

Institute of Education, University of London

The social networks of refugees: A sociological
investigation of the processes of relationship building in
ESOL in the further education context

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Statement

I hereby declare that except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Anastasia Dimitriadou

The thesis is 83.440 words, excluding references and appendices.

“If relativity is proved right the Germans will call me a German, the Swiss will call me a Swiss citizen, and the French will call me a great scientist. If relativity is proved wrong the French will call me a Swiss, the Swiss will call me a German and the Germans will call me a Jew”.

Albert Einstein, 1919

[Wikiquote 2010]

Abstract

This thesis argues that social relationships, developed between refugee and migrant students in the ESOL/FE college environment, can provide individual refugees with resources that can positively impact on refugees' integration into British society. The rationale of this study is based on the recognition of refugees' increased need for communication and friendship building and the lack of consideration, so far, of their relations with ESOL students from different ethnicities, as they develop through the acquisition of the English language.

The theoretical framework of this study has been informed by social networks and social capital theory, within which social capital is perceived as a resource that derives from social relationships. The study has been developed and presented through the experiences and perspectives of refugees. Its methodology is based on case study, mixed methods design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, a survey and participant observation in ESOL classrooms of two London FE colleges.

The findings highlight that refugee ESOL students do build friendships with other ESOL students from their group and to a lesser extent with students from other groups at their college. Factors that have been identified to influence the process of relationship building include gender, age, and marital status, as well as refugees' presence of their nuclear family in London and their association with the ethnic community. Although with the passing of time refugees' English language skills improve, time does not strongly affect the formation of new friendships, but has a positive impact on existing relationships. Finally, the benefits deriving from the ESOL network that may further refugees' socio-economic integration have been identified as knowledge, information and qualifications, which constitute the social capital developed in the ESOL network. However, the refugee experience, changes in the family structure and participation in the ethnic community may impact on the recognition and utilisation of these gains as potential resources that can further the socio-economic integration of refugees into British society.

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List of Acronyms

AET: African Educational Trust

BIS: Department of Business, Innovation and Skills

BSA: Basic Skills Agency

CoE: Council of Europe

DfES: Department for Education and Skills

DIUS: Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills
DLR: Discretionary Leave to Remain
ECRE: European Council for Refugees and Exiles
EFL: English as a Foreign Language
ELR: Exceptional Leave to Remain
ESOL: English for Speakers of Other Languages
FE: Further Education
FEFC: Further Education Funding Council
HMSO: Her Majesty's Stationary Office
ICAR: Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees
IELTS: International English Language Testing System
ILR: Indefinite Leave to Remain
IND: Immigration and Nationality Directorate
IPPR: Institute for Public Policy Research
LSC: Learning and Skills Council
NGO: Non Governmental Organisation
NIACE: National Institute of Adult Continuing Education
NRIF: National Refugee Integration Forum
OFSTED: Office for Standards in Education
ONS: Office of National Statistics
QCA: Qualifications Curriculum Authority
RCO: Refugee Community Organisation
SFA: Skills Funding Agency
TSO: The Stationary Office
UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Part I: General Introduction and Overview

Introduction

(1) Aim, focus and research questions

This is a study about the development of social relationships built between refugees and migrants, studying on *English for Speakers of Other Languages* courses (ESOL), and the impact on the process of refugee integration. Its main aim is to investigate the effects of the social contexts and processes of English language attainment upon the social relationships of refugee ESOL students within the ESOL/FE college environment through the analytical insight of social capital theory. The theoretical framework of this study has been informed by social capital theory, within which social capital is defined as an emergent resource that derives from social relationships which is available to individuals that form these relationships (Coleman 1988a, 1988b, Bourdieu 1997, Putnam 2000). The study focuses firstly on social relationships that arise through daily interaction and communication between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL and wider FE college environment, and secondly on the effects of social capital, deriving from these relationships, to the process of integration. The thesis addresses the following questions: 1) What are the differences between migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics? 2) What are refugee ESOL students' experiences of flight, migration and settlement in Britain? 3) What are the refugee ESOL students' existing networks, and why are they important to refugees? 4) What factors influence relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE College environment? 5) What do refugee ESOL students gain from participation in the ESOL network? 6) How do the gains deriving from the ESOL network impact on the process of integration? (see section 4.5).

(2) Rationale, reasons for carrying out the study, and contribution of the thesis

In recent years the social integration of refugees has become a key policy objective in Britain, in which ESOL provision has been recognised as an essential element of the process of integration. Indeed, English language competence can enable refugees to

access areas from which they tend to be excluded, such as employment, housing, education and health, and actively engage in their local communities (Bloch and Schuster 2002, Sales 2002, Home Office 2000, 2005a). However, counterevidence suggests that refugees strongly rely on their networks of family and friends and their ethnic community for socio-economic support during their settlement in the host country (Stein 1981, Bloch 1997, Wahlbeck 1997).

Once refugees enter the ESOL/FE college environment, besides learning English, they have the opportunity to develop social relationships with people from different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. These social relationships can provide them with resources that, if utilised, can ease their adaptation and further the process of their integration into British society. As such, these resources constitute social capital deriving from the ESOL environment. However, whether and how refugees start to interact with people outside their ethnic social network once they are initially developing fluency in English has been scarcely investigated. In addition, whether they use the social capital deriving from the ESOL environment, and how this impacts on the process of integration, is not known. Hence, the study seeks to explore the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a social network that enables social capital formation in the form of resources that may enable individual refugees to further the process of their social integration.

The study deployed social capital theory as an analytical tool that allows the examination of the ESOL environment as a social network facilitating friendship building. Such a perspective can provide new insights into the process of refugee integration and its relationship to ESOL provision.

The reason for carrying out this study is twofold. Firstly, the thesis is concerned with issues related to the social adjustment of refugees in the country of exile. It will highlight the disadvantaged position of refugees in relation to other foreigners in Britain, due to the impact of their prior experience of loss and difficulties encountered when rebuilding their lives. Secondly, although British integration strategies identify the importance of English language attainment and the development of relationships between refugees and the wider population for the process of integration, these areas have been underinvestigated. The study presents the perspectives of refugees about their experiences of socialisation within the ESOL classroom environment and analyses

the social capital dynamics emergent in the role of these experiences for their socio-economic integration in Britain.

The study contributes to the fields of refugee studies and sociology of education. Its innovation is that it unites two under-investigated aspects of crucial importance to refugee integration: firstly, refugees' participation in social networks in Britain, and secondly, the sociological understanding about processes and mechanisms of refugee integration and language education in specific social contexts, namely, ESOL provision. The thesis extends current knowledge on, and contributes to understanding the refugee experience, for instance by highlighting background differences between refugee and migrant ESOL students and by examining how factors, such as age, gender and ethnicity impact on refugees' interaction and friendships with others in the ESOL environment. In addition, it increases our understanding of the function of the ESOL environment as a social network that provides its members with social capital. Finally, the thesis enriches our knowledge of refugees' integration into British society by highlighting the impact of English language fluency on the wider processes and spheres that encapsulate vital aspects of the process of social integration.

(3) Organisation of the thesis

The first chapter aims to introduce the reader to the refugee experience by identifying the refugee in the legal and social sciences literature. It provides a definition of the refugee in the current study, explores the differences between refugee and migratory populations, examines refugees' perceptions of settlement in the host country and outlines the policy provisions for refugee integration.

The second chapter provides additional contextualisation for the main study in that it critically examines the reorganisation and development of the ESOL sector in Britain as part of policies promoting social cohesion and refugee integration. In addition, it critically reviews the literature related to the ESOL setting's capacity as a site of socialisation that fosters the building of relationships among students.

The third chapter investigates the impact of social relationships on refugees' lives in the host society. It reviews the role of the ethnic social network on refugee settlement, the

use of social capital as a theoretical concept and research tool, and the insights deriving from social capital perspectives in refugee studies to the process of refugee integration.

In the fourth chapter the theoretical framework of the study is presented, explaining the interconnection of theoretical aspects of refugee integration, social networks and social capital. Further, the usefulness of social capital theory as an analytical tool for the present study is identified, and the research questions and hypotheses deriving from them, as well as the overall rationale of the study, are presented.

The fifth chapter specifies the methodological approach and research design of the study. It also presents the methods of data collection and research procedures, outlines the strategies adopted for the analysis of data and addresses ethical issues.

The sixth chapter reports and examines the refugee experience through a comparison of the background characteristics of migrant and refugee ESOL students and through an exploration of refugees' experiences of flight, migration and settlement, intending to identify factors that may affect refugee ESOL students' willingness and ability to build friendships in the ESOL/FE college setting.

The seventh chapter reports and examines refugees' existing social networks in Britain and explores the possible impact of these on the process of relationships building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE college environment. It identifies ethnicity, gender and age as the factors impacting on relationship building. Also, it demonstrates that refugees' willingness to seek friendships is affected by the presence of the nuclear family, as well as their future plans about their lives in Britain. In addition, it highlights that refugees have limited opportunities to socialise with students from other courses in the wider FE environment.

The eighth chapter explores the ESOL environment's capacity for social capital development. It illustrates that ESOL is an inclusive social network, which promotes cultural diversity and facilitates the building of inter-ethnic relationships and also the bonding between its members, but within the wider FE college context the ESOL network is characterised by closure. Furthermore, it highlights that the ESOL network mediates social capital in the form of benefits to its members, which, when utilised, could contribute to the process of refugees' integration.

The ninth chapter discusses the findings in relation to the central thesis, the overall aims carried through into the specific research questions. It reflects on the usefulness of the theoretical and methodological framework for the exploration of relationship building, states the limitations of the study and identifies areas for further research. Also, it reflects on the 'exploratory' nature of the study, and what can be done to generate additional research and possible developments for future research projects building upon this study in each of its aspects.

Chapter 1: An overview of refugees' experiences in Britain

1.1 Introduction

According to estimates, the global number of refugees reached forty-two million people by the end of 2008. 333,000 asylum applications were submitted to European countries at the end of 2008, and Britain¹ was the fourth largest preferred European destination, receiving approximately 30,547 asylum applications (UNHCR 2009). Whilst asylum claims peaked during the late 1990s and early 2002 (Rutter 2001, Vink and Meijerink 2003), there are almost 300,000 refugees in Britain, with the majority living in the Greater London area (Bardsley and Storkey 2000, Sutcliffe 2003). In consequence, a culture of suspicion arose towards asylum-seekers, which can be identified through an analysis of policy discourses and the media, legitimising the labelling of refugees as bogus or economic migrants (Kaye 1998, Fekete 2001, Kundnani 2001), and resulting in the introduction of restrictive policies concerning territorial entry by Britain and other European states² (Castles and Miller 2003).

This introductory chapter aims to locate refugees in the legal and social science literature, by highlighting their different position to non-refugee migrants (hereafter migrants) and by exploring the effects of the refugee experience on their perceptions of settlement in the host country. It is important to highlight the refugee experience as it can increase our understanding of refugees' willingness to build social relationships with others from different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The chapter firstly identifies the refugee in the legal literature, discusses the various legal categories of refugees and presents the definition of refugees in this study. Further, it analyses the differences between refugee and migrant populations. Finally, it explores refugees' perceptions of settlement in the host country.

¹ Britain has provided shelter to refugees since the 13th century, but at times has introduced immigration restrictions, such as the *1793 Aliens Bill* or the *1905 Aliens Act*, in attempts to protect its territory. After the Second World War immigration was restricted, accepting manageable numbers of refugees fleeing communist regimes during the Cold War (Cohen 1994, Hayes 2002, Schuster 2002).

² This European response towards immigration helped to construct the legacy of *Fortress Europe*, which increasingly forced refugees to turn to illegal means of entry into a country (Pirouet 2001, Castles and Miller 2003).

1.2. Identifying the refugee

Under international law refugees are clearly distinguished from other populations, and are recognised as such according to provisions of the *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees (1951 Geneva Convention)*. According to article 1.2 of the *Geneva Convention*, a refugee is recognised by a host country as such, being judged to have 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 of that country...

(UNHCR 1951)

The definition indicates that a person is recognised as a refugee by a state if s/he fears persecution because of political opinion or membership of particular social groups, and is outside the territory of the country of nationality. In addition, it implies that refugees are individuals who have experienced persecution, loss and flight. Also, the definition presupposes that a person has to make a claim to be recognised as a refugee, in order to start the process of recognition. Thus, the differentiation of refugees from other migratory populations is crucial in understanding the process of migration and settlement in a host society.

This definition has been highly criticised as being specific to the refugee movements of the immediate post-war period in Europe. Even after its adjustment with the *1967 Protocol*³, it does not apply to contemporary refugee movements (Zetter 1999, Feller 2001, Goodwin-Gill 2001). Ramajan (2002) argues that the refugee definition in the *1951 Geneva Convention* fails to recognise a number of persecuted people as refugees, such as mass refugee influxes, victims of natural disasters or internally displaced persons. Further, other issues have emerged: firstly, an individual must demonstrate to have acted upon individual motivation to avoid persecution through flight, secondly, the harm inflicted has to amount to persecution that is traceable to a state authority, and thirdly, there must be a clear distinction between the perpetrator and the victim. Hence,

³ The *1951 Convention* was to a large extent reflecting the refugee movements of the WWII aftermath and Cold War division between East and West. Responding to events of the 1960s, e.g. uprising against colonial rule, ethnic conflict and human rights abuse, the *1967 Protocol* extended the *Convention's* applicability to countries outside Europe and included those who fled after the 1st January 1951 (Zetter 1999).

in international law, it is *one* state that produces, and a *different* state that legitimises the term *refugee*. In addition, Lavenex (2001) points out that the modern state system is on the one hand based on the principle of the universality of human rights, and on the other, on the right of a state to control entry into its territory. As the production of refugees by a state impacts upon other states, these principles may be contradictory or supplementary, depending on the socio-political conditions throughout space and time. Thus the definition leaves to signatory states freedom of interpretation. It is necessary to highlight this issue, as it is within this context under which states, including Britain, develop policies for the distinctive treatment between refugees and migrants that impact upon refugees' settlement within a state's territory. The process of the recognition of refugee status in Britain will be analysed below.

1.2.1 *Legal categories of refugees in Britain*

Under British legislation refugees who have been recognised as such under the criteria of the *1951 Geneva Convention* are granted *Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR)*, which entitles them residency rights. In comparison, *asylum-seekers* are identified as those who have crossed international borders in search of safety and refugee status in a host country and have to prove their fitness to the *1951 Geneva Convention* criteria. Until they are recognised as refugees, they have very restricted rights (Bloch 2001, Rutter 2001). Those whose asylum claims are rejected, but who cannot be repatriated until conditions in their country improve, may be granted *Humanitarian Protection* or *Discretionary Leave* under the *1950 European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR)*⁴ (Schuster and Solomos 2001, Morris 2002, IND 2005). These two immigration statuses have replaced the status of *Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR)*, granted under the discretion of the Home Secretary. Humanitarian Protection is a grant of limited leave for those who can demonstrate a need for protection in the UK. Those who cannot demonstrate such a need under either, asylum or humanitarian protection provisions,

⁴ Article 3 of the *1950 European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* states that 'No one shall be subjected to torture or to inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment' and article 8 states that '1. Everyone has the right to respect for his private and family life, his home and his correspondence. 2. There shall be no interference by a public authority with the exercise of this right except such as is in accordance with the law and is necessary in a democratic society...' (CoE 1950). The *1950 European Convention on Human Rights* has been incorporated into British law with the *1998 Human Rights Act* (Schuster and Solomos 2001).

may qualify for a grant of discretionary leave (IND 2005). Refugees with these statuses have limited rights and entitlements and their cases are reviewed after 3 years of receiving their status. Further, after 5 years of ILR or Discretionary Leave refugees can apply for *probationary citizenship* but will be required to prove⁵ a) their knowledge of English, b) knowledge of life in Britain and c) that they are still in need of protection (TSO 2009, see also section 2.3.1).

The status of *Temporary Protection* has been an adaptation of ELR as a mechanism for harmonisation. Under temporary protection, quotas of refugees from a country are temporarily accepted by a host country and are either resettled or repatriated. Temporary protection is for a limited period only and its holders cannot be considered for refugee status under the *1951 Convention* (Levy 1999a, Bloch 2001, Home Office 2005b). Levy (1999a) argues that temporary protection was advanced as a method of defining away large groups of refugees who otherwise would have been granted Convention status⁶. Thus, Temporary Protection may have been a device to avoid the full responsibilities of international law. Finally, only the asylum claims of persons that match the criteria of the *1951 Geneva Convention* are being granted *refugee status*, under which they can stay in Britain for an indefinite period and acquire residency rights.

Schuster and Solomos (2001) outline that the *1951 Geneva Convention*, as well as the *1950 European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms*, have been incorporated into British law only in the 1990s with the *1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeal Act* and the *1998 Human Rights Act*. Thus, the government changed immigration law to regulate refugee influxes. In addition, the fact that the *1951 Geneva Convention* applied only to those who were granted convention status allowed the government to introduce differential treatment towards those with different asylum-seeking immigration statuses.

⁵ The period of probationary citizenship lasts for 1 year, where candidates have to earn their right to permanent citizenship by obeying the law, paying taxes and actively engaging in their communities. This citizenship process was introduced by the *Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009* (TSO 2009, Kostakopoulou 2010).

⁶ Levy (1999a) refers here to readmission agreements between Bosnia-Herzegovina and Germany concerning 200.000 Bosnian refugees in 1997.

1.2.1.1 Working definition of refugees in the present study

The definition of refugees in the *1951 Geneva Convention*, as well as the existence of various asylum-seeking immigration statuses related to refugees, have limited applicability outside legal contexts except as they affect rights and entitlements. For example, a refugee might be recognised as such in another European country and acquire the citizenship of that country. When this person emigrates to Britain, according to immigration law he/she will be treated as a European Union national. However, recognition and acquisition of citizenship do not erase the refugee experience and this person will have similar needs as his/her other co-ethnics. In addition, legal asylum provisions have a limited applicability in the ESOL environment, as the provision targets all who need to learn English irrespective of immigration or refugee status (see also section 2.3.2). Consequently participants included in this study were primarily selected on the basis of their refugee experience and not on their legal immigration status. For these reasons, the refugee has been defined in this study as: *a person who has been forced to leave his or her country because of threat of persecution or war, irrespective of applying for asylum in Britain or the outcomes of his or her applications.*

The word refugee will be used throughout this thesis to describe people who come under the above stated working definition. However, reference to legal categories of statuses were made where, necessary in order to explain the individual circumstances of participants.

The following section highlights the refugee experience through a focus on differences between refugees and migrants. This differentiation is important, as it has effects on the settlement and integration into the host society of these two populations.

1.3. Differences between refugees and migrants

The literature on migration clearly distinguishes between migrant and refugee movements through push-pull factors that determine the reasons for migration and the direction of migratory flows (Kunz 1973, Stein 1981, Hein 1993). For Kunz (1973), the driving force behind refugee and migrant movements is to a large degree determined by

the collective or individual character of migration. Specifically, migrants are 'pulled' into a country, and Kunz (1973) argues that this is an individual, rather than a collective decision-making process. As such, the migration process leaves the migrant sufficient time to prepare psychologically for the move because it was desired and planned. On the other hand, refugees are being 'pushed' out of their country because of radical changes that have occurred in the political or social structure. These changes result in the flight of whole families or social groups, who either head to the unknown, or join members of their social circle or family who have already settled in a safe country. Richmond (1993) and Staring (1998) disagree with Kunz, arguing that refugees may also be pulled by a country, as they may choose a destination because of prior contact, such as trade or post-colonial relations or pre-existing ethnic networks.

Kunz differentiates between two types of refugee movements: a) *the acute refugee movements*, in which people flee their country on short notice without having planned their migration in advance, usually after political change or military interventions and b) *the anticipatory refugee movements*, in which people are able to predict forthcoming changes and flee with resources and a possible destination. The difference between these two movements is that the anticipatory refugees perceive the threat early because they are usually actively involved in political or public life, which means that they have a certain social status, are well educated and successful professionals (Kunz 1973, 1981, Stein 1981, Joly 1996). On the contrary, acute refugee movements are not caused only by political changes, but also by environmental disasters or famine. In consequence, during temporary shelter refugees have to choose between return to their home country or living in exile. It is during this period that the refugee perceives the loss of habits, culture and identity and feels controlled and dependent (Stein 1981, Zetter 1999, Keely 2000).

