss how in what setting will the participatory observations take place or to just do more focus observations of what I already have and how that would be useful to the research.

**06.05.14** E-mail contact with supervisor: Sent final version of power point presentation

**07.05.14** Oral presentation of proposal
- Questions raised were the role of theory and methodology
- Supervisor suggest I rephrase the research question into a why.
10.05.14 Email contact with supervisor: Feedback and mark on oral presentation
26.05.14 Email/Ph contact with key key informants
Notes:
I have not been able to visit key informants (except my main contact) because they have had no availability. Personal issues has made it very hard to keep up with my research schedule. Other commitments (MRU Student Conference) has created a time management issue.
04.06.14 Visit to key informants
05.06.14 Draft final dissertation outline, preliminary interview schedule, participant information sheet, and preliminary interview schedule
16.06.14 Updated reading list to fill some of the gaps I may have in the literature review or to aid the legislative content analysis
18.06.14 Visit to key informants to share participant information sheet and preliminary phone contact with potential participants
19.06.14 Meetings with potential participants discussing the research and consent.
20.06.14 Meetings with potential participants discussing the research and consent.
26.06.14 Drafted risk assessment
26.06.14 3rd Meeting with Supervisor:
- Run through dissertation outline (I receive approval of the structure and content).
- I express concern over how hard it has been to get the actually set up the date and place of the interviews as well as have a varied sample.
- Discuss the July 11 deadline for the 1st draft he says that he would prefer I if give him a draft of my empirical chapter in mid-August.
- We agree that I will contact him with any questions by e-mail.
- We speak about risk assessment form and how I cannot submit it until I know exactly where I am meeting people for interviews because the setting my change from a specific space to around London.
27.06.14 3rd entry on observation diary & meetings with potential participants discussing the research and consent.
Notes:
I did not know how difficult it would be to have available and willing participants. Key constrains has been availability and continuous re-scheduling of meetings by those who have so far consented to participate; consent itself not many are willing to participate; and me not wanting to use a translator so finding participants that can speak at least a medium level of English.
30.06.14 Email contact with key informants about potential interviews
01.07.14 Begin draft legislative chapter
02.07.14 4th entry on observation diary
04.07.14 Meetings with potential participant discussing the research and consent.
10.07.14 Draft final version of interview schedule.
11.07.14 Phone contact with participants to schedule interview.
12.07.14 Phone contact with participants to schedule interview.
14.07.14 Phone contact with participants to schedule interview.
16.07.14 interview # 1 Consent to record and transcription
17.07.14 interview # 2, # 3, # 4, (all written by hand)
18.07.14 interview # 5 (written)
19.07.14 interview # 6 and # 7 (written)
21.07.14 interview # 8, # 9, and # 10 (written)
22.07.14 expert interview (recorded) and transcription

Appendix 3: Interview Schedule

A. (Topic) General demographic information

1. Where are you from?
2. What part are you from (optional)?
3. How old are you?
4. How long have you been living in London?
5. Was London the first and/or only place you have lived in the UK? If no, how did you end up living in London? And how long have you been living in the UK?

B. (Topic) Asylum Process

1. How did the asylum process affect your transition into you feeling safe or protected and creating a new life here?
2. How long were you an asylum seeker?
3. What was the transition like—from seeking asylum to finally being granted refugee status (mentally, emotionally, legally, assistance)?
4. Over the years the asylum policies in the UK have gotten stricter and the treatment of asylum seekers has gotten worse, how do you think that affects the rights of refugees and the type of formal assistance granted to refugees?
5. How do you think the asylum policies in place (e.g. dispersal policy, employment ban) affect you once you had refugee status, such as the rights of refugees and the type of protection the government gives refugees?
6. Do you hear what the media, government, and general public opinion is about asylum seekers or refugees?
7. Do you feel that general misconceptions or negative reactions of asylum seekers or refugees affects how you are protected and your day to day experience as a refugee?
8. Do you feel that the way the law and policies are affects how you, with refugee status, is protected?