Another difference between refugees and migrants is their psychological state, which impacts upon their willingness to settle in a host country. As Kunz (1973, 1981) argues, the decision to migrate has been taken voluntarily by migrants, who plan their migration and choose their destination in advance. Hence, they are psychologically prepared for migration and settlement in a host country. On the other hand, refugees' act of migration is a choice that is often informed by desperation and fear. In particular, the use of political violence enables a regime to create a state of terror that penetrates social

relations and individual mental states in order to exercise social control (Kalyvas 2004). One consequence is a breakdown of trust at both the individual and community level, resulting in suspicion, hostility and alienation amongst members of a community. In these situations refugees learn to mistrust people and are sometimes mistrusted by the government and the population of the host society (Levy 1999b, Summerfield 2003, Hynes 2003). In these cases, the behaviour of refugees may be deeply marked by the experience of torture, loss, mistrust, identity crisis and downward mobility in the host country. These experiences are largely reflected in the high rates of psychiatric disorder among refugees, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression (Hein 1993, Gorst-Unsworth and Goldenberg 1998, Murphy *et al.* 2002, Tribe 2002).

Lastly, as discussed in the previous section, a further difference between refugees and migrants is in the process of entrance in a host country. For example, in Britain, refugees have to prove their fitness under the *1951 Geneva Convention* criteria; whilst migrants are subjected to visa and residency requirements.

To summarise, whilst migrants make informed and advanced decisions about migration because they wish to live in a specific country, refugees are forced to leave their country mainly because of political reasons, and in many instances do not know their destination until arrival in a host country. What is more, before they can start to rebuild their lives in the host country, they have to enter a legal process to recognise their refugee status. Their treatment in the home country, as well as the involuntary character of their migration, will have effects on their psychosocial well-being, often leaving them in an ambivalent state in their sentiment towards the host country. In conclusion, although the reasons and process of migration may be different between refugees and migrants, the specific differences and variations between their actual process of entry and settlement into a host country are often hard to discern. The following section discusses refugees' perceptions of settlement in the host country.

1.4 Refugees' perceptions of settlement in the country of exile

Previous research suggested that during the initial stay in a host country refugees typically enter a psychological struggle justifying migration and exile. Exile

encompasses the process of refugees' flight from the home country and their settlement into the host society (Joly 1996, Shahidian 2000). Because return is impossible, '*exile is a definite event and has important consequences for social identity*' (Hein 1993:51).

Generally there is a tendency to assume that once refugees have reached safety, they are working towards their settlement in the host country until return to their country is safe. However, De Santis (2001) argues that while exiles escape the imminent danger they are trapped between contradictory forces, not being able to settle in the new country, nor wanting to return home; not being able to identify themselves and their sentiment towards their home country or the host society. He claims that '*exile discourse has a schizophrenic quality, unable to commit to any firm conclusion about their lives, identity or future*' (De Santis 2001:3), but in the host country refugees are united by their shared struggle to define their psychological state⁷.

Stein (1981) identifies four distinct stages of adaptation in the host society, during which refugees change their expectations of themselves and the host society. During the initial period, refugees have to confront their loss of occupational and social status, the loss of culture, identity and habits. It is likely that during this stage their children act as mediators in the socialisation of their parents and the host society. During the second stage, which is usually one to two years of living in exile, refugees are driven to recover what they have lost, especially if they were successful in their home country. In addition, during the process of recovery, the refugee experience may increase their innovativeness and aggressiveness in their quest for rights and entitlements. At the third stage, after four to five years of living in the host society, refugees may have acquired the language and aspects of the culture of the host society, or may be acculturated to function, but not to assimilate or integrate in the host society. Their hopes of regaining their lost status will be transferred to their children. During the last stage, after ten years of living in the host society, refugees may experience a stability and acceptance of their social situation; although they continue to try and regain their previous social status, this is done at a much slower pace.

Another interpretation of refugees' settlement in the host country is provided by Joly (1996, 2002). She identifies two broad categories of refugees: firstly, the *Odyssean*

⁷ De Santis (2001) refers to Adorno's dialogical tension whilst an exile in the USA in the 1930s.

refugees, who nurture a collective project in the land of origin and see exile as a temporary condition, perceiving it as a continuation of their project in the host society. They are ideologically driven and likely to enter international/transnational networks with a strong group identity and they certainly plan to return to their country. Thus, the motivation of exile determines the level and forms of adaptation to the host society. Secondly, the *Rubicon refugees* are severing links with the home country and have no interest to return, although they might be concerned about the socio-political situation of their home country. They have a positive attitude towards the host society, but their successful settlement depends on host-related factors, for instance socio-economic opportunities. In this respect, they resemble migrants through ethnic group formation and ethnic mobilisation. However, this group may be excluded by both the country of origin because of flight and the host country if its structure does not tolerate minorities. Kelly (2001) expands Joly's typology, arguing that loss of control by refugees over the events in their home country and over their stay in the host country may prevent them developing a collective project in the home country or the host country, and their orientation towards stay or return is uncertain.

The exploration of refugees' perceptions of settlement in the country of exile has shown that the adjustment in the host country is affected by the refugee experience, where refugees enter a struggle justifying their losses, migration and their sentiment towards the home country. Whilst they attempt to regain their losses, through the pursuit of socio-economic opportunities, they may perceive exile as a temporary or permanent condition, depending on their attachment to their home country. With time however, refugees come to accept their situation and may transfer their hopes to the second generation.

1.5 Summary

This chapter has argued that the representation of refugees in international law has limited applicability outside the legal context, as it does not account for the refugee experience, which is firstly, distinct from the migrant experience and secondly, affects refugees' perceptions of settlement in the host country. The intention of this chapter was to introduce the reader to the refugee, and to provide a background context to the

issues that contribute to the complexity of settlement and integration into a host country. Further, the insights into the process of adjustment and settlement provide preliminary ideas for modelling of how the refugee experience⁶ affects the motivation of refugees to settle in the host country. Next, attention will be turned to ESOL provision and its role in the political agenda on refugee integration.

Chapter 2: ESOL provision as a key element of refugee integration

2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to explore the parallel policy developments in refugee integration and citizenship, and their relationship to ESOL provision. It is argued that recent changes in ESOL provision are strongly interrelated with refugee integration policies, under which ESOL has become a key element of the refugee integration strategy, within the wider policy context of the promotion of good community relations and social cohesion. The chapter argues that past ESOL provision failed to address the educational needs of refugee ESOL students, or to provide any mechanism to account for refugees' prior education and experiences. However, as a site for socialisation, ESOL can facilitate relationship building between refugees and others within the ESOL/FE college environment. Social integration is defined as the interrelation of the processes that help refugees to successfully further their socio-economic participation in British society. The chapter critically examines the evolving refugee integration strategy and changes in ESOL provision. Then, it reviews refugee students' experiences as ESOL students in existing literature, and finally assesses the capacity of the ESOL environment to act as a site for socialisation and friendship building between its students.

2.2 Refugee integration in Britain

The term integration broadly describes processes of access to, and involvement in social life by newcomers in a host society. However, these processes and forms of integration can be affected by different experiences of migration, entry into a country and rights deriving from the differential legal status between migrant and refugee populations. International and human rights legislation provides for the protection of refugees from forcible repatriation, but does not prescribe the form refugee integration should take. Specifically, the *1951 Geneva Convention* outlines that integration in the first country of

asylum is one durable solution⁸, and states the right of refugees to ‘*wage-earning employment, self-employment and liberal professions*’ (Chapter III), and to ‘*housing, public education, public relief, labour legislation and social security*’ (Chapter IV) (in ECRE 1998). Similarly, the *1950 European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms* provides for i) the prohibition of torture, and ii) the right to private and family life. Hence, refugees cannot be forcibly repatriated if their home country disrespects human rights, or, if they have settled with their families, or have established considerable ties of non-family character, in the host country (Wollenschlaeger 2003).

Because refugee integration is not directly addressed by international and human rights legislation, but only refers to entitlements for employment, public services and social security in the host country, the form it will take as a process will vary and depend on a host country’s social attitudes towards immigration and multiculturalism. Britain has promoted race relations, multiculturalism and respect for diversity since the 1980s (ECRE 1998); however, ethnic unrest in the early 2000s has led to a shift in policy emphasis on social cohesion (Schuster and Solomos 2004, Cantle 2005). Hence, this study focuses on refugee integration as a process promoting communication across and within multiethnic communities (see also section 4.2).

The section below discusses the meaning of integration for refugees in the British context, develops a working definition of integration for the present study, and analyses the concepts that have been used as alternatives to integration.

2.2.1 *The concept of integration*

The integration of newcomers in a society does not only concern their entitlements and rights, but involves a range of social players and ‘*takes place at every level and in every sector of society*’ (Castles *et al.* 2002, p.113). As such, in Castles *et al.*’s analysis, integration may take two forms, depending on the policies and popular social attitudes of a host society. In its first form, integration is a one-way process and takes on the form of assimilation, under which the state creates conditions that lead newcomers to

⁸ The durable solutions for refugees as outlined in the *1951 Geneva Convention* are i) integration in 1st country of asylum, ii) resettlement in a 3rd country or iii) voluntary repatriation.

take on the dominant culture, language and practices of the host society. This process presupposes that the host society is willing and capable of providing to newcomers equal rights and opportunities, but ignores the democratic principles of diversity and choice. In its second form, integration is a two-way process, where it requires the adaptation to the new social conditions of both the newcomers and the host society.

Castles et al (2002) argue that in political discourses integration is assumed to conform with values and norms of a mono-cultural society. However, '*in a multicultural society, integration may be understood as a process through which the whole population acquires civil, social, political, human and cultural rights, which creates the conditions for greater equality*' (p.113), under which minority groups should be supported in maintaining their cultural and social identities. Aspects of the process of integration include access to employment, housing and public services (e.g. education or welfare), the building of relationships with the ethnic and wider community, and negotiations with private services and political participation. These aspects refer to different activities or sectors that have their own modes and meanings of integration. Consequently, integration for a person or a social group may be achieved in some sectors of the social structure and not in others. For instance, refugees may be included in the labour market, but excluded from political membership or culture (p.115). Therefore, Castles *et al.* (2002) argue that the concept of integration should be a term that encompasses a set of possible and overlapping short and long term processes and spheres (p.126).

Castles *et al.* (2002) also identify and compare alternative concepts that have been used at times to describe integrative processes. These concepts were devised by researchers as typologies to describe reception policies and settlement patterns of immigrants and refugees in Europe, Australia and North America, or were formulated by policy makers to address problems related to settlement (e.g. Berry 1980, Portes and Rumbaut 1990, Montgomery 1996, all cited in Castles *et al.* 2002). Besides assimilation, these concepts include, amongst others, the concept of *settlement*, which describes the processes under which newcomers become part of the host society, and is mainly used in the context of policy models. Similarly, the concept *incorporation* also describes the process of how newcomers become part of the host society, emphasising the process of gaining access to rights and privileges and participation in the legal, organisational or political structure

of the host society. Both concepts have been used as general and neutral terms when examining the process of immigrant involvement in the host society. Additional concepts studying specific aspects related to the process of integration include the concept of acculturation, which examines the process of newcomers' adjustment to different cultures and active participation in the host society, while the cultural identity is maintained. Acculturation involves the learning of the language and the presumed dominant cultural values and practices of the host society, and presupposes that the host society is mono-cultural and that newcomers have to give up their own culture. Similarly, the concept of adaptation, which refers to a selective attempt to modify aspects of cultural practice of newcomers in accordance with the host society's dominant norms and values, is based on the idea that a newcomer's public behaviour should be in line with the dominant culture of a society, while their private behaviour may be influenced by the culture of the sending society. Finally, concepts that examine newcomers' ability to access sub-sectors of society, such as education, welfare and political participation, as well as the sub-sectors' capacity to facilitate the integration of newcomers in their structure, include the concepts of inclusion and exclusion. Inclusion emphasises the active and conscious character of inclusion as a process in which public policies play a major role, whereas exclusion refers to the denial of access to certain rights and entitlements for particular social groups. While inclusion is useful for policy formation, exclusion tends to imply that newcomers should adjust their values and behaviour in order to be included in society.

Some of these alternative concepts, such as assimilation or acculturation, are centred around society; others, such as exclusion-inclusion or adaptation, are centred around the needs of newcomers. While they provide a possible broad framework for investigation, these concepts do not distinguish between different populations, and therefore may lack sensitivity to specific issues experienced by refugees, especially those centred around legal restrictions that refugees experience from their first day in the host country. However, the concept of integration as a two-way process attempts to encompass the processes described by the alternative concepts, by focussing on ways in which newcomers rebuild their lives and the preparedness of a given society to facilitate such process.

Castles *et al.*'s (2002) analysis of integration as a two-way phenomenon encompassing a set of processes and spheres, indicates that in a multicultural society refugees should acquire the same rights as the wider population, "including their right to maintain their cultural and social identities. The ESOL environment is capable of providing refugees with greater involvement in accessing public services and the building of inter-ethnic relationships, as part of the wider set of processes of integration, resulting from refugees' increased competence in English.

2.2.1.1 Working definition of refugee integration in the present study

The intention of this study is to examine the interrelation of, firstly, the building of social relationships between refugee and non refugee populations in the context of the ESOL/FE sector's role as facilitator of relationship building, and, secondly, the impact of these relationships on refugees' involvement in issues concerning their social welfare and socio-economic integration. Hereafter, integration in this study will refer to *the interrelation of the processes that help refugees to successfully further their socio-economic participation in British society, by maintaining parts of their cultural identity and adopting cultural aspects of the host society.*

Next, attention will be turned to the development of refugee integration policies in Britain.

2.3 **Refugee integration: the policy context**

As argued in the previous section, since the 1980s Britain has been widely regarded as a multicultural society, aiming to promote good race relations. As such, it did not provide any special intervention for the integration of refugees, except anti-discriminatory measures to promote equal opportunities (Schuster and Solomos 2004).

One such measure was the creation of ESOL programmes, addressing the linguistic needs of immigrants arriving in Britain. In the 1960s, the cultural politics behind the creation of these programmes were strongly driven by assimilationist beliefs (Usher 1989, Khanna *et al.* 1998), which assumed that '*all that immigrants need to learn was*

the English way of life' (Khanna *et al.* 1998:9). In addition, the financing of ESOL programmes through the Home Office⁹ worked as a mechanism to reinforce stereotypical notions towards linguistic and cultural minorities as the cause of social problems (Bellis 2000). Nevertheless, since the 1980s, a more mainstream approach to language and literacy education was adopted in line with the promotion of multiculturalism, and governmental agencies began to show some interest in the outcomes of ESOL provision (Khanna *et al.* 1998, Bellis 2000). Specifically, the objectives of ESOL were now focussing, on firstly, the acquisition and development of spoken and written English, secondly, the progression of students to further education, training and employment, and, thirdly, on the provision of information about systems, institutions and services available (Prince *et al.* 1999). However, the riots in the north of England¹⁰ in the early 2000s resulted in the re-evaluation of ESOL provision under the wider agenda of addressing social cohesion (Young 2003). In this climate, the British government devised for the first time a refugee integration strategy, where ESOL was considered as instrumental in initiating the process of integration. The introduction of this strategy can be regarded as an acknowledgement of the fact that newcomers were to a large extent excluded from economic and social life, as well as the need to coordinate public services, including ESOL provision, to work in partnership, addressing the short and long-term processes that are part of the wider process of refugee integration.

The next sections will critically review the development of policies addressing refugee integration and the reorganisation of ESOL provision.

2.3.1 *British integration policies*

The integration of refugees was addressed for the first time in 1997 by the European Commission, defining it as '*a two-way process (whereby) immigrants change society at the same time as they integrate to it*' (EC 1997, in ECRE 1998:13), and the ECRE Task Force on integration was set up to address specifically the integration areas of employment, housing, education and health (ECRE 1998, Mestheneos and Ioannidi

⁹ The financing of ESOL by the Home Office budget was established through Section 11 of the 1966 *Local Authority Act* (Bellis 2000).

¹⁰ Young (2003) refers here to the riots in Oldham that took place in 2001 as a result of ethnic minority populations' social exclusion and a lack of community cohesion.

2002). In this climate, Britain started to develop refugee integration policies in 2000 and for the first time adopted a refugee integration strategy, '*Full and Equal Citizens*'. This strategy outlined that refugees would be supported to develop their potential and contribute to the economic and cultural life of the country as equal members of society. The document highlighted that '*this strategy should be seen as a vision*' and is '*the beginning of a process*' that '*looks at what the government can do*', and '*what the wider community can do*' (Home Office 2000:2) in integrating refugees by examining areas refugees are likely to experience difficulties with. For these purposes the *National Refugee Integration Forum* (NRIF) was created to implement the strategy, targeting housing, education, employment and health, and placing a special emphasis on community development. In addition, the strategy acknowledged the integrational capacity of national governmental organisations (NGOs), refugee community organisations¹¹ (RCOs) and a commitment to provide funding for them.

In 2005 *Full and Equal Citizens* was revised with the new integration strategy *Integration Matters*. This strategy aimed to continue the policies set out in 2000, and to contribute to the promotion of good race relations and the building of cohesive communities. In this document, integration was defined as refugees' empowerment to achieve their full potential, to contribute to their communities and to access public services. Furthermore, the strategy stressed the importance of the voluntary sector to its success and also outlined the piloting of the *Sunrise programme*, under which newly recognised refugees were to receive help in accessing services and developing an integration plan (Home Office 2005a). The achievement of 'integration targets' would be indicated through access to services, such as English language attainment, education, housing standards and health, and through social and political participation, indicated through employment, volunteering, contact with community organisations, naturalisation, and the reporting of racial, cultural and religious harassment.

In 2009 *Integration Matters* was revised with the strategy *Moving on Together*. This document emphasises its commitment to the continuation of policies laid out previously and reviews the strategy's achievements so far. In addition it stresses its commitment to ESOL provision for refugees; employment of refugees by setting up the *Refugee*

¹¹ Refugee community organisations aim to provide individuals with a collective voice by networking and cooperation with other agencies (Griffiths *et al.* 2005).

Integration and Employment Service, aiming to find employment for 30% of refugees within 12 months; to community cohesion, by providing guidance and support to local communities; and to the improvement of ESOL provision on outcomes supporting community cohesion (UK Border Agency 2009). Koopmans (2010) claims that compared to other North-West European states, Britain demonstrated better integration outcomes because of the existence of multicultural policies and cultural and linguistic ties to former colonies, as well as less generous welfare provision and increased opportunities for low-paid employment. However, Kostakopoulou (2010) argues that the representation of the term integration in political discourses moves the attention from selective migration processes, failures in boarder controls, disciplinary mechanisms and citizenship awards to those considered to be 'worthy' (p. 843-844).

Having reviewed the policy context within which the refugee integration strategy has evolved, it becomes clear that the way in which refugee integration is defined and applied in these policies is serving the wider policy agenda of social cohesion, rather than international obligations for humanitarian protection. There is an emphasis in immigration legislation on active citizenship. Specifically, the *2002 Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act*, which prepared the ground for the revision of the refugee integration strategy, outlined that central to the success of integration is the acquisition of the English language and knowledge of the British way of life; and ultimately, the encouragement of refugees and migrants to acquire British citizenship, to be earned through knowledge of the English language and of British cultural knowledge. As a result, since 2004 all citizenship applicants were requested to prove their fluency in English, and, since 2007, have to undergo a citizenship examination (see also section 2.3.2). In addition, the *Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009* now requires citizenship candidates to demonstrate their engagement in the wider community (TSO 2009, see also section 1.2.1). The refugee integration strategy places an emphasis on cross-cultural communication. Particularly, *Integration Matters* identified the development of inter-community relationships as an indicator of the integration target of contributing to the community, and *Moving on Together* expressed its commitment to community cohesion by supporting local authorities with resources to absorb new migrant populations in the communities. The strategy acknowledges that positive and lasting relationships can be build if the host communities receive accurate information about refugees from local government and the media. In addition, the strategy expects

refugee community organisations to act as bridging agents in the development of inter-community relationships, as they can strengthen the involvement and participation of refugees in their local communities (Home Office 2005a, UK Border Agency 2009).

It could be argued that the British government has adopted a deficit approach towards refugees under the wider investment in good community relations and community cohesion. The expectation of refugees' economic and cultural contribution presupposes that refugees are burdens to their communities, disregarding the fact that many tend to be marginalised from economic and social life due to problems arising, for instance, from long period of economic inactivity due to long-term migration and the lengthy asylum process (Craw *et al.* 2007), or lack of acculturation to British employment practices and lack of work experience in the UK (Bloch 2004, LDA 2005, Green 2006). The emphasis on refugees' empowerment implies that refugees are in need of qualifications and skills. However, it does not account for structural problems related to accreditation and recognition of prior qualifications and professional experience (Aldridge and Waddington 2001, Bellis *et al.* 2005). The indication of integration through targets presupposes that elements of the process of integration are primarily associated with accessing services and social and political participation, disregarding the problems faced with initial adjustment due to the refugee experience, and limited ability to communicate (see section 1.4), as well as the negative media impact on the public and increasing xenophobia in communities (Kundnani 2001, Fekete 2001). Nevertheless, the recent strategy *Moving on Together* indicates a shift in this approach by restating its commitment to previously stated targets and, most importantly, by giving a wider role to government agencies to work together in promoting refugee integration.

Clearly, then, the key indicators of the success of the refugee integration strategy are identified in, refugees being accepted as equal members of society by demonstrating fluency in English and cultural knowledge and skills, and by developing good relations with their local communities. Despite placing a share of this responsibility on the wider community, refugees are expected to make efforts to mix with their local community. The strategy, then, as indicated previously, is two-fold: a) an expectation that refugees 'learn' a set of skills to integrate and b), the host community takes account of their needs.

Undoubtedly, the 2002 *Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act* and the refugee integration strategies are recognising the necessity of English language attainment for refugees and migrants as crucial for their integration in Britain, but also as an integral aspect of good race relations and community cohesion. Yet these policy developments exclude asylum-seekers awaiting a decision on their case and those who for various reasons, such as childcare responsibilities, full-time employment or health problems, cannot attend English language classes¹² from the process of integration.

Within this policy framework the ESOL and wider FE college context acquires an increasingly important role in facilitating the two-fold targets of the integration strategy. Thus, attention is now turned on developments in ESOL provision that enhanced its capacity to facilitate the initiation of processes related to refugee integration.

2.3.2 *ESOL provision in Britain*

The main ESOL providers in Britain are the Further and Adult Education Colleges, private training organisations and voluntary and community organisations (Griffiths 2003). In addition, ESOL is part of the general field of Adult Basic Skills (BSA 2001).

In the 1980s the scale and need for appropriate local ESOL provision was acknowledged. Early empirical evidence highlighted that most ethnic minority populations were unaware of existing local ESOL classes (ALBSU 1989) and that ESOL students were not able to cope with English speaking and writing (Carr-Hill *et al.* 1996). The problems associated with ESOL provision included high drop-out rates from ESOL due to inappropriate initial assessment procedures, wrong placement on courses or dissatisfaction with provision or progress (McDonald 1995, Kambouri *et al.* 1996). Finally, the level of language provision offered in ESOL classes was below the language skills required by employers (Schellekens 2001).

¹² *Moving on Together* outlines that the strategy applies to those who have been recognised as refugees, or have been granted with leave to remain in Britain. Nevertheless, the elderly and those with learning difficulties applying for British citizenship are exempted from proof of English and the citizenship examination (UK Border Agency 2009).

In turn, educational provision in the FE sector in the early 1990s was affected by major structural changes. FE colleges¹³ became independent corporations, entering a competitive market environment¹⁴ that was dominated by a funding methodology¹⁵, which prioritised the retention of students and identification of new learner populations (Huddleston and Unwin 1997, Smithers and Robinson 2000a, Lucas 2002). As a result, colleges increased their engagement with their local communities, including the needs of local businesses, as well as for a growing number of regional and international students (Huddleston and Unwin 1997, Alexiadou 1999). Since the late 1990s the FE sector's priorities have shifted¹⁶ towards attracting the socially excluded and disadvantaged – adults with learning disabilities, ethnic minority populations, the unemployed and unqualified (Smithers and Robinson 2000b, Stuart 2002). Within this context, the refugee as an adult ESOL student falls under the category of the disadvantaged and socially excluded learner, where ESOL provision is offering a second chance to education and employment.

The structural changes in the FE sector and the recognition of problems of ESOL provision led to the reorganisation and improvement of the ESOL sector, addressing previous failures and the changing demography and needs of the ethnic minority populations in Britain. Specifically, the emphasis on the importance of education and training to address disadvantage allowed the FE sector to adopt a leading role in the

¹³ Previously, FE colleges played a significant role in tertiary education and their 1980s image was according to Merrill *et al.* (2000) related to trade and leisure courses.

¹⁴ Colleges operated as quasi-markets, because the funding was highly regulated by the *Further Education Funding Council* (FEFC) (Alexiadou 1999). According to Le Grant and Bartlett (1993), quasi-markets replace monopolistic state providers. They differ from the conventional markets on the supply side, because they do not aim to maximise profit, and on the demand side, because the consumer purchasing power is not expressed in monetary terms, but takes the form of a budget or voucher, or is centralised in a single state purchasing agency.

¹⁵ The FEFC's funding methodology was based on enrolment, progress and achievement, under which students attracted funding units that depended on learning outcomes. In 2001 the FEFC was replaced by the *Learning and Skills Council* (LSC) being responsible for the funding, planning and quality assurance of further education provision (Lucas 2002, Avis 2002).

¹⁶ One of the main aims of the Labour Government elected in 1997 was to reform education. The Kennedy Report, *'Learning Works'* published in the same year, outlined the importance for those who had left education without qualifications to return. Thus, the colleges' priority was now to find new ways to attract the socially excluded (Smithers and Robinson 2000b, Stuart 2002). McDonald and Lucas (2001) argue that Kennedy Report was an early public signal of new priorities for FE, by recognising the FE sector's capacity to contribute to social, economic and cultural regeneration.

elimination of social exclusion with programmes such as the *New Deal*¹⁷ or by making ESOL provision widespread (Stuart 2002). Under these policies, ESOL provision was strongly promoted within the ethnic minority and refugee communities.

With regard to ESOL, the main recommendations of the report '*Breaking the Language Barriers*' (DfES 2000) were concerned with national standards, curriculum development and teacher training, mapping the way for the development of a distinct ESOL curriculum framework. This included teaching standards based on inclusive teaching approaches, a qualifications and training framework for ESOL teachers, and a flexible funding regime that would encourage collaboration with employers and training providers. Following the report's recommendations, the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* was developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) and was introduced in 2000 (BSA 2001), at the same time as the refugee integration strategy was introduced (see section 2.3.1).

The ESOL curriculum provides a national framework under which provision is divided into 3 entry levels and 2 further levels. Prospective students have to undergo an initial assessment and are then placed in appropriate ESOL levels. Students need to be competent in all components of language, which are reading, writing, listening and speaking, in order to progress (BSA 2001). The curriculum recognised the educational diversity of ESOL learners and emphasised communicative language teaching techniques that should draw on learners' short-term goals and aspirations, and which should derive from a cross-cultural perspective, aiming to promote independent learning. At the same time, new learning materials were developed and, since September 2004, these were to be used nationally on all LSC funded ESOL courses. These new provisions were placed within the broader *Skills for Life* initiative to raise adult numeracy and literacy skills for adults. The *Skills for Life ESOL* syllabus covers aspects of living in Britain and is based on human capital ideas. For example, it emphasises how to apply for jobs or be successful in the job interview. Also, *Skills for Life ESOL* learning materials concentrate on providing information about life in Britain, and are being taught by applying language learning processes, such as reading, speaking, listening and writing (DfES 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004).

¹⁷ The *New Deal* initiative aims to address social exclusion by giving specific groups of unemployed people (those aged 18-24, 25+, 50+, the disabled and lone parents) a chance to gain skills and experience, and in this way, to increase their employability (Lefton and Hall 2001, JobCentre Plus 2007).

The testing and delivery of the ESOL curriculum was carried out by the ESOL Pathfinder project¹⁸ which evaluated the experiences of over 3,400 ESOL students studying in participating institutions (Dalziel and Sofres 2005). It indicated an extensive diversity among learners in terms of age, gender, marital status, ethnicity and previous education. Also, it highlighted a high demand in ESOL students to learn English for everyday tasks and greater involvement in their communities. In addition, the project showed that 60% of learners felt that ESOL positively affected their future employability in Britain.

At the same time there has been an emphasis in ESOL provision on maximising students' chances to access training or employment. Many ESOL providers run employment-focused courses (Roberts *et al.* 2004) with a strong emphasis on teaching employability skills, such as learning to fill out job applications or writing CVs and staging mock job interviews (Foth 2003); or target highly educated refugees who were professionals in their home country (e.g. Morrice 2005a, 2005b). Other providers have developed courses within which ESOL is embedded in another vocational subject, such as health and science, motor vehicle and construction or child care (e.g. DfES 2005).

A further change affected ESOL qualifications. Whereas previously students were awarded the Pitman qualification, from 2005 the *Skills for Life* initiative introduced new qualifications tailored to meet ESOL students' needs. These qualifications (six were introduced) use the Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and establish clear progression routes for learners, ensuring parity with other adult literacy qualifications and acknowledging different levels of prior attainment. However, although these qualifications were introduced to count towards national targets, in practice they replaced internationally recognised qualifications, such as IELTS, sought by higher education institutions and professional bodies (Schellekens 2005).

Furthermore, since 2005, citizenship candidates have to undergo a citizenship examination (see also section 2.3.1). For this purpose, the compendium entitled '*Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship*' (Home Office 2004) and the classroom support material *Citizenship Materials for ESOL Learners* (NIACE 2005) were

¹⁸ The project was set up in 2001/2002 by the Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit and included ten ESOL Pathfinder projects across England and one for HM Prison Service to run from September 2002 to December 2003 (DfES 2005, Danziel and Sofres 2005).

developed. In order to be eligible to apply for citizenship, candidates have to prove their English language fluency in Speaking and Listening at entry level 3 (Hedges 2005). This change, though, means that ESOL provision was given an expanded responsibility of preparing students for citizenship candidacy. What is more, since 2007 fees were reintroduced in ESOL after a five year period. Following concerns about the exclusion of those living in poverty or who were unemployed, means-tested fee remissions were introduced (LSC 2006, DFES 2007).

In an attempt to trace the targets of *Integration Matters* in the application of these learning materials, a document analysis was carried out. I identified that although the intention of the learning materials was to enable ESOL students to improve settlement into their community and adopt a western lifestyle, they indirectly emphasised the importance of cultural difference in a multicultural society (Dimitriadou 2006). In both documents, however, cultural difference was reduced to religion, ethnicity, clothing and food. Hence, although both learning materials were found to support and promote the targets of *Integration Matters*, they primarily served the third integration target, that of accessing services. Similarly, although both documents were found to provide rich information about achieving full potential and contributing to the community, thus preparing refugees for naturalisation, they were only equipping refugees with 'citizenship skills'.

In 2008 Ofsted (2008) conducted an evaluative survey about the quality of ESOL provision nationally and found that there was a satisfactory improvement and the majority of ESOL students were working towards the Skills for Life ESOL qualification. Information technology was effectively used in lessons, citizenship learning was well incorporated into the ESOL curriculum, and progression to ESOL or vocational studies was good. However, there were few opportunities for work experience, and the introduction of fees resulted in a 14% decrease in enrolments in 2007. The study recommended the need for closer monitoring of fee policies and that stronger attempts should be made by ESOL providers to match the needs of communities and increase the range of vocational courses with embedded ESOL. Regarding teaching and learning, it was recommended that ESOL teachers differentiate more effectively between individual learning needs of students and the aims of citizenship needed to be identified and incorporated into language learning. Also,

regarding the employability of ESOL students the report recommended the expansion of workplace learning and the development of stronger links with employers.

Responding to these recommendations the *Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills* (DIUS) announced a new approach regarding the role of ESOL in community cohesion, under which ESOL will have a greater focus on the inclusion of socially excluded groups with ESOL needs in local communities. The policy calls for a new partnership approach under which local authorities, the LSC and its successor, the Skills Funding Agency, FE colleges and training providers will collaborate to identify the most vulnerable people in their communities and the issues preventing them from accessing ESOL. Refugees are recognised as being a priority group and therefore will benefit from means-tested fee remissions. However, ESOL funding will be frozen for the academic year 2009/10 (DIUS 2009). This funding shortage will strongly affect ESOL provision in urban college centres with high concentrations of ethnic minorities (Linford 2010), and also, could inadvertently discriminate against non-English speakers and non-Europeans because they erect additional barriers to the acquisition of citizenship (Han *et al.* 2010).

Moreover, while recognising the crucial role of ESOL in addressing social exclusion and community cohesion, the fact that ESOL funding will not be increased means that, in practice, ESOL providers may encounter difficulties in providing ESOL to an increasing student population, especially in a multi-agency setting, where organisations with different priorities are expected to work collaboratively. What is more, the quality of ESOL provision may be affected, as FE colleges may be required to shorten courses in order to accommodate an increasing student population without additional funding.

The outline of the development of ESOL provision suggests that the ESOL sector's past failures to provide adequate English language tuition were related to a combination of factors, such as unqualified teaching staff, inappropriate initial assessment and placement procedures and the absence of a national ESOL framework. These problems have been addressed and the ESOL sector appears to have been revitalised and given new responsibilities, such as refugees and educating future citizens. However, whether changing ESOL provision is capable of addressing refugee' needs and furthering the process of integration, has still to be evaluated over the long-term.

2.4 The experiences of refugees as ESOL students

One general characteristic of ESOL provision is its variability in structure and context throughout institutions (Griffiths 2003)¹⁹, because of the diverse groups of English language learners. Although it is recognised that refugees are likely to encompass a range of social, political, religious, cultural, educational and professional backgrounds, there is no separate ESOL provision for refugees, with the exception of some individual initiatives of some institutions and refugee community organisations (BSA 2002).

There is separate English language provision for people who come for short visits to the UK or who learn English abroad under the name of *English as a Foreign Language* (EFL). EFL provision has been developed separately from ESOL and has generated language learning theory and research for learners who already have studied English and come from academic backgrounds (Barton and Pitt 2002, Glenton 2005). Evidence suggests, however, that this practice resulted in the labelling of ESOL students as academically less able to follow EFL courses (Cooke 2000, Cooke and Peckham 2001). Although, theoretically, refugees can study on EFL courses, the high financial cost of these courses tends to redirect them to ESOL courses instead. Additionally, given that ESOL provision aims to prepare students for a life in Britain, refugees increasingly rely on ESOL in order to prepare for the citizenship test.

The sections below discuss the experiences of refugees as ESOL students in Britain and explore the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a site for socialisation.

2.4.1 ESOL provision for refugees

Early research evaluating refugee settlement identified that the problems refugees experienced were related to their weak English language skills. Particularly, investigations into the settlement of Vietnamese refugees in Britain revealed that ESOL

¹⁹ There are differences in ESOL provision among providers, and ESOL classes are increasingly offered on a language support basis to mainstream vocational courses that offer GNVQ and BTEC qualifications (Prince *et al.* 1999, Griffiths 2003).

courses were useful for the improvement of English and for knowledge of British society and culture (Duke and Marshall 1995). Furthermore, English language knowledge predetermined refugees' employment chances and everyday communication with others, but existing ESOL courses were found to be inadequate for settlement in the UK (Edholm *et al.* 1983). Similar patterns were discovered by a government-funded study for non-quota refugees, arriving spontaneously in Britain²⁰ (Carey-Wood *et al.* 1995, Duke 1996), which highlighted that many refugees studying English still had problems in communicating with officials and the wider public, and resorted to interpreters or relied on friends from their ethnic community and their children, who were studying in British schools.

A study exploring the factors that affect the settlement experiences²¹ of three refugee communities (Tamils, Somalis and Congolese) in the London borough of Newham identified differences between ethnic groups regarding the reasons behind their ability to learn and their motivations to study English (Bloch 1997, 2000, 2002). Specifically, it was found that Tamils and Somalis had better English language skills on arrival than the Congolese, due to the formers' historic colonial ties with Britain. However, the Congolese were the group who attained English language skills most rapidly as they were the most educated group and multilingual. By contrast, Somalis had problems learning English, especially women, who had no formal previous education. In addition there were differences between the three groups regarding their motivations to study English in Britain: while the Tamils and Congolese hoped that they would have increased employment opportunities and improve their communication skills, the Somalis tended to value learning in its own right.

²⁰ The project aimed to identify the extent to which refugees could successfully access employment and housing through the use of educational and training opportunities. The study was an exploratory survey and its sample consisted of 263 refugees who were invited to give free, unstructured accounts of their settlement experiences. Most of the participants were from Somalia, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, Uganda and Sri Lanka and applied for asylum in Britain during 1982-89.

²¹ The study emphasised on examining refugee employment as the main factor affecting refugee settlement in Newham, London, through the interrelation of refugee employment with a) refugees' attitudes towards settlement in Britain and reasons for claiming asylum in Britain, b) the socio-economic impact of social networks to their settlement, c) their previous labour market participation, attitudes towards and aspirations of employment and training and their participation in training for English language and employment, and d) the factors affecting their absorption into the labour market, such as demographic and personal characteristics, access to information and advice, methods of job seeking and discrimination (Bloch 1997:15-16, part of the findings are also presented in section 3.2).

Another small-scale qualitative study exploring the factors positively affecting refugee ESOL students' learning experiences was carried out by Tully (2005). It identified that the factors supporting refugees' positive learning experience were related to having control over their lives and the relevance of the lesson content to their daily lives. In addition, external factors to ESOL increasing student motivation and contributing towards English acquisition were the positive cultural learning experiences outside the classroom, informal learning situations (e.g. through the media and exchange of ideas with others), positive social interaction with the local community and the presence of a trusted English speaker, such as the teacher. The study concluded that teachers should get more involved with students by making an effort to understand the refugee experience.

Further, Hou and Beiser (2006) attempted to link English language acquisition with length of stay in the host country. This study was based on a longitudinal, quantitative design and aimed to investigate the process of language acquisition over a ten-year period in a sample of 608 East Asian refugees settled in Canada. It was identified that the proportion of those who spoke English competently at two years after arrival rose from 17 per cent to 32 per cent at 10 years after arrival. Similarly, the proportion of those without English language skills at two years after arrival (16 per cent) halved at ten years after arrival (8 per cent). The investigators concluded that although improvement in language acquisition is most rapid during the first years of settlement, the determinants of language acquisition change over time. Consequently, while English language proficiency is largely determined by pre-immigration achievement and demographic characteristics, post-migration opportunities and incentives become increasingly important factors for language acquisition.

In addition, research on ESOL provision for refugees living in the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) North London area (AET 2002) highlighted that refugees wanted ESOL classes to be more practical and appropriate to their learning needs for finding employment and communicating with the public. Although ESOL courses were identified to be focusing on skills development for job search, office work and information technology, refugees preferred to attend ESOL classes run by their refugee community organisations, feeling that these classes were more able to accommodate their learning and wider social needs. In addition, refugees believed that there should be

cultural classes teaching them British culture and norms, as well as the responsibilities of service providers.

With regard to citizenship and refugees' sense of belonging to British society, a project carried out by Bellis and Morrice (2003) investigated the concept of citizenship in relation to issues of migration, cultural differences and identity by examining refugees' views about their understanding of 'meaningful participation in society'. Seventeen interviews were carried out with refugees, from a range of nationalities, studying English in the Brighton and Hove area. Their findings highlighted the insecurity and uncertainty felt by many asylum-seekers awaiting a decision on their application, and their awareness of negative stereotyping of refugees and asylum-seekers in the media. Regarding English language proficiency, refugees viewed the learning of English as an important requirement for participation in British society. However, they were concerned about the adequacy of English language provision available and its effectiveness in helping to access further education or employment, despite the university qualifications and professional experiences possessed by most refugees, usually unrecognised in Britain. Most had positive views about citizenship classes, as these were regarded as an opportunity to learn about complex structures and the British culture. In addition, 'a sense of belonging' and inclusion – taking the form of the celebration of distinctive cultural differences and recognition of previous skills, talents and knowledge instead of assimilation and enforced homogeneity – were found to be of high importance for the participants.

Finally, a project²² exploring the education and employment barriers faced by highly qualified refugees, and the effectiveness of current policy measures to promote refugee integration, identified refugees' continued experience of barriers of accessing education, training and employment, and their frustration towards a lack of differential learning opportunities within the ESOL curriculum. Also, the study showed that refugees had little involvement in their local communities. It recommended stronger communication between providers and clients with targeted advice and guidance, and the development of improved progression pathways in FE. Additionally, it suggested the recognition of informal social learning opportunities in which many refugees engage, in order to

²² The Refugee Employment and Progression Research Project was carried out in 2005 and involved four regional cases from Sussex, Lancaster, Leeds and Stoke-on-Trent and was based on interviews with refugees from West Midlands studying ESOL with Information Technology.

empower refugees and promote their equality of opportunity (Bellis *et al.* 2005, Morrice 2007, Houghton and Morrice 2008).