C. (Topic) Refugee Status & Protection

1. Did you think ‘legality’ i.e. refugee status was going to give you a chance at a new life and more protection?
2. Do you know the type of protection the government gives refugees because of your refugee status?
3. What does protection mean to you?
4. What do you think about the type of protection the UK government gives refugees? Do you think protection is just allowing someone to stay here?

D. (Topic) Personal Experiences

1. What has your experience been like since you were granted refugee status?

D1. Urban circumstances in London

2. What was the housing situation in London once you were granted refugee status?
3. Where did you stay when you first arrive to London?
4. Have you experience homelessness while living in London?
5. Do you find the place you live in safe and comfortable?
6. Do you like living in London? And if you moved to London why did you choose to move to London?
7. Do you find it difficult living in a big urban area?

D2. Belonging

8. Do you have friends, family, or a community to rely on in London?
9. How do you feel about the reception from the British community? Have you ever experienced exclusion because you have a refugee status?
10. Do you feel like you are part of the larger British community?
11. How do you think the reception and/or belonging within the British community can inform/affect your protection or how you are protected?

D3. Assistance

12. Since gaining refugee status do you seek or use any informal assistance available to refugees?
13. Since gaining refugee status do you seek or use any formal/government assistance available to refugees?

D4. Socio-Economic Opportunities

14. What has been your experience with having the opportunity to pursue education (e.g. learn English, college, university, other trainings)?
15. What has been your experience with having economic opportunities (e.g. employment)?

E. Closing (optional):

1. Overall how has your experience been like since coming to London?

*Potential Relevance to include:
- How having a 5 year residence limit affect your experience and feelings about protection?
Appendix 4: Excerpt of Interview Transcript

Date: 07/17/14 Interview # 2

Expanded Notes: (Introduction: As we walk to a local coffee shop…we speak of the last time we saw each other (preliminary meeting) and I remind him of the aim and purpose of the research. Once we reach our destination and order coffee and sit down. I show him the information participation sheet and the consent form once more. I state what the consent form and ask him if he consents to being recorded. The interviewee expresses concern of disclosing his location and expresses his preference to not be recorded. “it is better with no voice”).

Written Interview:

**Int:** How did the asylum process affect your transition into you feeling safe or protected and creating a new life here?

Ptp: (hesitates) repeat?

**Int:** when you asked for asylum, like how did that process affect the way your life is now?

Ptp: You know I was in Russia then I had problems there too. So I come here. I was an engineer in Iran. I worked with cars you know (gestures with hands).

**Int:** Like manufacturing?

Ptp. Yes. So then I also do films. So I do a film about life in Iran. The government did not like – So I came here – It was very hard – I did not like living there – I got not protection because of the people – Did not have any money there…to move here…but when I went to the GP the GP help me so I move here – But very hard – I did not have money…hard to get help to move here –Then I got a letter they accept me as a refugee…so I came here.

**Int:** How long were you an asylum seeker?

Ptp: Long time since I come. Accepted as refugee in September.

**Int:** What was the transition like—from seeking asylum to finally being granted refugee status (mentally, emotionally, legally, assistance)?
Ptp: It was good. Happy to be accepted as refugee because I saw [inaudible] people wait wait wait to be accepted as a refugee and hard to wait and one day came. You know a lot interviews, so when it came I was happy. Then I was not safe you know – so happy to come to London.

**Int: Safe in the town where they made you move?**

Ptp: Yes I had problems so I asked to be move here.

**Int: who did you ask?**

Ptp: The government. You know home office. They kept telling me no London no London. Then accepted as a refugee and I come here.

Int: Where you not allowed to move as an asylum seeker?

Ptp: yes. Not allowed only as a refugee, but you know the problem. There problems but they give me house. I move here and no house. No money nothing. It was very hard – you know I had no place to stay. I go to get money. They say I need a house. I got to get house but no money.

…..