The studies reviewed above indicate that different ethnic groups of refugees have different learning needs, ranging from illiteracy in the first language to high levels of education, and the purposes, such as communication, access to further education or employment, were not always met by ESOL provision. In addition, there seems to be a broader need for a clear mechanism by which refugees' previous experiences, skills and qualifications are recognised, so that they can further their integration in Britain. What can be concluded from this section is that past ESOL provision in Britain did not always adequately address refugees' learning and social needs in terms of progression to training and employment, provision of knowledge related to British culture and norms, and fostering refugees' communication with non refugee populations. Thus, the government's commitment to changing and improving ESOL provision (see section 2.3.2) can be interpreted as an acceptance of the problematic nature of past provision that partly contributed to refugees' isolation from social and economic participation, although recent funding cuts may decrease the quality of ESOL provision.

The next section assesses the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a site for relationship building by reviewing research that explored interaction and communication within the ESOL environment.

2.4.2 *The ESOL environment as a site for socialisation*

As a social environment, ESOL can facilitate socialisation between students because it connects people who may share future goals and aspirations regarding their education and careers, and because student interaction in the classroom is encouraged by the ESOL curriculum as a pedagogical practice. The ESOL sector's capacity to act as such a setting has been demonstrated by Hodge *et al.* (2005). In their ethnographic study²³ exploring the relationship between language learning needs and the broader social needs

²³ This research project was part of a wider project on ESOL provision including 5 case studies, which aimed to identify a range of current ESOL practices and establish some of the features of ESOL learners in numeracy, literacy and ESOL (Roberts *et al.* 2004, Roberts 2005). As this project focused primarily on learning practices, the detailed review of all the cases is beyond the focus of the present study.

of recently arrived asylum-seeking ESOL students, they found that the ESOL classroom can be a social space enriched by students' life experiences, as well as a learning environment (Hodge *et al.* 2005). This environment resulted from the teacher's involvement as an advocate and supporter for students, often taking on the role of the counsellor or social worker developing an atmosphere of security and mutual support in which the students learned English. This approach led to the development of trust between students which positively affected students' willingness and initiatives for mutual support inside and outside the classroom. As a consequence, students met with each other outside the classroom socially and for help with homework.

Although Hodge *et al.* (2005) have effectively demonstrated that the ESOL environment can act as a social space in which students interact and build friendships, it was beyond their study's scope to further investigate the quality of the friendships, the extent to which these relationships were the result of students' goal to learn English, their migration and/or refugee experience, or an effect of a shared ethnicity, culture and first language. In addition, their study does not highlight any differences in relationship building between gender, religion or race. Even so, the value of this study is that it identified that refugee ESOL students are in need of a learning and a social space within which they can exchange information, support each other and learn.

Another qualitative study exploring refugee ESOL students' views on how learning English affects their lives outside the classroom²⁴ found that participation in ESOL was instrumental for participation in the wider FE context and the acquisition of vocational qualifications, and had a positive impact on students' employment prospects, education, social interaction and personal well-being (Carey 2004). In particular, this study found that ESOL provision was more successful in facilitating non-economic outcomes rather than vocational progression opportunities. In the form of an informal outlet for information sharing, advice and support with other ESOL students, the ESOL environment made refugees feel less isolated and more optimistic about their future in Britain. Thus, participation in ESOL increased students' self-esteem and enabled them to communicate with their classmates. However, participation in ESOL could also become a deterrent to labour market or community participation because students had

²⁴ Data were collected through 16 semi-structured interviews with refugee ESOL students from two London colleges and through secondary analysis of 3 already existing interviews with refugees.

limited time available to find a job or take up hobbies due to their concentration on learning English.

Glenton (2004) investigated how relationships and interactions between learners in a mixed-nationality ESOL classroom contributed to the learning experience. The study was based on an ethnographic design and data were collected through participant observation in an ESOL classroom over the period of one academic year, in a further education college in the North of England. It showed that the ESOL group had its own distinct culture with strong communication between learners, although dislikes were expressed as well. In addition, it was highlighted that the mixed nationality relationships enhanced the social success of the class. The study concluded that learning in a mixed nationality group was motivating the learners, assisted in advancing group accountability and encouraged feedback.

The findings of Carey (2004), Glenton (2004) and Hodge *et al.* (2005) confirm that the ESOL environment as a social space can facilitate the building of friendships between refugees and other ESOL students. In fact, the studies indicate that the social outcomes of ESOL provision may affect refugees' lives in a positive way. Nevertheless, these studies examined the ESOL environment in isolation and therefore did not investigate the ESOL students' position in the wider context of the FE college, or their attempts to build friendships with students from other courses. The present study intends to open up this region and explore the interaction and intermixing of refugee ESOL students with students of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds within the ESOL and wider FE environment.

Another study that aimed to explore the educational experiences of adult ESOL learners and to investigate the barriers to access and progression they encountered within the post-compulsory education system found that ESOL had a marginal status in comparison with other courses (Bellis 2000). This was an effect of funding and organisational factors, as well as the culture within adult education and ESOL subculture, associated with literacy and basic skills as opposed to the higher status of academic English. The study followed a mixed-method case study approach and gathered data through a survey with education providers, participant observation in classrooms, document search and interviews with ESOL learners and education providers. The qualitative findings showed that ESOL students were a heterogeneous

group of learners who nevertheless were often highly qualified professionals, and felt frustrated at being unable to make use of their qualifications and experience in Britain. The quantitative findings also indicated that ESOL students were marginalised within the system, as a result of the culture of adult education, as well as assumptions that students were primarily in need of basic skills and compensatory forms of education. The author concluded that there was a need firstly for a holistic approach in the education of ESOL students, and secondly for embedded antiracist strategies within the educational management policies, addressing the ways in which provision can affect the educational opportunities of ESOL students.

Bellis' findings highlight that although the ESOL environment can act as a site that fosters socialisation between ESOL students, the socialisation of ESOL students within the wider context of the FE college is questionable, often reinforcing the marginalisation of ESOL within the wider FE context. Further, the ESOL students' lack of advanced English language skills and cultural knowledge may affect their willingness to develop friendships with students from other courses. Since Bellis' study, attempts have been made by the government to improve ESOL provision by standardising ESOL across colleges and through the introduction of learning materials that emphasise citizenship issues, aiming to encourage ESOL students' familiarisation with British culture and way of life. Through these changes, it is expected that once refugees have become fluent in English and learn about British culture they will integrate better within their local communities.

2.5 Summary

This chapter has argued that recent changes in ESOL provision are strongly interrelated with refugee integration policies and come under the wider policy agenda for the promotion of social cohesion, under which the government has adopted a deficit approach towards refugees. The chapter has demonstrated that ESOL provision is a key element of the refugee integration strategy by reviewing parallel policy developments in both policy areas. In addition, it was illustrated that the re-organisation of ESOL provision was a recognition of the problematic nature of past provision. Finally, it was highlighted that the ESOL/FE college environment can act as a site that fosters

socialisation and relationship building between students. However, what still remains unaccounted for and is of major interest to this study is whether the changes in ESOL provision address the future education and employment opportunities of refugee students as part of their socio-economic integration; the identification of the reasons that influence refugees to seek friendships within ESOL; the ways in which existing relationships outside the ESOL environment, such as the family or ethnic social network, enable or obstruct refugees to build strong relationships within ESOL; and the ways in which ESOL friendships impact on refugees' lives in Britain. Attention is turned next to the exploration of the social networks and social capital for refugees.

Chapter 3: The social networks and social capital of refugees

3.1 Introduction

This study deploys the concept of social capital as an analytical tool that will assist in the exploration of the building of relationships within the ESOL/FE college environment and their impact on the process of integration for refugees. As was demonstrated in chapter 2, the ESOL environment can provide refugees opportunities for socialisation with other students and can act as a facilitator for relationship building (Carey 2004, Hodge *et al.* 2005). However, the dynamics that enable the formation of these relationships, as well as the amount of time needed for these to develop into strong friendships which are maintained outside the college environment, is not known. The concept of social capital as an analytical tool will assist in the exploration of the building of these relationships, and their impact on the process of integration. Specifically, the social network formed in the ESOL/FE college environment that potentially enables the formation of inter-ethnic relationships may provide refugees with resources that will allow them to address their needs and assist them in identifying ways to further their socio-economic integration. Thus, social capital is conceptualised as a resource deriving from a social network, such as a network formed in the ESOL/FE college environment, which allows one or more members of the network, in this case refugee ESOL students, to access different sectors of society, such as welfare services and employment. Once refugees have gained access to these sectors, they will have increased opportunities to further their social mobility, accumulate economic capital and power, or be active in the development of strong relations in their local community. In this sense, social capital, deriving from the relationships built in the ESOL/FE college network, allows refugees to access society and therefore, further their socio-economic integration.

This chapter sets out to explore the role of the ethnic social network in the socio-economic adjustment of refugees in the host country, and to critically examine social capital theory and review its use as a theoretical concept and research tool in refugee studies. It is argued that social relationships can provide individual refugees with social

capital, which can be used to further their socio-economic participation in the host country.

3.2 The social networks of refugees

The presence of an ethnic community network in the host society can potentially play an important role in refugees' reception and settlement, as it can offer protection against external prejudice, economic opportunities, a group identity and a network of relationships and associations (Stein 1981, Portes 1995), based on shared culture, ethnicity and language. Nevertheless, once refugees have entered the ESOL/FE college environment and start to develop relationships with others in this environment (or ESOL/FE network), they can improve their English language level and can access information about ways of improving their lives in Britain from other members of this network. Subsequently, acquisition of the English language and access to information may constitute valuable resources that, theoretically, can initiate the process of their socio-economic participation into British society, by providing refugees with social (e.g. opportunities for socialisation with the British and people from other ethnic or linguistic backgrounds) and economic (e.g. for human capitalisation, education, training and employment) opportunities outside the boundaries of their ethnic social network.

A social network, such as the ethnic community network, can be generally described as a group of people with a degree of mutual awareness and recognition. They are connected in relationships that might be based on acquaintanceship, friendship or kinship, and support each other. Boyd (1989) argues that social networks are central in migration analysis, because they become the link between sending and receiving countries and can explain the continuation of migration (Boyd 1989:661). Alexander *et al.* (2004, 2007) have highlighted that, for some immigrant communities, the term 'community' is constructed around the network of family, friends and the ethnic social network, which can act as the main resource for social support. According to Portes (1995), a social network can be a source for the acquisition of scarce means, such as capital and information, and can link individuals within and across communities and organisations. More importantly, it can influence individuals' goals. The social network as a concept has been extensively theorised by Castells (1996), who defined it

as a set of interconnected nodes that are *'able to expand without limits integrating new nodes as long as they share the same communication nodes'* (Castells 1996:470). The social network's performance depends on its ability to facilitate communication between its components, and allow the presence of common interests between the goals of its components and of the network itself. Vertovec (2001) argues that Castells (1996) uses networks in order to describe the dominant organisational form of the information economy; thus, his approach does not emphasise the interpersonal relationships of individuals in a network and the subsequent circulation of the network's resources.

A further insight into the function of social networks within the organisational structure, which formed the basis for later theoretical development of social capital (Lin 2001), is provided by Granovetter (1973). Focusing on individuals' differential access to resources embedded in a network, Granovetter (1973) identified that there are strong and weak ties between individuals in a network. The strong ties allow for greater group cohesion, but the weak ties may allow greater distribution of resources, as they can act as bridges, enabling individuals to make connections with others beyond their social circle. These ideas have been influential in the development of refugee integration strategies (Home Office 2005a, UK Border Agency 2009), including the emphasis on the concept of building bridges across refugee communities and their local communities, in order to enhance social cohesion in British society.

Research examining the impact of social networks for refugees' lives in Britain has been scarce. Existing studies have mostly concentrated on the use of social networks as sources of information for asylum destinations, on aspects of refugee settlement and on the organisational capacity of refugee ethnic communities. Nevertheless, these studies identified the reliance of refugees on their ethnic, formal or informal, social networks. For instance, it has been identified that social networks are the most trusted source of information for asylum destinations (Koser and Pinkerton 2001); the presence of a social network in a host country can influence refugees' choice of destination (Robinson and Segrott 2002); and can help asylum-seekers overcome obstacles in entering a host country (Crisp 1999). Nevertheless, it has also been shown that the number of asylum-seekers with family networks present in Western European countries has declined (Gilbert and Koser 2006). Also, refugees increasingly obtain information about an asylum destination from networks of weak ties, rather than family networks (Collyer

2005). Regarding refugee settlement in Britain, early government-funded research, examining the extent to which Vietnamese refugees were able to access public services, identified that they sought help and advice from "their relatives, friends and ethnic community associations, rather than from professional services (Duke and Marshall 1995, Duke 1996). Similarly, a further study examining refugees' experiences of accessing housing and employment found that refugees' friendships in Britain tended to be formed with their co-ethnics (95%), rather than British people (54%), as the experience of discrimination and harassment increased with refugees' contacts with the British population (Carey-Wood *et al.* 1995).

These indications were further examined by Bloch (1997, 2000, 2002, see also section 2.4.1), who explored the role of ethnic social networks in relation to refugees' social settlement. She found that the presence of ethnic social networks influenced the choice of destination for asylum and the locality for residence. For the Tamils and Somalis, the choice of Britain as an asylum destination was largely determined by the presence of family networks, and they were more likely to regard Britain as home than the Congolese, who did not have a choice in their destination. In addition, the majority of refugees chose to settle in Newham because of the presence of family and friends in the area, as well as ethnic community activity. All ethnic groups found it easy to make friends from their own communities, but difficult to meet people from the wider society (only 2% had British friends), even if their English skills were advanced. Only the Congolese found it easier to meet English people and even attended English language classes because they had opportunities to meet new people. Most refugees had received help from their community organisations and some acted as volunteers for their organisations.

An ethnographic study aiming to identify the social networks of refugees living in Britain and to investigate their role in refugees' lives was conducted by Williams (2006). This study included 15 refugee participants living in a small city in the Midlands who were followed during a three-year period. Its findings highlighted that the circumstances of individual refugees influenced the form and usability of their social networks. These networks were found to be geographically located in the city in which they lived, in other locations in Britain, in their home country, and in other countries. The maintenance of ties and contacts with these networks was driven by refugees'

individual needs and by cultural traditions and practices. Neither distance nor the cost (e.g. for telephoning) for maintaining contact were problematic. In addition, the more established refugees were able to use their networks for the reproduction of cultural practices, such as arranging marriages. It was further identified that refugees' transnational networks, such as relatives and co-ethnic friends living in other countries, and their networks of weak ties, which included the acquaintances they made in their locality, all had a major influence over individual refugees' lives, as they provided them with support, the sharing of information and knowledge, and helped them to re-establish or create new identities. The author concluded that although networks of family and friends were able to provide refugees with emotional support, their transnational networks and networks of weak ties may be more effective in helping them to achieve their aspirations in the host country. Moreover, the networks of weak ties differed from other networks in the fact that they had a low durability.

Bloch's study indicated refugees' attitudes towards life in Britain, demonstrated that the existence of solidarity between refugees from particular ethnic groups was formalised in their organisational capacity as an ethnic community, and showed that pre-existing ethnic communities influence refugees' choices of asylum and settlement. Bloch's findings contradict Kunz's (1973, 1981) push and pull model in that only migrants are being pulled by a host country, and supports Richmond's (1993) and Staring's (1998) position (see section 1.3). In addition, Williams (2006) illustrated that the reasons behind refugees' preference to mobilise their social networks for adjustment into the host country were related to a combination of trust in the networks of family and friends and cultural practices.

However, the exploration of the effects of a social network's ethnic identity and cultural norms to the formation of a group identity, as well as its impact on attitudes towards life in Britain, were beyond the scope of Bloch's and William's studies. Specifically, Bloch (1997, 2000, 2002) approached social networks as being the result of kinship ties and shared ethnicity, language and culture. However, the ways in which exile affects the organisational capacity of refugee ethnic groups were not intensively explored. Similarly, although Williams (2006) investigated the role of refugees' social networks in their integration, she did not explore the dynamics that enable the ethnic social network's formalisation into, for example, a refugee community organisation. Her study

approached social network analysis from the individual refugee perspective, without examining the evolution of the social network into a community, and its role in refugee integration. For instance, ethnographic research investigating refugee ethnic community organisations in Britain has highlighted that the formation or not of a refugee ethnic community organisation is affected by an individual community's history and identity (Griffiths 1999, 2002), as well as by the refugee reception policies of a host country (Wahlbeck 1997, 1999, Kelly 2001, 2003). In addition, the character of a refugee community organisation reflects to a large extent the political struggle in the home country, and the community organisation may itself be part of a wider transnational network with a shared ideology and cause (Wahlbeck 1997, 1999).

Although Bloch (1997, 2000, 2002) established how ethnic social networks influenced the choice of asylum destination and locality, and highlighted the social connections of refugees, her study did not identify the reasons behind refugees' choices to interact with their co-ethnics, or the opportunities or constraints of the network with regard to the social actions of refugees. By contrast, Williams (2006) demonstrated that the interaction of refugees with their ethnic social networks was partly a cultural practice deriving from the need to preserve ethnic identity. However, she did not explore further the ways in which the ethnic social network might influence individual refugees' goals and future plans. In relation to this, Robinson Finnan (1981) identified that the community bond offered by the ethnic social network compensates individuals for their material and social losses resulting from the refugee experience, encouraging them to develop a group identity based on the acceptance of their socio-economic situation. Similarly, Al-Rasheed (1992) showed that individual refugees' life in the host country is affected by their ethnic social networks' ideology, their perception of the refugee experience and future aspirations. Nevertheless, the strength of Bloch's and Williams' is their exploratory and comparative nature, as they effectively established for the first time in the British context that settlement of refugees takes on different forms for different ethnic groups, and that the presence of ethnic social networks critically impacts on refugees' social settlement.

However, what is of major interest to the present study is that the findings of these studies imply that refugees do seek to form relationships with people outside their ethnic social network, and that English language classes are regarded by some refugees

as settings that offer such opportunities. In turn, social relationships or social networks can provide individual refugees with access to information and opportunities that would otherwise not be available, and that may be used to further their social integration. These opportunities and access to information can potentially constitute social capital. Before moving on to analyse the form social capital can take as a resource used for refugees' socio-economic adjustment in the host country, it is necessary to review the key theoretical developments of social capital. The next section will present and analyse the developments in social capital theory and review the controversies that have surrounded its conceptualisation and operationalisation. This will help provide clarification and specification of the use of the term *social capital* in this study.

3.3 Social capital theory

In recent years social capital theory has been extensively used in contemporary sociological research and related social science disciplines. In general, social capital can be described as a resource that derives from social networks that are characterised by trust. The first appearance of social capital as a concept can be traced back to the early twentieth century, where its emphasis was on aspects of community development (Putnam 2000:19). The concept resurfaced in the 1960s and 1970s in urban studies and economics, and entered the sociological field through the influential works of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu and American sociologist James Coleman. Since the 1990s, the deployment of social capital has been expanded across the social sciences, and influential work includes the work of Burt (1992, 2000, 2002), who demonstrated that *structural holes*, which describe the absence of ties (Portes 1998), or simply holes in the social structure, are created by the weaker connections between social networks and create a competitive advantage for an individual whose network spans holes. The work of Fukuyama (1992, in Schuller *et al.* 2000) on trust approached social capital as a determinant of the level of trust embedded in societies. The work of Lin and colleagues (2001, in Kadushin 2004) on social stratification examined the relationship between social capital and status attainment, and found an association between higher social capital and higher social status. In addition, social capital as a concept has been used as a research tool by international organisations, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and by National Statistical Services throughout

developing and industrialised societies, including in Britain (Grootaert and van Bastelaer 2002, Office of National Statistics 2003).

Despite the popularity and extensive applicability of social capital theory, there has been controversy regarding its definition and operationalisation. According to Portes (2000), the source of this controversy lies '*with its application to different types of problems and its use in theories involving different units of analysis*' (Portes 2000:2), which may be an effect of its rapid and parallel expansion in the social sciences. Below, the key developments of social capital theory are presented and discussed.

One of the original theoretical developments of social capital was provided by Pierre Bourdieu in the early 1980s. Bourdieu (1997) concentrated on the interaction of the forms of capital and presents social capital as one of the three fundamental guises of capital. In his essay '*The Forms of Capital*' he identified the other two forms as economic and cultural capital, and outlined that all three are convertible and institutionalisable. While social and cultural capital may be converted under certain conditions to economic capital, and can be institutionalised in the form of titles of nobility and educational qualifications respectively, economic capital is directly convertible into money and institutionalised in property rights. Also, he equated the different types of capital with power.

Bourdieu defined social capital as '*the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition...which provides each of its members with the backing of collectively-owned capital*' (Bourdieu 1997:51). With this definition, it is implied that a social network is the product of individual or collective investment strategies, which are driven by the establishment and reproduction of usable relationships. The relationship itself is reproduced through durable subjective or institutional obligations (such as friendship or rights), and the solidarity that characterises the relationship between members in a network is consciously or unconsciously motivated by material or symbolic profit. Thus, social capital is created through the investment in long-term relationships and reproduced through exchanges between the actors involved in these relationships, where recognition is constantly affirmed and reaffirmed between them. Within these relationships, the volume of social capital for a member depends firstly, on the size of the network that he or she can

mobilise, and secondly, on the amount of capital (in its three forms) of the network's members.

A second theoretical development of social capital was provided by the American sociologist James Coleman. Coleman (1988a, 1988b), aiming to identify how rational or purposive action affects social organisation, used social capital as a conceptual tool to provide a post hoc explanation, together with the concept of human capital²⁵, for the relationship between educational achievement and social inequality. Like Bourdieu, he regarded social capital as co-existing with financial, physical and human capital. Physical capital is embodied in an observable and material form, human capital is embodied in skills and knowledge acquired through education, and social capital inheres in relationships among persons. Like physical and human capital, social capital is productive and specific to certain activities. However, what makes social capital different from other forms of capital is its fundamentally different position to purposive action. Unlike physical and human capital, which primarily benefit individuals, social capital as a public good primarily benefits all who are part of a given social structure, and its value cannot be captured by individuals. Thus, social capital is created or destroyed through '*changes in the relations among persons that facilitate action*' (Coleman 1988a:S100), as well as through long-term changes in social structure, as they cause a shift of rights from some individuals to others. Hence, its form and facilitation depend on the nature of a given social structure.

Coleman defined social capital as '*a particular kind of resource available to an actor*', which is '*defined by its function*' and consists of some aspects of social structure that facilitate certain actions to actors within that structure (1988a:S98). This function, as identified by social capital, is the value of aspects of social structure that can be used by actors to pursue their interests. Thus, he identifies three forms of social capital: in its first form, social capital is constituted in the expectations and trustworthiness of the social environment and the extent to which obligations are fulfilled; in its second form, the concept refers to the benefits of the potential of information exchange between actors; and lastly, a powerful form of social capital can be created through effective

²⁵ The concept of human capital was described as the skills and abilities of people that increase their productivity (Coleman 1988b).

norms, that, on the one hand can facilitate opportunities, and on the other, can constrain the actions of members of a social network.

It was the work of American political scientist Robert Putnam (Putnam *et al.* 1993, Putnam 1996, 2000) that entered the concept of social capital into the mainstream political discourse. Building on Coleman's conceptual framework (Portes 1998), the concept of social capital became for Putnam an indicator of civic engagement in society, transforming it in this way from a public good to a national property. Influenced by Tocqueville's 19th century writings about democracy in America, he measured social capital by voting patterns, newspaper readerships, and participation in sports and cultural associations, and then traced patterns of traditions of civic involvement. Putnam did not regard social capital as a resource arising through predetermined actions by individuals in social relationships, but as features of social life itself, defining it as the '*connections among individuals – networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them*' (Putnam 2000:19). In this definition, he recognised that social networks are valuable in that they involve mutual obligations to their members that must be sustained through the norm of reciprocity. In turn, reciprocity is distinguished in balanced reciprocity, which points to a simultaneous exchange of goods with the same value, and generalised reciprocity, which refers to a continuous and imbalanced exchange based on mutual expectations of repayment. Essential to reciprocity is the trust between members of a network. A society bearing the characteristics of a dense network can reduce opportunistic incentives within its structure, and reciprocity between members of a dense network can facilitate cooperation that can benefit all members of such society. In this respect, social capital becomes a positive outcome of community relationships.

This short review describing key theoretical development of social capital has highlighted the similarity between Bourdieu's and Coleman's approaches, where they are focusing on social capital as a resource for individuals, versus Putnam's different theoretical position, emphasising the development of strong community relations. It has indicated that social capital theory has been applied in different sociological contexts, aiming to provide explanatory insights into different theoretical problems.

In particular, Bourdieu's analysis of capital aided him in his analysis of social structure and hidden, structural dynamics that do not originate in the economic function of a

society per se, but initiate the struggle between social classes in their accumulation of capital and power. Although this analysis was informed by a neo-Marxist framework, in antithesis to Marx, Bourdieu emphasises that "power is not accessible through accumulation of economic capital only, but also through culturally valued characteristics, such as aesthetics, charisma or honour, and their articulation with economic capital. This position is evident in the obligatory nature of giving and returning resources within a social relationship as a cultural practice; the fact that in social exchanges in networks a resource can be returned in a different form at a non specified time is determined by cultural and not institutionalised rules. The obligatory nature of return refers to the honour of those involved in the exchange. This indicates that Bourdieu's presentation of social capital follows the tradition of Mauss's classical study of the *Gift* (Mauss 1954, first published in French in 1950, Smart 1993) (in that resources must be reciprocated). In this study, Mauss compared the underlying forces of the institution of gift giving in the social structures of primitive societies. He showed the obligatory nature of the practice of receiving and returning gifts within a system of reciprocity, in which economic transaction is not central, but engages the honour of those involved. If the cycle of gift exchanges breaks, it will affect the economic function and threaten the private and public well being of these societies. In other words, the engagement of gift exchange accounts not only for socio-economic stability, but also highlights the symbolic nature of reciprocity that is motivated by religious, moral and economic factors. In addition, Smart (1993:396-397) argues that an unreciprocated gift will create a gift debt that will increase the social status of the expectant recipient, as it affects the honour of those involved in the exchange. Consequently, through Mauss's perspective, Bourdieu shows with his theoretical development of social capital how cultural practices and sociability are used and reinvented by ruling classes for reproducing and balancing power.

In contrast, Coleman's use of social capital focuses on the potential success of individuals which is only achievable under certain practices and conditions that are related with the socialisation of children and families. In his attempt to account for social inequality, he shifts the focus of attention from social capital to the social structure, whose openness or closure determines the inclusion or exclusion of individuals and their subsequent success in life. Success, in turn, although not explicitly specified by Coleman, is perceived to mean the upward social mobility of those who

possess both human and social capital. This is an idea that implies a competition between individuals to rise across social strata and therefore, social capital is inclusive towards some individuals and exclusionary towards others, so that the balance of economic and social organisation is maintained. In addition, although Coleman identified and explained the nature of various forms of social capital as resources inherent in the structure of social relationships, he did not sufficiently explain the dynamics that determine the ways these resources are obtainable by individuals within a social network.

Putnam in turn, having redefined social capital from being a resource related to individuals to becoming that of communities and nations, focused on the theoretical expansion of social capital as a positive attribute of democratic communities. He accepted that social capital has various forms and uses, which he identified as intensive and multistranded, or anonymous and single-stranded networks, which can be informally or formally organised and serve private, public or both purposes. He explained that the benefits from investment in social capital can serve the interest of outsiders, as well as those of the investor. Nevertheless, he also recognised that social capital can have negative consequences to those outside the network, referring to the exploitation of social capital for antisocial purposes by some networks. In addition, following Granovetter's (1973) theoretical description of the bridging functions of social networks, Putnam distinguishes between two major forms of social capital: that of *bridging social capital*, which indicates an inclusive network that can generate broader identities and reciprocity between its members, and of *bonding social capital*, which indicates an exclusive or closed network, where some kinds of bridging social capital may discourage the formation of bonding social capital and vice versa. There is a similarity between Putnam's and Bourdieu's analysis of social capital, in that it is accumulated because of solidarity or reciprocity between members of a network, with the difference that solidarity imposes the exchange of resources as a cultural practice, and reciprocity is the natural driving force behind strong and civic communities.

In summary, despite the differences in the key theoretical developments of social capital, as a research concept it has been used to serve the examination of different theoretical problems in different social contexts. As a consequence, this parallel theoretical development of social capital has been the source of disagreement with

respect to the conceptualisation and operationalisation of social capital. Before the working definition of social capital for the present study is presented, it is necessary to turn attention to these controversies.

3.3.1 *Controversies surrounding social capital theory*

The multiple applicability and conceptualisation of social capital gave rise to controversies surrounding its conceptualisation and operationalisation. Specifically, there is caution concerning the measurability of social capital, as its context-specific definition does not allow for the development of a universal, standard measurement tool (Van Deth 2003). Although Putnam's use of social capital as a measurable indicator of civicness created an enthusiastic following leading to its use as a tool for community participation and social cohesion, this approach was nevertheless widely criticised. Specifically, Portes (1998, 2000) argues that Putnam drew on Coleman's notion that community ties can benefit individuals and thus diverted the focus of social capital from representing benefits for individuals to becoming an attribute of communities and nations, without explicitly theorising this diversion. This, in turn, gave rise to the present confusion that surrounds the concept with regard to the absence of a universal definition and differential operationalisation. Subsequently, Coleman operationalised the concept by extending the scope of social capital beyond the relationships of elite groups, and by demonstrating the ways in which social capital relates to aspects of stratification.

The application and use of the social capital framework as developed by Putnam to account for social cohesion and inclusive societal practices tends to underestimate the power of state control and the structure of social inequalities. Putnam has treated social capital as a given characteristic of social networks, resting on the norm of reciprocity to account for its mechanical use and circulation as a solution to social control and social injustice. This approach, however, leads to the danger of disregarding the *downside* of social capital. Portes and Landolt (1996:4) argue that '*the one-sided picture of social capital produces a series of tautologies, truisms and stereotypes*', placing a strong emphasis on the positive effects of social capital. In addition, they point out that the bias in seeing social capital as a solution of social problems prohibits the discovery of

its negative effects. Hence, social capital could lose its meaning if resources that are commanded through social networks are not distinguished from their quality. Although Putnam has acknowledged that social capital may have negative effects on outsiders of a network, such as its exploitation by antisocial groups or power elites, he has concentrated on identifying ways of maximising the positive outcomes for a community deriving from a substantial stock of social capital, rather than on the concept's potential to highlight the social 'downside'.

Schuller *et al.* (2000) argue that one of the key merits of social capital as a concept is, firstly, the shifting of analytical focus from individuals to patterns of social relations, and secondly, the reinsertion of issues, such as trust, reciprocity and community building into social discourse. They point out that social capital can be conceptualised in three different ways: through the explicit use of the term as developed by one theory; through the use of elements of the concept, such as trust or social networks; and as a combination of all theories related to social capital. Schuller *et al.* (2000) are cautious about the measurement of social capital and question the coherence and validity of its measurable indicators. They conclude by referring to the heuristic quality of social capital as an analytical concept, which enables the exploration of new directions and strengthens the case for complex and multidimensional investigations.

Having reviewed the theoretical development of social capital and the controversies surrounding its conceptualisation and operationalisation, attention is turned to the development of a working definition for social capital for the present study.

3.4 Defining social capital for the present study

The previous sections highlighted the role of social networks in refugee populations' migration and settlement process, and the solidarity and trust existing in ethnic social networks in the host country. They also reviewed social capital theory development to show that social capital theory can provide explanations about the impact of social networks on individuals' social mobility and accumulation of capital and power in general, as well as the development of strong community relations. In addition, the review of social capital theory has indicated the conceptual considerations in

understanding that social capital, deriving from social networks, can be utilised as an educational (Coleman 1988) or potential economic (Bourdieu 1997) resource. However, the creation of social capital also depends on the quality of relationships between individuals, and its value may be limited outside a specific social network. A key focus of this study is to examine the possibility that these resources deriving from the ESOL/FE college network can potentially enable refugees to further their social integration into British society.

A central objective of this study is, therefore, the exploration of the building of social relationships between refugee and other ESOL students participating in multiethnic classes through the processes of English language attainment, and the effects of these relationships on their socio-economic integration. In order to accomplish this objective, the present study deploys the perspectives of social capital theory in order to capture the processes in which social relationships can or cannot accommodate a specific outcome. Examples of such outcomes include the ESOL network's capacity to provide information about accessing services, including education and employment in Britain. Thus, the present study regards social capital as *a resource available to individuals that is created and maintained through social relationships between individuals, and these relationships' characteristics and structure determine the form and effects of social capital for individuals*. A social relationship can be formal or informal and based on kinship, ethnicity and first language, common aspirations and goals or any other characteristic shared by a group of individuals. In turn, the type and role of a social relationship in the creation and maintenance of a form of social capital is crucial, because the trust and reciprocity, or their absence, that characterise relationships, determine the possibility of exchange of help, information, favours and other benefits.

Having conceptualised and defined social capital for the present study, attention is turned to the use of social capital theory and conceptualisation in refugee studies.

3.5 Social capital as a resource for refugees and its effects on their socio-economic adjustment in the host country .

The previous sections reviewed the theoretical development of social capital and its application to the analysis of processes of non-economic forms of exchange within networks, the utilisation of social relationships for economic and social success, and the potential use of relationships for the improvement of community relations. In addition, the rationale for the use and conceptualisation of social capital were presented, and a working definition of social capital for the present study was developed. Further, the present study intends to deploy key features of the theory and conceptualisation of social capital as an exploratory tool for the identification of the possible social effects of participation in social networks on refugees' lives. For this purpose, this section intends firstly to explore how refugees may use their relationships to create and use social capital in the host country, and secondly to identify the effects of social capital on the process of socio-economic adjustment. Importantly, the analysis of the studies presented below is limited to investigating social capital deriving from refugees' ethnic social networks, as the participation of refugees in inter-ethnic networks has not been investigated. Nevertheless, these studies highlight the way in which social capital can be utilised by individual refugees to improve their lives in the host country.

3.5.1 Social capital as a resource for refugees' socio-economic adjustment

In the essay '*Are refugees social capitalists?*' Loizos (2000) demonstrates the ways in which social capital, described as networks, shared values and trust, can be used by refugees to aid their socio-economic adjustment in the host country. Through the comparative analysis of four ethnographic studies to three refugee groups' uprooting and settlement during 1890-1925, Loizos aimed to clarify the understanding of the process of socio-economic adjustment of refugees in the host society through social capital theory. The three refugee groups were a) Christian Greeks from Asia Minor who settled in Greece, b) Armenians of south-east Turkey who settled in Cyprus and c) Muslims from Crete, who settled in Turkey. His analysis highlights that the creation or conservation of social capital acted as a substitute for basic economic support. Particularly, groups of refugees tended to maintain contact during flight and relocation,

and the family served as the preferred unit of economic cooperation. Social capital was created or conserved through the preservation of traditional family attitudes and marriage patterns, maintenance of kinship ties, continuity of identity, customs and values, and the creation of schools, churches and cultural clubs that helped to nurture the distinctiveness of these groups.

Loizos's essay demonstrates how, after the initial shock following flight, refugees make use of their family and friendship networks in their socio-economic adjustment as a substitute for absent state economic support. In this way, Loizos shows that the preservation of cultural traditions through ethnic social networks enables refugees to use their resources for their socio-economic benefit, and to adjust to their social surroundings. Hence, forms of social capital may not be easily portable, but its creation or conservation through cultural practices is possible in the host society over time.

By contrast, McMichael and Manderson's ethnographic study investigating the role of social capital as a resource, deriving from ethnic networks in the socio-economic adjustment of refugees in the host country, identified that Somali women in Melbourne, Australia, experienced difficulties in creating or preserving social capital, and that its absence affected their adaptation negatively (McMichael and Manderson 2004). Specifically, they explored the relationship between the loss of Somali women's social relationships through civil war and displacement, and their distress and sadness. The study drew on social networks theory and social capital theory, the latter defined as a resource deriving from social relationships to explore the erosion of social relationships, and its effects on everyday life and well-being. They identified that war can have detrimental effects upon trust and reciprocity, and, subsequently, on social capital formation. Thus, social capital, referring here to lost relationships, only partially explained the women's continued sense of displacement. The social networks among Somali women in Melbourne were problematic in that they restricted their capacity to create and use social capital; that is, to use their social relationships in order to enhance their socio-economic settlement in Australia, because they were restricted by mistrust, occurring as a result of civil war and displacement, and by their preoccupation with memories of social worlds in Somalia. The study concluded that social capital is neither portable, nor easily established on migration, because through the erosion of reciprocity, trust and community cohesion by war it is not reformed upon resettlement. The

conflicts and hostilities that provoked displacement and migration continue to inform social relationships after resettlement.

McMichael and Manderson's findings confirm the argument of DeSantis (2001) about refugees' ambivalent position to identify themselves and their sentiment towards their home country or the host country (see section 1.4), and that trust is an essential ingredient for the creation of social capital (Fukuyama 1992, in Schuller *et al.* 2000). In turn, the erosion of trust has been identified as a consequence of indiscriminate violence occurring during civil war²⁶ (Kalyvas 2004). This experience leads to the mistrust of refugees towards others, including their co-ethnics, during adjustment in the host country (Hynes 2003), which in turn prohibits them to build social capital to be used for their integration. Seen from this perspective, the creation or conservation of social capital depends not only on common identity, culture, ideology and goals, but also on the history of a social network and on the experiences of its individual members. This means that some refugees may not seek interaction and assistance from their ethnic social networks, which in turn could affect relationship building in the ESOL/FE environment.

3.5.2 *The role of social and human capital in refugees' social mobility*

Two studies that investigated in different ways the role of human and social capital in the social mobility of refugees in the North American context are presented below. The first study, carried out by Zhou and Bankston (1994, 1998, 2001), explored the ways in which social capital, defined as '*closed systems of social networks inherent in the structure of relations*' (p.824) and identified in the form of immigrant culture, contributed to adaptation in school and in post-educational upward mobility of second generation adolescent Vietnamese refugees in eastern New Orleans, USA. It was established that ethnicity can be utilised as a form of social capital because the adjusted cultural orientations of immigrant or refugee populations may serve as a resource, rather than a disadvantage. The findings suggested that students with strong adherence to

²⁶ Somalia experiences a prolonged period of civil war that broke out in 1991. The reasons behind the civil war outbreak were conflict between clans and a competition about economic and political resources (Griffiths 2002).

traditional family values, strong commitment to a work ethic, and a high degree of personal involvement in the ethnic community, tended disproportionately to receive high grades, to have definite college plans, and to score high on academic orientation. In addition, it was found that social capital, in the form of strong positive immigrant cultural orientations, could promote value conformity and constructive forms of behaviour. They concluded that social capital was crucial and more important than human capital for successful adaptation to school and employment of second generation refugees. In a secondary analysis of the data (Zhou and Bankston 2001), this time examining the coping strategies of girls in accommodating control from their family networks, they found that traditional attitudes led families to exercise greater pressure over their daughters than their sons in terms of educational performance. While obedience and achievement were considered as the most desired qualities in a daughter, parents perceived education as a means of enhancing opportunities and thereby improving their daughters' bargaining positions with high status husbands within traditional gender roles. Nevertheless, the emphasis on Vietnamese American women's educational success was not caused by a renegotiation of gender roles, but through the socio-economic demands and career opportunities of the host country.

The second study investigated the impact of human and social capital on quality of employment of refugees in Alberta, Canada (Lamba 2003). Social capital was defined as the aid received by social networks and was measured as the proximity of close family ties, the presence of extra-familial ties and the impact of social relationships in finding a job. The findings indicated that refugees used their family and ethnic networks as resources in search of employment, but were constrained by structural barriers, such as employment discrimination and time invested in English language and other training, as a high proportion found out that their human capital had a small or no value in the Canadian labour market. The study concluded that although the family and ethnic networks were aiding refugees in their employment adjustment, these ties were not sufficient enough to compensate for their downward occupational mobility. In particular, family and ethnic group ties did not have the power to overcome restrictions, such as regulations regarding the recognition of foreign credentials, and therefore their use was limited. Thus, refugees, especially females, may be at a social capital disadvantage, as the closure of family networks, invoked by family responsibilities,

limit women's advancement in employment – a negative effect of social capital as identified by Portes (1998).