**Int: How do you think the asylum policies in place, like the one that made you move near Sheffield (dispersal policy) affect you once you had refugee status, such as the rights of refugees and the type of protection the government gives refugees?**

Ptp: You know am a refugee. I leave Iran because of the government. They did not like what I did, so I am refugee because I have to leave, so I come here for protection, so many interview, interview…asking no one help us care about Iran. No one care of the problem with the people. I ask to move everybody say no – yes so I come here I am refugee, but they treat me like I am no refugee. Then it is hard for anyone to understand. You know my English is not that good, so no one helps. You know I am Christian and Iran this is no good, so I am refugee but I get no help from the government.

**Int: UK government?**

Ppt: yes. I ask them to move here because of the problems with the people, but they don’t hear me. The GP tells them my problems, but they left me there for a long time and no money. So I am refugee but no right there. I do not come here if am no refugee, but I am refugee, but when I was there no money, no London, rights.
Int: Do you hear what the media, government, and general public opinion is about asylum seekers or refugees?
Ppt: yes yes. The problems people do not like, but I do not hear too much. I don’t have TV or computer (both laughs).

Int: Do you feel that general misconceptions or negative reactions of asylum seekers or refugees affects how you are protected and your day to day experience as a refugee?
Ppt: yes, you know because people do not know why I leave. I am here for protection. People do not know. People do not help me.

Int: Did you think having a refugee status was going to give you a chance at a new life and more protection?
Ppt: (umm) I am happy to be accepted as a refugee. In Iran is no good for me, but it is hard to do something here. I am happy in London (umm) I am engineer and film maker in Iran, here I do not have that. I hope I can do film here. I hope I can do more work of artist.

Int: Do you know the type of protection the government gives refugees because of your refugee status?
Ppt: yes. You know I can stay here. You know you help me with job seekers. I get money for housing. I get some help. But it different I am male and alone. I see other people get houses get help with the job, with the English. I come to London and I do everything, but no job. To do job seekers is hard you know.

Int: the paperwork?
Ppt: no the papers, no one listens to you. I go to Red Cross, you told me about, they say they find me a translator, but takes long time. I go to office they no you have to call us, but I call they don’t understand me.

Int: What does protection mean to you?
Ppt: (umm) protection. Protection of human rights to be safe, safe life. Protection from government, they help you to opportunity of job, family. How you say? Artists say what you want to say?

Int: Freedom of speech?
Ptp: yes! Also freedom to have a chance to work. You know and to live where you want to and to rights of human to live okay like a human.

**Int:** What do you think about the type of protection the UK government gives refugees? Do you think protection is just allowing someone to stay here?

Ptp: good to be accepted as refugee because you know am refugee, but here this (shows me I.D.) only 5 years. I hope more later more, but you know Iran is no good for me the government needs to protect my human rights. Human rights you know Europe and the United States say they protect human rights, but lot of hard emotionally hard (touches his chest). I am a good person, good artists, I want to work to have friend to here. Protection (gestures so and so). Not protected all the time. I need to be here and work.

**Int:** so protection more than just allowing you to stay?

Ptp: yes, you know I stay. I come to London, but no money, no house, no protection.

**Int:** What has your experience been like since you were granted refugee status?

Ptp: experience been good because I am not in Iran, but it has been here no family, no money, no job. Hard to get a job. I come to the centre to eat, may I do some painting. You don’t come to he centre, so no more talking (laughs). It is hard, not easy.

**Int:** Can I ask you about the housing situation in London once you were granted refugee status?

Ppt: yes, you know I come here and no money it was very hard.

**Int:** Where did you stay when you first arrive to London?

Ppt: you know I had no house. I talk to you that day…about me not house it is hard to talk and ask for help.

**Int:** where you homeless?

Ppt: (hesistates) (umm) hostel. I was stay in a hostel, but you know the guy wanted me to do very bad things. I did not want to do bad things. So then no home. I went … to look for a house they ask [inaudible] how do you say? (umm) shelter shelter.

**Int:** a homeless shelter?

Ppt: yes but not allowed because I am refugee (laughs).