There is consensus in both studies that social capital plays a more important role than human capital, in the form of qualifications and professional experience, in the employment of refugees. These findings, however, are contradicted if the same focus is applied on *immigrant*, as distinct from the *refugee* context. For instance, Marger (2004), investigating the use of human and social capital in Canadian immigrant businessmen, showed that immigrants with intentions of entrepreneurship prior to migration rely more on their human rather than their social capital while in Canada. This difference indicates not only differential opportunities available to migrants and refugees in a host country, but also that the refugee experience affects the lives of refugees in the host country negatively, because of their inadequate preparation for the migration process.

What is of interest for the present study is firstly, the impact of refugees' attachment to their family or ethnic community, and secondly, the psychological impact of trauma to the building of social relationships in the ESOL/FE college environment. As outlined above, the family or ethnic social network may restrict individual refugees' willingness or opportunities to interact with people outside these networks. Therefore, existing family and ethnic social capital is regarded as a factor that might negatively impact on the building of new relationships. However, the absence of ethnic social capital might positively impact on the building of new relationships, if individual refugees' psychological state allows them to want to rebuild their lives in Britain.

3.5.3 *Social capital and refugee community organisations*

A study investigating the changing position of refugee community organisations in a period of radical legislative change regarding asylum was carried out in England by Griffiths and colleagues (Griffiths *et al.* 2005, Zetter *et al.* 2005). This study explored the impact of asylum-seeker dispersal on the formation of refugee community organisations through the critical examination of bridging and bonding social capital (as developed by Putnam, see section 3.1) as an explanatory tool. Social capital was defined as a metaphor for the material and symbolic benefits deriving from participation

in social networks. Interviews and participant observations were carried out with case workers from about 40 refugee community organisations in the West Midlands, London, Liverpool and Manchester. The study found that bridging social capital through collaborative efforts between established refugee community organisations was commonplace in London. However, the creation of refugee community organisations in new localities as an effect of asylum-seeker dispersal was a response to the crisis of exclusion of asylum-seekers and not that of civicness. There was little evidence of linking and bridging social capital as explaining current forms of associational organisation among asylum-seekers. Rather, informal networks were more effective in building bridges between refugee organisations. The study concluded with a reconception of newly created refugee community organisations as fragile social networks, compared to established inclusive organisational structures. Further, formation of social capital in refugee communities is perceived as a product of crisis and social breakdown. Thus, Griffiths *et al.* (2005) argue that Putnam's perspective tends to suffer from a weak understanding of institutional constraints and structured inequalities, and question the formation of social capital and its promised positive effects, because the state level predetermines associational activity that produces social capital.

Griffiths *et al.* (2005) highlighted that that the formation of social capital for refugee community organisations in England depends to a large extent on state involvement, and that the creation of refugee community organisations in asylum-seeker dispersal areas was a response to changes – such as the short-notice, compulsory nature of dispersal – incurring through legal changes as identified by Coleman, rather than an effect of bridging social capital as argued by Putnam.

The review of social capital in refugee studies indicates that social networks based on kinship, ethnicity and culture can produce social capital if these networks are based on trust. However, the form and exchangeability that social capital is going to take is determined by a networks' ideology and identity, as well as by the host society's social structure. As the studies above show, social capital can impact on the social integration of refugees. Specifically, as a resource it may positively affect refugees' economic cooperation and well-being in the host society if there is lack of other forms of support, and may lead to refugees' integration. Nevertheless, these actions have to be supported

by the social structure. In contrast, social capital can also constrain individuals, if their aspirations and goals are different from those of their social network, or if the network is not open to external influences, as demonstrated by Lamba (2003) and Zhou and Bankston (2001). Social capital ceases to be a potential resource that may positively impact on integration if the relationships between members of a social network are based on mistrust, rather than trust, mutuality and solidarity, and if social networks are not powerful enough to overcome restrictions imposed by the social structure within which they are embedded. Thus, the social capital possessed by individual refugees may simply not be useful for the achievement of particular goals of a social network (Lamba 2003).

The studies reviewed above were primarily concerned with conceptualising the ways in which social capital derives from refugees' kinship and ethnic social networks with the potential to aid their adjustment in the host country. The extent to which, firstly, refugees are willing to develop relationships with people of a different culture, ethnicity and language, and secondly, the tensions arising from participation in the ethnic social network and a multi-ethnic network, such as the ESOL network, has not been investigated. Thirdly, it is not known if social capital, deriving from a relationship between refugees and people outside the ethnic social network, is a resource for their socio-economic adjustment in Britain. These issues constitute central rationales for developing this empirical investigation and underpin the questions this study has embarked to address.

3.6 Summary

This chapter has argued that analytical insights and focus of social capital theory can assist in the exploration of the building of relationships between refugees and others in the ESOL/FE college environment. It was demonstrated that social capital theory has been frequently used to explain the underlying dynamics which determine the function of social networks. Also, it was highlighted that while refugees' participation in their ethnic social network may ease their socio-economic adjustment in the host country,

little is known about their participation in inter-ethnic networks. Social capital is conceptualised in the present study as a potential resource deriving from refugees' social networks that is available to, and can be used by them to promote their socio-economic integration into British society. The extent to which this resource is used to further their socio-economic integration depends on individual refugees' presence of their family, their attachment to the ethnic community and their interaction with people from different ethnic backgrounds. With this conceptualisation the study aims to analyse the process of relationship building within the ESOL environment and to identify the impact of these on the refugee integration. Next, the theoretical framework of the study will be presented.

Part II: Theoretical Framework and Research Design

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework

4.1 Introduction

This chapter specifies a theoretical framework explaining the interconnectedness of refugee integration, social networks and social capital. Particularly, the chapter aims to establish an analytical connection between the areas of focus, namely ESOL provision and its relationship with the refugee integration strategy, and refugees' social networks in the host country. It argues that the analytical focus of social capital theory in the exploration of relationship building between refugee and migrant ESOL students can examine the function of the ESOL environment as a social network facilitating relationship building, and explore the quality and portability of these relationships. In this way, social capital theory can enhance our understanding of the process of refugee integration. The chapter discusses the role of ESOL provision in the British refugee integration strategy. Then, it identifies possible tensions for the individual refugee student through his/her simultaneous participation in the ethnic social network and the ESOL/College network. Further, it examines the usefulness of social capital as an analytical tool for the present study and lastly, it presents the research questions and the rationale.

4.2 The role of ESOL provision in the refugee integration strategy

Sections 1.3 and 1.4 highlighted that the difference between refugees and migrants lies in their reasons for migration, the migratory movement, refugees' and migrants' psychological state and attitudes towards migration, and its consequences on refugees' motivation for settlement in the host country. A further difference is the application of state legislation through the legal categorisation of foreigners. Bounded by obligations towards international law, the state has a commitment to treat those seeking humanitarian protection as refugees according to the Convention criteria. In practice, this means that those seeking asylum are involved in a complicated and lengthy process of proving the genuineness of their need.

At a time that has been marked by high voluntary and involuntary migratory movements across the globe (Castles and Miller 2003), the British government responds, on the one hand, to the demands of globalisation by framing acceptable migration around a highly skilled workforce (Castles 2003, TSO 2009) and, on the other hand, by restricting immigration through the tightening of border controls in order to preserve and enhance good community relations and social cohesion (Schuster and Solomos 2004). Examined from the perspective of the state, it can be argued that the controlled circulation of skilled workers from within member states of the European Union and other developed countries has been an expected and welcome effect of globalisation, while the high influx of undocumented migrants and asylum-seekers an unwanted side-effect. However, if examined from the refugee perspective, the systematic construction of some asylum claims as being non genuine, aiming at the reduction of asylum influxes into Britain, has led to refugees' marginalisation and exclusion from social life (McGhee 2005).

Since 2000 there has been a shift in British policies from border closure and employment-related social policies for refugees, to an emphasis on refugee integration as part of broader political tactics to address community cohesion (Young 2003, Schuster and Solomos 2004, see also section 2.3).

In essence, social cohesion and its transformation into social capital (based on the idea that it may constitute a resource accruing from good community relations) have been used at social policy level to highlight the importance of building connections across communities (Hulse and Stone 2007). Under these circumstances, ESOL provision was reinvented from a failing programme to structured English language and cultural knowledge provision, in order to address the weakness or the absence of connections across communities. Consequently, it has been used to contribute to the restoration of social cohesion in the long-term by strengthening socio-economic cooperation between and across communities. Parts of this political strategy have informed the introduction of requirements for the acquisition of British citizenship, such as knowledge of English, knowledge of British society and culture and an oath of allegiance (HMSO 2002). Hence, it can be argued that the government has invested in ESOL provision to enable ethnic minority populations to develop links with their local communities. In this way refugee integration is promoted through the acquisition of English language skills and

knowledge about British society and culture, as part of a broader investment in community relations.

With respect to refugees, however, it is their responsibility to acquire these socially desired skills in order to further their individual socio-economic integration by finding employment and accessing social services; and in their collective integration by building good relations with other local communities and the wider community. In other words, ESOL provision was given a major role as the key service in addressing and promoting refugee integration at the micro level, and as one of the policy mechanisms for the promotion of social cohesion between communities at the macro level. The questions that arise now are the following: To what extent and in which ways do individual refugee ESOL students regard ESOL as a resource that may initiate or further their socio-economic adjustment into British society? Do they want to, and if so, do they use this potential resource deriving from ESOL, and in which way?

Although the recent introduction of ESOL fees has resulted in decreasing enrolment numbers (see section 2.3.1), nevertheless the ESOL/FE College environment can still provide an inclusive setting for refugees. In addition, in the ESOL environment refugees have the opportunity to learn about how British society functions, as well as to socialise with people from their local community and possibly those from a different ethnic, cultural and linguistic background. In this respect, the ESOL environment becomes a resource that could be used by refugees to initiate or further the process of their integration into British society: 1) they have the opportunity to learn the English language, history and culture; 2) they can access information about services and learn how to 'work with the system', knowledge which can be used for their further education and training, employment and housing; and 3) they have the opportunity to develop social relationships with students from other nationalities or British students, and thus widen their social networks by interacting with people outside their ethnic social network.

In turn, the majority of refugees enter the ESOL environment in order to learn English in the belief that, once they become proficient in English, they will be able to access further training, education and employment. As was highlighted in section 2.4.1, however, English language attainment can be a lengthy process that partly depends on previous achievements and the motivation of refugee ESOL students, as well as on their

post-migration opportunities. The nature of language acquisition in ESOL pedagogy requires frequent verbal interaction between learners and their exposure to the cultural characteristics inherent in the language. For instance, teacher-led activities, such as role play for speaking practice, require the students to actively apply their English speaking skills in the classroom by engaging in conversation on a daily basis. Also, students are taught to apply aspects of the English language that are related to the English culture rather than the language itself, such as the word '*please*' when structuring a question (DFES 2003a, Dimitriadou 2006). This learning process enables students to engage in communication with each other by using the English language, as well as the culturally imposed rules of communication. In turn, communication in the ESOL classroom provides the opportunity for students to communicate informally outside the ESOL classroom or even the college environment. Although refugee ESOL students may socialise inside and outside the classroom for the purposes of supporting their learning, it is not known what forms refugee ESOL students' social relationships with fellow ESOL or college students take. In addition, it is not known if these relationships provide the individual refugees with resources that could be used to further their integration into British society.

In conclusion, this study examines the ESOL environment as a microcosm that is capable of providing its individual members with resources that could be used for their socio-economic well-being by helping to operate beyond the micro-society. Such an approach can analyse the effectiveness and usefulness of ESOL provision as the initiator of the refugee integration strategy, as well as identifying the motivation of refugee ESOL students towards their socio-economic adjustment and integration into British society.

4.3 The family/ethnic social network versus the ESOL/college network

As was discussed in the previous chapter, the presence of a network of family and friends in a host country strongly influences the choice of destination of spontaneous refugees. Similarly to migrants, refugees naturally want to live together with family members, because the family as a social network can give refugees a sense of belonging and provide them with the emotional support and security, enabling refugees to focus on

rebuilding their lives (Delgado-Gaitan 1994, Lamba 2001, Alexander *et al.* 2007). In addition, consistent with the refugee experience „is the loss or break-up of family because of war, imprisonment or the migration process itself. Reunification of refugee families in this sense helps refugees to get over trauma and loss they might have experienced.

Further, it has been identified in section 3.2 that the ethnic social network can provide refugees with information and guidance, as well as emotional and socio-economic support. This is supported by research on the settlement of immigrants, indicating that a high proportion are provided with economic opportunities within ethnic enclaves, able to lead their lives within the confines of the ethnic community and having limited opportunities for social mobility outside (Portes 1995, Schmitter Heisler 2000, Poros 2001, Janjuha-Jivraj 2003). In the same way as the family network, the ethnic social network is characterised by closure to outsiders and strong ties among its members. The boundaries of ethnicity are not only formed by cultural characteristics such as language, culture or religion, but also by the perception of difference set by others/outsiders within which an ethnic social network might interact (Malešević 2004). In turn, the existence of ethnic social networks in a host society is a result of kinship and friendship and their connection in space, economy and society (Aldrich and Waldinger 1990). Consequently members of an ethnic social network are not only held together by financial incentives, but are enabled by their ethnic social network to redefine their identity (Mortland 1994). Thus, at the initial stages of settlement in the host country refugees may be directed to interact with their ethnic social network because of linguistic and cultural constraints. Further, with the passing of time they may be offered economic opportunities that would not be available outside the ethnic social network. Alternatively, if a refugee arrives in a host country in which there are not many members of his/her ethnic group, the refugee will be forced to interact with people from other ethnicities, who may or may not share the refugee experience, and the native population of that country. Hence, it is the presence of the ethnic group of the individual refugee in the host country that influences him/her to interact with members of the ethnic social network. For this reason, refugees from different ethnic groups are very likely to have different experiences of socio-economic settlement in the host country. The same pattern applies in the ESOL environment: if there is a dominant ethnic group in a classroom, the likelihood is that students from the dominant ethnic

group will tend to interact with those from their ethnic group, especially when they cannot verbally communicate in English. In classrooms with balanced ethnicities, ESOL students will be more likely to interact with students from different ethnic groups in English.

Furthermore, as was discussed in section 3.4, the ethnic community as a social network provides its individual members with social capital, as it is an individual's connections with other members of the network that might provide him/her with opportunities. Despite the positive properties associated with social capital, Portes (1998) argues that it may have negative effects depending on the nature of a social network. If the network's structure is closed, it may inhibit the sociability of its members with other networks and in this way exclude outsiders and prevent the success of personal or business initiatives of its members with the outsiders. Hence, the extensive social control exercised by the network restricts the individual freedom of its members. This is evident in Lamba's (2003) findings about the limited opportunities for women of social mobility in the host society (see section 3.4.2). In addition, a network's openness or closure is determined by its norms and ideology and it is these norms that keep members together. If these norms are in opposition to mainstream society, the network's members are going to be marginalised from society. Thus, there might be a tension between the norms of the ethnic social network and those of the host society to which refugees are expected to integrate. On the one hand, refugees try to keep their identity by the reproduction of cultural practices in the host society within their ethnic community (e.g. Zhou and Bankston 2001, Williams 2006) and, on the other, they try to adapt to the expectations of the host society, which may lead to the reinvention of their identity and re-evaluation of their attitudes towards their home country and the host society. The outcome of this process, however, may be against the norms and ideology of the ethnic social network. For instance, Kostovicova and Prestreshi (2003), examining identity transformations in Kosovan Albanian refugees living in London, identified that the pursuit of education led to major lifestyle changes in Kosovan Albanian women, which were condemned by the ethnic Kosovan Albanian community as the abandonment of authentic Albanian identity. Thus the authors predict future cultural conflict within the ethnic Kosovan Albanian community.

Consequently, an individual refugee's participation in two or more social networks can give rise to tensions, depending on the social networks' structure and norms. Thus, refugee ESOL students' friendships with their fellow students may be affected by firstly, the presence of the network of family and relatives, and of the ethnic community and, secondly, their ethnic community's network structure, norms and attitudes towards integration in the host country. In the ESOL environment refugee ESOL students might find themselves torn between maintaining good relationships with the family or co-ethnic friends and creating long-lasting relationships with other ESOL or college students. In addition, if there is one dominant ethnic group present in an ESOL classroom, there might be a resistance from student-members of the specific ethnic group towards the interaction with ESOL students of different ethnicities.

4.4 The specification of social capital concepts and theory as analytical tools in investigating the building of social relationship in the ESOL environment

The present study has embarked on an investigation into whether social relationships built within the ESOL and FE college environment provide refugee ESOL students with resources that could be utilised to promote their socio-economic adjustment and further the process of integration into British society. For this purpose the study seeks to deploy the insights and perspectives of social capital theory in order to capture the processes in which social relationships can or cannot accommodate a specific outcome. The rationale for adopting social capital theory for this study is based on the theoretical insights social capital interpretations can provide to the refugee experience. By definition (see section 1.2), an individual becomes a refugee due to his/her participation in networks and is persecuted by state authorities because of this participation. After flight, the refugee continues to be a member of multiple networks, for example within the network of family and friends in the home country, the transnational ethnic network, the ethnic social network and the network of acquaintances in the host society. This indicates that participation in social networks is an intrinsic part of the refugee experience. It is this experience that needs to be examined through the insights of social capital theory within the context of refugee integration. A social capital approach that explores the complexities of formation of social networks as part of the refugee

experience, as well as the benefits that accrue from participation in these social networks, may provide an understanding and inform the process of refugees' social integration into the host society.

As an analytical construct, social capital has the power to expand the theoretical boundaries through the shift of focus from the main research theme towards the interrelated aspects of the same theme (Schuller *et al.* 2000). For instance, a social capital approach in the investigation of lifelong learning has highlighted amongst others the relationship between adult education and learners' socio-economic contributions to their communities (Balatti and Falk 2002), and the provision of effective opportunities of informal learning to adult learners (Field 2005). Similarly, in the context of migration and refugee studies, the analytical insights of social capital theory have highlighted amongst others the inequalities in employment patterns across ethnic groups (Lin 2000), the utilisation of social capital as an economic resource (Portes 1995, Loizos 2000) and the organisational capacity of refugee ethnic communities (Griffiths *et al.* 2005). Within the context of adult ESOL education, social capital approach can explore socialisation and relationship building between refugee and other ESOL students, as well as the usability of these relationships for the process of integration. Particularly, social capital theory can provide explanations about refugee ESOL students' motives and patterns of interaction with fellow ESOL or college students, which can indicate students' expectations from each other, as well as the nature of the ESOL relationships. In addition, social capital theory can provide an analytical framework to enable the identification of the resources that derive from the ESOL environment and that may be used by refugee ESOL students in order to ease their transition from marginalisation to that of full participation in British society. Specifically, social capital as an analytical tool will enable the present study to explore the following themes:

- The process of relationship building between refugee ESOL students and other ESOL or further education students.
- The nature and quality of these relationships: trust levels and solidarity among ESOL students, and their engagement in reciprocal activities.
- The portability of relationships outside the ESOL and FE college environment and the durability of these across time.

Further, social capital as an analytical tool, conceptualised as a resource deriving from the ESOL/FE college environment that, if utilised, may positively impact on refugees' socioeconomic integration, can provide insights into the processes of social relationship building in the ESOL environment for the individual refugee ESOL student. Hence, the following themes as constitutive possibilities of social capital will be explored:

- The position of refugee ESOL students as individuals belonging to two or more social networks (presence of family network, the ethnic social network and the ESOL/College network) that may develop a tentative or harmonious relationship.
- The nature of resources deriving from the ESOL network for individual refugee ESOL students, and their usability for the initiation and advancement of socio-economic adjustment.

Currently very little is known about what occurs when refugees start to communicate and build friendships with people from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the ESOL classroom and FE college environment. These new relationships, facilitated by the ESOL environment, are, in social capital terms, built upon emergent shared goals, aspirations and experiences in Britain. Hence, they become a resource of information and support that may have effects on refugees' lives in Britain. Thus, this study aims to explore the social capital mechanisms that facilitate or inhibit the building and maintenance of new relationships within ESOL and their impact on the process of integration.

4.5 Research questions and their rationale

The objective of this study is firstly to identify the social relationships of refugee ESOL students in the ESOL context and the social capital deriving from these relationships and secondly, to analyse the processes of transformation of these social relationships and identify their impact upon refugee ESOL students' socio-economic adjustment in British society. Participation in social networks and formation of new ones is regarded as an intrinsic part of the refugee experience, and their impact on socio-economic adjustment of refugees in the host society may potentially increase our understanding of

the process of refugee integration. Hence, this study aims to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. The refugee experience

- a) What are the differences between migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, number of years living in Britain before starting ESOL, British citizenship plans, educational background, occupational background, employment in Britain and future educational and employment aspirations)?
- b) What are refugee ESOL students' experiences of flight, migration and settlement in Britain?

2. The social networks of refugees in Britain

- a) What are the refugee ESOL students' existing networks and why are they important to refugees?
- b) What factors influence relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE College environment?

3. The ESOL network

- a) What do refugee ESOL students gain from participation in the ESOL network?
- b) How do the gains deriving from the ESOL network impact on the process of integration?

The first set of research questions facilitates investigation and expansion of our knowledge of the refugee experience firstly, by identifying the different background characteristics of migrant and refugee ESOL students and secondly, by exploring refugee ESOL students' experiences of flight, migration and initial settlement in Britain.

This set of questions aims to compare the background characteristics of migrant and refugee ESOL students in order to identify if any differences in these could affect the willingness of refugees to build friendships in the ESOL/FE college environment. This set of questions combines qualitative and quantitative data and migrant students were included as they are those with whom refugees might socialise.

The second set of questions examines refugee ESOL students' existing social networks in London and explore the process of relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment. This set of questions aims to identify refugees' existing social networks, to explore their willingness and tendency to develop social relationships in the ESOL/FE College environment and to identify any factors that may impact on the process of relationship building and on the portability of these relationships outside the ESOL/FE college environment. Also, this set of questions combines qualitative and quantitative data.

Finally, the third set of questions explores the capacity of ESOL as a social network to provide benefits to refugee ESOL students that, when utilised, can contribute to the process of integration. This set of questions aims to highlight the extent to which increased fluency in English motivates refugee ESOL students to increasingly use the benefits deriving from their participation in the ESOL network to further the process of their integration.

4.6 Summary

This chapter has specified a theoretical framework explaining the interrelatedness of refugee integration, ESOL provision and participation in social networks, and presented the rationale and the research questions of the study. The chapter argued that the exploration of relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment through social capital theory as an analytical focus can examine the function of the ESOL environment as a social network that allows social capital development. Specifically, it was revealed how a social capital focus can provide a different analytical perspective to the investigation of relationship building, and can identify the factors affecting this process. In addition, it was outlined how social capital, conceptualised as a resource, allows for

the examination of participation in multiple networks and its usability for the advancement of the process of integration. Attention is turned next to the methodological framework of the study.

Chapter 5: Research Design

5.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to demonstrate that a mixed-method case study approach is the most suitable research design for the exploration of relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others within the ESOL/FE college environment. The case study design has been described as an empirical enquiry investigating a phenomenon within a real-life context, where phenomena and context have no clear boundaries and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin 1989:23). This research approach strengthens the exploration of the study's research focus firstly, through the use of multiple methods, secondly, by overcoming issues related to refugee populations, such as a lack of reliable data sources and thirdly, by strengthening the reliability of the findings. This will be demonstrated with an assessment of methodological issues arising when researching refugee populations and a discussion of the reasons for adopting a mixed-method case study design. Then, the research procedures and analytical strategy deployed will be presented. Finally, ethical issues made during the research process will be considered.

5.2 Methodological issues in research with refugee populations

Designing a research project for the investigation of refugee populations can be challenging. The definition of the refugee in international law (see section 1.2) serves the purposes of the state and provides a description of the refugee in international affairs. However, this definition can be misleading for the purposes of sociological research (Black 2003), because it discredits refugees' experience of '*uprooting, migration and adaptation*' (Hein 1993:33). Specifically, the legal definition of refugees that is reserved by signatory states can affect social research because it contributes to

problems associated with the identification of refugees in statistical sources. In the British context the existence of subcategories of immigration statuses tied to the term ‘*refugee*’ has led to the paucity of statistical data sources about refugees. Although researchers may access statistical information about asylum, immigration and their appeals, details of country of birth and ethnicity through the 2001 Census, regional refugee-specific data collected by local authorities or charities, and country-specific and international data on refugee displacement and migration patterns (ICAR 2004), there are no comprehensive, national statistics about *all* refugees. Hence, for researchers the term ‘*refugee*’ is tied to space and time because in legal terms a refugee is a *refugee* for a particular timeframe: the moment an *asylum-seeker* is recognised as a refugee, he/she is categorised as a *resident* in existing statistical sources. In turn, this lack of national statistical data on the refugee experience in the host country obstructs its comparison across countries. Thus, an uncertainty is attached to official statistics because firstly, there are discrepancies between existing data sources (Bloch 1999) and secondly, because within these, refugees are ‘*invisible populations*’ (Esterhuizen 2002:10).

A further problem associated with researching refugee populations is that of gaining access. In particular, permission to carry out research in a social setting or gaining access to refugee communities does not guarantee access to research participants if the refugee experience is being examined. Owing to their often difficult and painful life histories, as well as their mistreatment and misrepresentation by others, refugees naturally attempt to protect themselves from outsiders and often limit their interaction to necessary forms of communication due to lack of trust towards others (Hynes 2003). For instance, given the negative experiences refugees have had with government officials to whom they were required to prove the genuineness of their situation (Bögner *et al.* 2010), a researcher might be confronted with suspicion about the truthfulness of his/her identity and interest in refugees’ experiences. Although participation in research might result in a positive and cathartic experience for refugees (Dyregrov *et al.* 2000), their real and wanted participation requires a certain level of trust between researcher and refugee, which can be built up only over time and personal involvement of the researcher (Miller 2004). In turn, problems of authentic access to refugees can lead to the selection of non-representative samples and the introduction of bias, which may threaten the validity of the whole research (Jacobsen and Landau 2003).

Given the focus and lack of research in the area and having considered the problematic nature of refugees as research populations and lack of reliable data source about their experiences in Britain, this study adopted the case study approach in order to investigate the formation of social relationships between refugees and other students in the ESOL and wider FE college environment. The next section explains why the case study approach is most capable of achieving the aims of this study and outlines the strengths and weaknesses of this approach.

5.3 Case study as the research approach adopted for the present study

The rationale for adopting the case study design as the appropriate research approach is based on the study's aim to explore the refugee experience. The study's research questions focus on the exploration of the development of social relationship building between refugee ESOL students and other students within the ESOL/FE college environment. However, these relationships are specific to a spatial timeframe, in the present case metropolitan London, because the composition of refugee populations in Britain is determined by political upheaval or war arising in specific geographical areas, immigration policies inviting or averting asylum applications, and Britain's position as a preferred asylum destination over other possible destinations (see section 1.2). Therefore, the case of the present study is focused on refugees' experiences of social integration in London with a specific focus on their tendencies to build friendships in the ESOL/FE college environment with students from different ethnic backgrounds and use possible resources, deriving from these relationships, to further their socio-economic adjustment. As these issues have not been investigated before, these experiences of refugees constitute the 'case' under investigation. Consequently, the study is not concerned about the development of results that are generalisable outside the specific case, but aims to produce results that may be comparable with other cases of a similar research focus. Instead, it aims to generate a rich and detailed account of refugee ESOL students' tendencies to build social relationships in the ESOL/FE college environment and to produce results that may be comparable with other cases of a similar research focus (see also section 9.6). Thus, given that refugees can be invisible

populations, and as such their systematic identification as a separate group is difficult, and given that the research aim of this study is the exploration of the refugee experience, the case study approach is advantageous for the purposes of this study.

As all approaches, the case study has strengths and weaknesses. Specifically, its strengths are related to the gathering of rich information, as it is capable of investigating an instance in depth (Hamel *et al.* 1993), analysing its function (Nunan 1992), and generating theory development (Yin 1989, 1993). In addition, its operationalisation is central in determining the research procedures, because it shifts the emphasis from the formulation of testable hypotheses to the triangulation of data sources in order to increase the validity of the findings (Chaiklin 2000, Stake 1995).

However, as a research approach it has also received strong criticism because its findings do not represent larger populations but reflect only the particular case. Specifically, its weaknesses are associated with low generalisability or external validity. Defending the approach, Yin (1989) argues that the case study's challenge is not to generalise statistical findings; '*case studies, like experiments, are generalisable to theoretical propositions and not populations*' (Yin 1989:21), thus aiming to achieve analytical generalisation. This occurs when a previously developed theory is compared to empirical results, and then tested through replication of findings in a second or further setting, and the same results occur. Also, naturalistic generalisation can occur, at which case study data presenting personal experiences and feelings will relate to readers' experiences, and achieve a greater understanding of the phenomenon by drawing analogies (Stake 1995).

A second problem related to this approach is that of internal validity. When an event cannot be observed, the researcher will 'infer' a causal relationship from the data available (Yin 1989). However, as with all research approaches the internal validity of a research design depends on the trustworthiness and scientific ethics of the researcher, rather than the research approach (Verschuren 2003). Finally, a third concern is that of construct validity. According to Smith (1991) and Procter (2001), construct validity requires the evaluation of a measure, which should represent a theoretical concept, so that their conceptual relationship is confirmed. In case study research this can be achieved if the research object selected represents the original objectives of a research project, and if the selected measure indeed matches the research object selected. In this

respect, construct validity is increased in case study research when triangulation is applied, a chain of evidence is established and a draft report is reviewed by the key informants (Yin 1989, 1993).

Having outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the case study approach, attention is now being turned to the research design of the study.

5.3.1 *Research design*

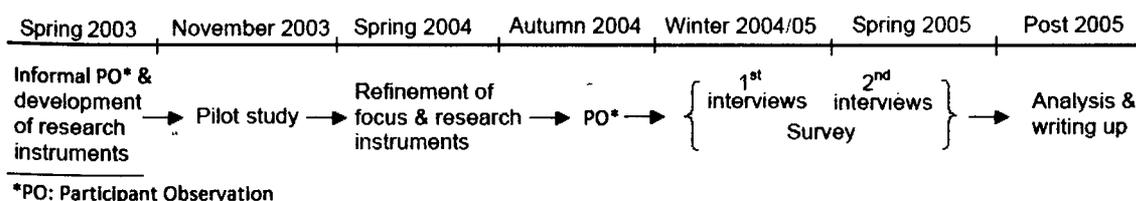
The research design of this study has been informed by a qualitative approach, aiming to analyse the meaning that refugee ESOL students attach to their lived experience through the understanding of their motives for integration into British society – according to Max Weber’s epistemological framework of *Verstehen* (Tucker 1965) – and its further interpretation through the insights acquired by the use of social capital theory as an analytical tool. This study aims to achieve this by allowing research participants’ accounts of their experiences as ESOL students to develop their own ‘collective’ meaning. Social capital as an analytical tool will assist in the interpretation of these accounts in order to enable the exploration of the dynamics of relationship building as an internal aspect of the process of refugee integration.

In order to ensure the validity of the study, a number of measures have been taken. According to Maxwell (2005) researcher bias and reactivity are internal validity threats that can affect a research project’s results. First, in order to account for *construct validity*, triangulation has been applied. Triangulation is the process of using multiple sources of evidence for clarification of meaning and verification of repeatability of an observation or interpretation (Denzin 1970:443), based on the reassurance that the validity of a research project is increased through the use of dissimilar methods, which do not share the same errors and biases (Singleton and Straits 1999, Gillham 2000). Therefore, the study integrated quantitative and qualitative research methods in its design. Increasingly, social research follows a mixed method approach in order to converge or confirm findings from different data sources, or to expand an understanding from one research method to another (Creswell 2003). In such studies, qualitative methods can inform the design of quantitative research instruments and lead to the

development of testable hypotheses (Yin 1989, Singleton and Straits 1999). Similarly, quantitative methods can contribute to qualitative fieldwork through the collection of information about research participants who were overlooked in the field, or by correcting for bias in the stage of interpretation (Sieber 1982). Furthermore *internal validity* is a concern when causal relationships are established (Yin 1989). As this study is of an exploratory nature, internal validity does not pose a threat. Nevertheless, care was taken to account for possible issues due to research participants' limited English language ability in the design of research tools and data collection stages (see sections 5.3.3 and 5.4.3). Finally, regarding external validity, the present study aimed to explore the process of relationship building in two research settings in order to develop a greater understanding of this phenomenon. Therefore generalisations were made at a theoretical level (see section 5.3).

The methods deployed, design of research instruments, refinement of focus and conduction of the pilot and main study will be discussed in the forthcoming sections. At this point, however, it is helpful to present the timeline and the development of the research design.

Figure 5.1: Timeline



Initially, for reasons of familiarisation with the participants and getting a 'feel' of the research context, two ESOL classrooms were informally observed at a community outreach centre of Marlowe College during Spring 2003. These observations informed the development of research instruments and their subsequent testing through the pilot study in November 2003. In turn, the pilot study enabled the testing of the overall research design and the refinement of the focus, as well as that of the research instruments and procedures. The main fieldwork was carried out during the academic year 2004/05 and started with participant observation and interviews in selected ESOL

classrooms, which were followed by second interviews with participants and a survey in all ESOL classrooms.

5.3.2 *Selection of field methods*

The primary aim for integrating qualitative and quantitative research methods is to strengthen the validity of the findings through complementarity of data and triangulation. In order to achieve this, the study collected data through participant observation, semi-structured interviews and a descriptive survey.

As a research method, participant observation has been traditionally the preferred method in anthropological research, but is also widely used in qualitative or field research (Yin 1989). In the present study, it was suitable to the research aims because it enabled the observation of the subject under investigation in its natural setting (Sarantakos 1998) and also because it enabled the collection of rich and detailed data (Burgess 1984). Problems likely to be encountered by participant observers are related to gaining access to the field of study, the management of research and ‘going native’ – an overidentification with the participants (Gans 1982). For the purposes of the research study I have adopted the role of the *participant-as-observer* (Gold 1958, in Burgess 1982:46), under which the participants were aware of my identity as a researcher but, in order to avoid overidentification, I attempted to keep the verbal interaction with them as limited as possible in the classroom (Walsh 1998:225). With participant observation I aimed to gather information on the interaction between refugee ESOL students, students and staff and on relationship building. An emphasis was given to capture the verbal and non-verbal interaction between students.

In addition, the study deployed interviewing as a method of data collection for the exploration of refugee students’ experiences as ESOL students and their attitudes towards integration in Britain. According to Sarantakos (1998), the interview’s main data source is verbal questioning that is systematically prepared and controlled by the researcher with its questions relating to the aims of the research. Interviewing as a method of data collection can range from unstructured to structured interviewing, but for the present study, semi-structured interviewing was the preferred method of

interviewing with refugee ESOL students, firstly, because this interviewing approach allows for flexibility of questioning, necessary for participants with weak language skills (Fielding and Thomas 2001) and, secondly, because the set of pre-selected themes and questions could be followed without requesting participants to talk about painful and distressing events. One major limitation is the interviewer effect, where informants give answers they judge that the interviewer expects to hear (Sarantakos 1998, Fielding and Thomas 2001). In order to overcome interviewer effect and participants' possible distress, students were given a copy of the interview schedule prior to interviews, and were asked to identify any questions they did not understand or would not want to answer. This tactic gave the interviewees a feeling of control and comfort during the interview process (see also section 5.7).

Finally, a survey was carried out with all ESOL students (see also section 5.4.3). The objective of using the survey was to collect descriptive information on refugee and migrant ESOL students' demographic characteristics, immigration status, educational and professional experiences prior to and after migration, and their attitudes towards relationship building in the ESOL/FE College environment. Generally, the purpose of a descriptive survey is to provide information about a representative sample and then make inferences about the whole population (Oppenheim 1992); its function depends on the subject knowledge and the research purpose (Moser and Kalton 1971). The limitations of the survey approach are related with its limited flexibility and adaptability of the research instruments once the research has started, and with the potential of systematic measurement error occurring when respondents provide wrong information, misunderstand the questions and have unstable attitudes towards the given topic (Singleton and Straits 1999). In the present study, the survey allowed the identification of background differences between all ESOL students and the validation of the findings through the cross-reference of information gathered by different methods. In this way, the problems associated with refugee ESOL students' English language use, as well as the validity of the information provided, could be checked.

5.3.3 Design of research tools

After informally observing one ESOL class during the pilot study, it was identified that the English language skills of ESOL students were adequate for their participation in interviews and the completion of a questionnaire (see appendix 1A) with some assistance of the researcher and the ESOL teacher. The draft interview questions enquired about refugee ESOL students' experiences in Britain, their educational experiences in the FE college and their aspirations for the future. Similarly, draft interview questions for ESOL teachers in the pilot were centred around refugees' experiences as ESOL students, and their possible chances for progression to other courses or employment. In addition, a questionnaire focusing mostly on all ESOL students' backgrounds was developed in basic English, aided by the *Adult ESOL Core Curriculum* (BSA 2001). In order to control for language comprehension (Dörnyei 2003), the questions were drafted according to students' English language skills expected at Entry Level 1 and by providing binary answers (*Yes* or *No*) to the majority of questions. Also, open-ended questions and pre-coding were avoided. Further, in order to assess students' comprehension, some check questions were built into the questionnaire, such as dates or repetition of questions. The questionnaire and interview questions were tested in the pilot study, and the question wording and language style were modified according to students' suggestions (see appendices 1A and 1B).

The use of research instruments in the English language format, rather than in translation, enabled more students to complete the questionnaire because the total number of participants' first languages was not known in advance; in translation the meaning of some concepts contained in the questionnaire may change (Temple 1997, Bloch 1999) and the administration of questionnaires in the native languages of the students would discourage them from using the English language in the ESOL classroom. Similarly, interpreters were not used in the interviews, because the number of students' native languages was not known in advance and the presence of interpreters for specific languages would exclude students from different language backgrounds. It was expected that within the ESOL environment students would not encounter linguistic difficulties when supported by fellow students and their teacher in a group discussion.

5.3.4 Pilot study

The pilot study was carried out in two inner London FE colleges, *Shakespeare College* and *Marlowe College*²⁷, which agreed to take part in the main study (see forthcoming section 5.5.1). The purpose of the pilot study was based on exploratory reasons and its aims were as follows: firstly, it provided access to the research setting and the assessment of research conditions; secondly, it enabled the testing of the research approach and research instruments, and explored refugee ESOL students' willingness to participate in research and the adequacy of their English language skills; and thirdly, it allowed the refinement of the research focus. Specifically, the pilot study tested whether the case study approach and methods deployed would enable the collection of in-depth information. It also assessed the usefulness of the form of social capital theory adopted as an analytical tool, enabled the refinement of the theoretical framework, and reconsidered the conceptualisation of social capital after the analysis of preliminary data. In addition, the pilot was crucial on assessing the appropriateness of the language level used in the questionnaire. Lastly, issues of access for the main study were negotiated and the feasibility of the overall research strategy was evaluated.

Permission for the pilot was obtained from the heads of ESOL in Marlowe College and Shakespeare College in October 2003 and the study was conducted in November 2003. Data collection started with observations of 8 randomly selected classrooms, which were surveyed during the first observation. In total 78 questionnaires were obtained from students present in the classroom during the lesson in which the survey took place. Then, three group-discussions were carried out with a total of 13 students, 4 interviews with ESOL teachers who volunteered to be interviewed, and one interview with a refugee worker from a Refugee Community Organisation cooperating with Shakespeare College.

The empirical findings of the pilot have been discussed elsewhere (Dimitriadou 2004a, Dimitriadou 2004b). At this point, however, it is necessary to outline the findings which enabled the refinement of the focus and the research design.

²⁷ The names of the colleges and all research participants have been replaced with pseudonyms for reasons of confidentiality.

Firstly, the pilot showed that students could understand and answer the questionnaire and that most were able to hold a conversation in English, as long as prompting and rephrasing of questions took place. Secondly, collecting information about the same subject from multiple sources through a mixed-methods approach allowed an increase in the credibility and validity of the findings, and a greater control and reassurance over the overall procedure. Finally, social capital theory was found to be of assistance in the exploration of refugees' experiences of ESOL and provided a valuable insight into the ESOL structure. Particularly, it enabled the identification of cooperation between Shakespeare College and a local Refugee Community Organisation and teacher involvement in assisting refugee ESOL students to contact social services or lawyers. In addition, the research design was capable of capturing the formation of social relationships deriving from the ESOL environment; for example, it was discovered that ESOL students preferred to socialise with students from the same ethnic and linguistic background.