**Int:** you were not allowed to stay because you were a refugee?
Ppt: yes they say only homeless people (laughs)......I got some money I look for a house. You know I told you. I go to apartment, but no I cannot get room because my refugee status, so no because of my refugee status. Very hard. Then you help me …fill out and explain the rent papers.

Appendix 5: Sample of Participant Information Sheet

Participant Information Sheet

Research Working Title
Urban Refugees in London: Problem of Protection, Integration, Poverty

Invitation
I would like to invite you to take part in this research study. Before you decide to participate, you need to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for you. Please take time to read the following information carefully. Ask questions if anything you read is not clear or would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not to take part.

What is the purpose of the research project?
As debates and advocacy has gathered a continuous focus on the process of asylum in recent years there is a lack of awareness in exploring the issues that face refugees after being granted a ‘legal’ status, i.e. ‘a leave to remain’. This research seeks to fill that gap and aims to explore the extent having a refugee status grants protection. Grounded in a social justice perspective this research will explore protection as not only surrogate protection, but also as a guarantee that economic and social opportunities/mobility can be accessed. Furthermore, reflecting the challenges an urban setting presents in correlation to any migration/forced migration experience it seeks to focus on refugee experience in the city of London.

How will the research be conducted?
The primary data collection method involves in-depth interviews with participants which will be conducted in-person with an estimated duration of 1-2 hours (If consent is granted the interviews will be audio-recorded).

Why have I been invited?
The study seeks to identify persons who have or have been granted refugee status by the U.K. government in the past five years, currently are living in London, and at least have
been in London for 3 months. Consideration is given to the following criteria to create a diverse pool of participants:

- **Country of Origin**: Selection of participants will seek to reflect a balance of the diversity that encompasses force migration.
- **Gender**: Selection of participants will seek to include a balance of male and female participants.

**Do I have to take part?**
It is up to you to decide. We will review the information sheet and a copy will be provided to you. You will then be asked to give oral or written consent if you agreed to take part. You are free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

**What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**
We may explore details of your experience of seeking asylum and as a refugee which may include sharing personal information.

**What are the possible benefits of taking part and what will happen to the results of the research project?**
The study aims to provide visibility and increase the understanding and diversity of experiences of refugees in the UK. As well as provide visibility to the challenges that refugees face after being granted asylum. Due to my role as an advocate, my hope is that this study can converge the already abundant works on asylum seekers and the UK policies on asylum and present a wider and comprehensive picture of the realities that face people who endure force migration.

**Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?**
Yes. All of the information you give can be anonymised upon request so that those reading reports from the research will not know who has contributed to it. The data will be collected and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. All the data collected will only be used by the researcher in the study; will not be given to a third party or used in another study or project.

**Who is organising or sponsoring the research?**
I have procured funding through a scholarship from government entity (SENECYT) to be able to pursue this research project as part of my Masters degree in Global Migration at University College London (UCL).
Appendix 6: Sample of Consent Form

Informed Consent Form MSc Global Migration dissertation research

Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research.

Project Title: Urban Refugees in London

Researcher: Vanessa Vaca Landeta

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Before you agree to take part, the person organising the research must explain the project to you.

If you have any questions arising from the Information Sheet or explanation already given to you, please ask the researcher before you to decide whether to join in. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form to keep and refer to at any time.

Participant’s Statement

I agree that:

- I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated .................. for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that if I decide at any time that I no longer wish to take part in this project, I can notify the researchers involved and withdraw immediately.
- I consent to the processing of my personal information for the purposes of this research study.
- I understand that relevant sections of my interview and data collected during the study, may be used be looked at and used by the researcher in their study.
- I understand that the information I have submitted will be published as a report and I will be sent a copy. Confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained and it will not
be possible to identify me from any publications.

- I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.
- I agree that the research project named above has been explained to me to my satisfaction and I agree to take part in this study.

Consent to Record: Yes ___ No__ (If no I understand that I give consent to have the interview recorded in a written form)