Thus, the pilot enabled the refinement of the research design and also highlighted an under-researched area in the field of sociology of education and refugee studies that became the subsequent focus of the main study, namely the building of social relationships between refugee ESOL students and others within the ESOL/FE college environment, and its effects on the process of refugee integration.

5.4 Research procedures

The pilot study facilitated the refinement of the research instruments, the timing and procedures of the research project and the research design overall. Specifically, through insights into the research setting and conditions acquired by the pilot, it was decided that it would be advantageous for the aims of the present study to carry out the fieldwork for a full academic year, as in this way participants could be observed in their natural setting across time and, in this way, a more holistic view of their experiences in the ESOL/College environment could be acquired. Access was negotiated with

gatekeepers at both colleges and written approval to carry out the study was granted in March 2004.

5.4.1 Sampling of colleges

It was decided to carry out the study in London, firstly, because estimates show that London houses the majority of refugees in Britain (Rutter 2001), and secondly, because FE colleges in London generally have a higher expertise in ESOL provision than those in dispersal areas (Griffiths 2003). The selection of more than one college would improve the representativeness of refugee ethnic groups, and in this way methodological problems related with the concentration of dominant ethnic groups in one area could be overcome. The colleges were selected from a list of over 20 FE-colleges in the wider London area. The sampling strategy was based on the plan to approach colleges one by one, provide a brief description of the purposes of the study, ask for their participation and, in case of refusal, to approach the next college. Five colleges were approached for participation during Spring/Summer-2003 and two agreed to participate in the study. These two colleges were located in working class areas of London boroughs and were providing ESOL to about 900 students each.

5.4.2 Refining the research focus and research design

Beyond the testing of the research design and assessment of the research setting, the pilot indicated that although social capital theory was helpful for exploration, it was not clearly conceptualised in relation to the research context. Specifically, before the pilot the study intended to analyse social capital formation for refugee ESOL students and for the ESOL environment, approaching refugees as members of the ESOL network that in turn was regarded as a node within a wider network that provided assistance to refugees. The pilot showed that such a focus was too broad and shifted the attention between refugee ESOL students' experiences and the existence of organisational networks assisting with the process of integration. However, the analysis of the pilot data

highlighted that the exploration of the building of social relationships between refugee ESOL students and others can provide explanations about refugees' motives for, and willingness to, integrate into British society. Thus, this issue became the subsequent focus of the study.

Regarding the research design, the pilot revealed that the case study approach was able to investigate an empirical phenomenon within its natural setting and methods employed to collect information about the refugee experience from multiple sources served the purposes of triangulation. However, refinement of the research focus required the slight modification of some features of the research design. Firstly, as the study aimed to explore the building of social relationships of refugee ESOL students, one objective was to identify any change in these relationships throughout time. Thus, it was important to incorporate time into the research instruments. As Saldana (2003:7) points out, *'analysing change requires at least two reference points though time, such as "then" and "now"'*. Therefore, the new questionnaire and interview schedule included questions that enquired about students' past in their home country, their present life in Britain and their future plans. In addition, change was perceived to be occurring naturally within a social context, as people modify their behaviours and preferences with the passing of time and because contradictions are inherent in change (Saldana 2003). For this reason, second interviews were introduced to investigate any variations in refugee students' accounts about their present social relationships and future plans. In addition, it was decided to carry out some interviews with refugees who had studied ESOL in the past and were now either studying in further or higher education or were working. These students were identified with the help of ESOL teachers.

Change was also attempted to be captured at the present, referring to refugees' current lived reality, and the future, referring to their future plans and aspirations. Interviews enabled the identification of macro-level change through the retrospective order of biographical questions in both interview schedules, and participant observation enabled the identification of micro-level change in students' social relationships within the ESOL and college setting. In addition, the interplay of time with the data collected through participant observation, such as the influence of the observer to the research participants, was recorded in a research diary that was structured in chronological order.

Question themes in research instruments used in the pilot were slightly modified for the main study in order to accommodate questions for the identification of social relationships within the ESOL/FE college environment. Particularly, the new questionnaire intended to collect information about students' backgrounds, their migration histories, their experiences of ESOL and their future plans and aspirations for their lives in Britain (see appendix 1B). Similarly, a new interview schedule was developed that included questions around participants' family network, their lives in the home country and Britain, their experiences of ESOL and the college, their network of friends and their ethnic social network (see appendix 1C). The patterns that evolved through the first interviews informed the second interviews, whose questions were concerned with identifying any contradictions or changes in students' accounts about ESOL, the college, and their network of friends (see appendix 1F). Further, it was decided to employ the selective observational method, a sub-category of participant observation that concentrates on one phenomenon in a given context and involves the searching for '*differences among specific cultural categories*' (Spradley 1980:128). This was necessary in order to avoid distraction in the classroom, as the focus of interest was the observation of student interaction and not the teaching or learning process.

The research management was slightly modified. Instead of carrying out the survey with a sample of students, it was decided to approach every ESOL group and administer the questionnaire to the students present on the day of the survey. This strategy allowed for the inclusion of students who might not have been able to complete the questionnaire at the beginning of the academic year due to language limitations. In addition, in order to maximise the response rates, beginner students with low reading skills were asked questions from the questionnaire, instead of having to fill it out.

5.4.3 *Data collection*

The fieldwork conducted for the main study was divided into three phases. The first phase employed participant classroom observation and was instrumental in identifying refugee students who would be approached for interviews, and for the identification of

existing or newly formed friendships in the ESOL classroom. In addition, participant observation allowed the follow-up of students' friendships in the wider FE college environment during the lesson breaks. The second phase involved semi-structured interviews with refugee students, focusing on their experiences as ESOL students. Finally, the third phase involved a survey with ESOL groups aiming to acquire information about students' backgrounds and attitudes towards ESOL, and also second interviews following up possible changes in refugee students' ESOL friendships and their future plans. The survey was conducted after the interviews for reasons of maximising response rates, as students' English would be more advanced towards the second part of the academic year, and also, because participants would be feeling more comfortable with the presence of the researcher and participation in survey towards the end of the academic year. Higher level groups were surveyed during the second and third terms, and lower level groups during the third term.

The study was carried out between October 2004 and July 2005. Official permission was granted in writing by the heads of faculty at both colleges in February 2004 and *Criminal Check Disclosure* was forwarded to the colleges in September 2004. A list with ESOL groups and their teachers' contact details was obtained from each ESOL department. All ESOL teachers were contacted and asked for permission to allow classroom observations and the survey. Those who did not respond were contacted again at one-month intervals until a positive or negative response was obtained.

In each college, one classroom per ESOL level was observed for at least 5 different lessons during a 2-3 week period and up to 6 refugee students from each classroom were interviewed. Before the beginning of observations or the survey, students were briefed about the research project and were invited to ask questions. Those who did not want to participate in the survey were excluded. In addition, during the survey students received a vocabulary sheet (see appendix 1D) which explained terms in basic English that were used throughout the questionnaire. At teachers' request some classrooms were also provided with a handout (see appendix 1E) explaining the purpose of the study. Care was taken not to carry out the survey on days or times on which students were more likely to be absent, for instance during Ramadan, on Monday mornings or Friday afternoons, or the last day before holidays. Similarly after each observation a student was selected for an interview. The interviews took place in the college

premises. Participants were invited to read the interview schedule first and mark any themes they did not want to discuss. Interviews were audio recorded and where participants refused to be recorded, notes were taken instead. After the interview, participants were fully briefed about the themes of the interviews and their relevance to the aims of the study.

In Entry Level 1 classes, instead of administering the questionnaire, all students took part in a structured interview using the questionnaire as an interview schedule. Because of the students' language difficulties, only the questions they understood were asked. If they would not understand a question, it was left blank and treated as missing data. In addition, in order to enable beginning students to take part in the interviews, it was attempted to carry out group discussions with students who shared a first language. However, after such an interview was carried out, it was decided to abandon this practice as students had difficulties to articulate themselves in English.

Table 5.1 summarises the fieldwork at both colleges. Briefly, 13 classrooms were observed at both colleges. 33 interviews were carried out with 35 participants²⁸ (17 from Shakespeare College, 14 from Marlowe College and 4 ESOL graduates) aged between 20 and 60 years and coming from 13 different countries; and 17 participants agreed to be interviewed twice. In addition, questionnaires were administered in 26 ESOL groups out of 38 in Shakespeare College and in 37 out of 49 in Marlowe College. In these groups, 689 students were approached and 681 returned the completed questionnaires (275 from Shakespeare College and 406 Marlowe College).

²⁸ This included one group discussion with 3 students from the SUAU group because of their limited English language ability.

Table 5.1: Overview of ESOL classrooms observed

Group Code ¹	College	ESOL Level	No of Students		No of Ethnicities	Interviewed ²⁶	Interviewed twice
			Refugees	Migrants			
<i>SUAU</i>	SC ²	EL1	10	0	5	Darine Yasir Mahmood	-
<i>GAWI</i>	MC ³	EL1	6	20	7	-	-
<i>LOLE</i>	SC	EL1/2	13	6	9	Enver Farah Kaalim	Kaalim
<i>LOGI</i>	MC	EL2	8	15	4	Fowsiyo Khadra Shima	-
<i>MOHE</i>	SC	EL3	9	4	11	Reza Leonora Daria	Reza Leonora Daria
<i>MAHA</i>	SC	EL3	9	6	9	Razaaq Hodan Siri Marc Nyambi Blerta	Razaaq Marc
<i>MOLU</i>	MC	EL3	1	10	2	Fadumo	Fadumo
<i>DEPE</i>	MC	EL3	3	8	5	Jamilla Tushkata	Jamilla Tushkata
<i>WODM</i>	MC	EL3	5	15	7	Mohammed	-
<i>ROFO</i>	MC	EL3	6	10	5	Ashia Nimo Ayanna Sarfras Abdul	Ashia Nimo Ayanna Sarfras
<i>XUWA</i>	SC	L1	7	4	10	Koffi Carine	Koffi Carine
<i>PHEA</i>	MC	L1	1	13	9	Safia	Safia
<i>LEGO</i>	MC	L2	1	10	9	Zeri	Zeri
<i>Interview participants who moved from ESOL to further or higher education or employment</i>						Ahmed Karzan Leke Birten	

¹ The group code is comprised by ESOL teachers' names

² SC: Shakespeare College

³ MC: Marlowe College

5.5 Data analysis

This section outlines the present study's approach to data analysis, discusses issues related to the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data and demonstrates the analytical strategy deployed. As a mixed method approach was adopted, before the analytical strategy is outlined, it is necessary to discuss the challenges such a research approach was confronted with.

Lofland and Lofland (1995) argue that social inquiry and social theory attempt to identify the characteristics, causes and consequences of a social phenomenon. Qualitative analysis delineates forms and types of social phenomena by their detailed documentation; quantitative analysis primarily aims to identify the causes and consequences of these social phenomena. In other words, qualitative data analysis produces 'thick' descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation that lead to theory development (Miles and Huberman 1994). When a phenomenon is examined, the researcher strives to record everything that is being observed in the research setting that might relate to the research problem. In their unprocessed form, qualitative data pose challenges to the researcher as the controlling of variables is not possible until the end of the analysis (Morse 1994). By contrast, quantitative analysis produces causal relationships between predetermined variables in order to test hypotheses (Marczyk *et al.* 2005). Nevertheless, when mixed methods are employed, a new dimension is added to the challenges because of the differences between the two analytical approaches.

The study deployed a mixed method approach primarily for the purposes of exploration. Data collected about the same phenomenon with different methods strengthened the internal validity of the case through triangulation. Nevertheless, triangulation could not always be applied, as in some instances a set of data could only derive from a quantitative (e.g. age) or qualitative method (e.g. opinions). In these cases data were used in a complementary manner (see section 5.6.3). This analytical method was advantageous because it allowed the capturing of instances that would have been overseen if only one method was used; for instance, the survey collected information on participants' background characteristics which were further explored in the interviews and observational data. This analytic approach allowed for greater overall management of the research process, as research with refugee populations is associated with a

number of problems deriving from the nature of the group (e.g. language limitations, difficulties in locating participants etc.).

Furthermore, a mixed-method approach can increase the validity of a case study and the data will be complementary (Erzberger and Kelle 2003). In turn, the case study will be comparable with similar cases investigating the refugee experience in a different geographical location or at a different time. Particularly, the present case study may be comparable with a case in a different geographical location bearing similarities to London, or at a later period in time. Participant observation or interviewing, and a survey on their own would only be able to answer some of the research questions under investigation; but through the combination of methods a more holistic picture, in this case, of the refugee experience emerges. Thus, mixed method data analysis is based on two major rationales (Onwuegbuzie and Teddlie 2003): firstly, it is a more comprehensive analytical technique enabling better understanding of the phenomenon under investigation; secondly, the assessment of information from both qualitative and quantitative data is a more comprehensive means of confirming the findings. Similarly, Mason (1994) argues that data which are based on different logical principles can be linked either by using the different data sets to address a particular topic from a variety of angles, or using them to follow up similar conceptual themes. Thus, the key challenge is the development of a strategy that is capable of integrating qualitative and quantitative data.

5.6 Analytical strategy

Intending to enable quantitative data to inform the qualitative, statistically significant relationships established in survey data were further explored through observational and interview data. Then, findings were contrasted to the theoretical hypotheses in order to establish connections between the data and to provide answers to the research questions. This analytic strategy is called 'pattern-matching' (Yin 1989, Gibbs 2002). The processing of qualitative and quantitative data and their analysis are described below.

5.6.1 Treatment of Quantitative data

After all the questionnaires were collected a codebook was developed, recording question wordings and variable names, values for each variable with their explanations, type of data used for each variable, the values for missing data and instructions for coding multiple response sets and skip questions (De Vaus 2000, Fielding 2001). With the aid of the codebook, questions were post coded, entered into SPSS 16 and then the database was checked for errors. In this process the checkpoints built into the questionnaire were most helpful in identifying any contradictory responses and new variables were computed from existing variables to aid the process of analysis, using the 'transform' function of the software (De Vaus 2000, Norussis 2003).

After the 'cleaning' of data, frequencies and cross-tabulations were calculated and χ^2 -test was applied in order to identify any statistical association between variables where it was hypothesised that a relationship did not exist (Brown and Dowling 1998). If statistical associations were identified, these were further interpreted through odds ratios or analysis of residuals²⁹ (Lachenicht 2002). This treatment was essential for identifying relationships between refugee and migrant students' background differences and patterns in friendships in the ESOL/FE college environment.

Some participants did not respond to all items on the questionnaire because of their limited ability to understand the question, especially those studying at Entry Level 1. While treating missing data is central to the study's validity when inferences and generalisations are made (McKnight *et al.* 2007), the present study does not intend to make inferences to the wider ESOL population, but to allow quantitative and qualitative data complementarity (see also section 5.6.3). Nevertheless, in order to strengthen the study's validity, non-responses were indicated in individual tables and where necessary, Entry Level 1 respondents were excluded from the statistical analysis (for implications for study see section 9.4).

²⁹ According to Lachenicht (2002) the χ^2 -test shows an association between two variables if the probability is less than 5%. This association can be further explored through odds ratios, which are capable of showing the strength of an association between the subcategories of the variables if a contingency table has 2 rows and 2 columns; or through the analysis of residuals, deployed in tables with more than 2 rows and 2 columns, which can show if the association between two variables is a result of a specific section in the table. As adjusted residuals are normally distributed with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one, their size can be interpreted in a probabilistic way (where if an adjusted residual is equal or higher than ± 1.96 its associated probability is less than 5%) (Lachenicht 2002:375).

5.6.2 Treatment of Qualitative data

Preliminary analysis of qualitative data started during data collection through the reflection on observational experiences in order to identify patterns in the data. Also, coding networks were developed from the theoretical framework. As the study progressed, observation notes were written in a diary and interview notes were taken from interview recordings. At the end of data collection, both the observational diary and the interviews were prepared for systematic analysis with the software Atlas.Ti 5.0. It was decided to use the Atlas.Ti 5.0 over NVivo 2 used in the pilot, because the former enabled the coding of digital audio data, rather than requiring a text based format, thus allowing the researcher to work with the data in their natural form (Gibson *et al.* 2005). Data were transcribed at later stages.

In addition, the software also enables the development of a codebook. As coding is the foundation of the researcher's argument and codes are instrumental in theory building, the development of a codebook (a list containing the main codes and their descriptions) is crucial to qualitative research (MacQueen *et al.* 1998). Therefore, it was decided that the codebook should be directive in coding but not extensive, in order to allow new codes to emerge from the data. The codebook included a definition of each code and example, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and the code's relation with other codes. Also index codes were developed to mark the themes discussed in the interviews.

During the process of coding, decisions had to be made about which data counted as important to the aims of the study and which data should be discounted (Emerson *et al.* 1995). In qualitative analysis, codes are labels that indicate a meaning and are attached to information collected during fieldwork, and coding is a process that involves the differentiation and combination of data retrieved through the reflections made by the researcher (Baptiste 2001). Therefore, '*coding is analysis*' (Miles and Huberman 1994:56); what will be available for analysis depends on the researcher's judgement.

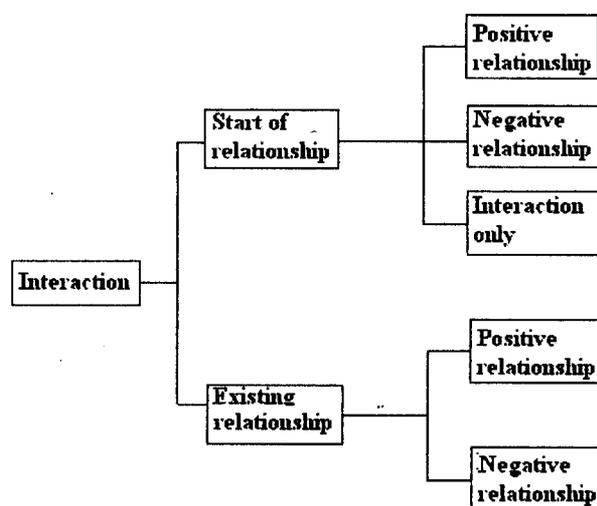
5.6.2.1 Observational data

Observation notes were written in a diary in chronological order. The object of interest of this method was the interaction between students in and outside the classroom and its

potential development into a relationship, either a positive or negative. Although the observational method could only capture snapshots of interaction and the formation or preservation of a relationship, and could not exclusively follow the continuation of an instance, it allowed for the recoding of information and observations that reflected further insights, and an understanding of interactions between two or more students in a class. These observations were further explored during interviews.

Furthermore the subject of interaction was traced in the observation notes and then, the type of interaction was established. Specifically, ‘interaction only’ described two individual students engaging in conversation in the classroom; ‘positive relationship’ described interaction between two students who would continuously interact in and outside the classroom, and ‘negative relationship’ described tensions in conversation between two or more students. Figure 5.2 shows in a code network the possible outcomes of interaction. In addition, the particular segments of text were indexed with the relevant codes. At the same time, it was attempted to generate codes from the text and their relationship to the unit of analysis (the refugee student) was established.

Figure 5.2: Network of the code ‘Interaction’



The development of interaction to a relationship was traceable only through evidence after the second observation of each classroom. Any description of interaction between

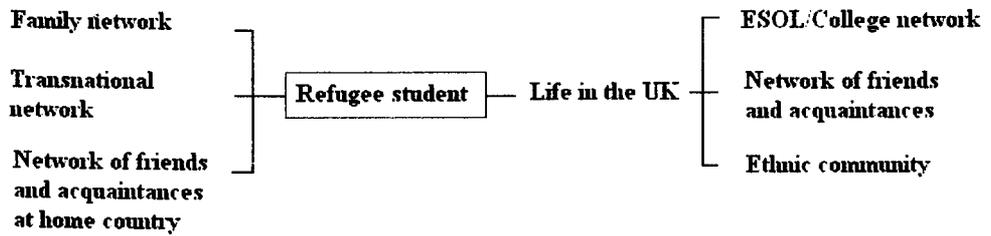
two or more people that was not imposed by a teaching method (such as group work) counted as evidence that interaction could lead to a relationship. Any form of talk between students that was irrelevant to the lesson content was treated as evidence of a relationship. Nevertheless, as the focus of interest were refugee rather than migrant students, interactions between migrant students were not further explored.

5.6.2.2 Interview data

Interviews were not transcribed prior to coding, but notes were taken instead, as the interest was to analyse participants' accounts of their lives and the qualitative data analysis software used enabled the processing of sound. This was helpful in identifying whether participants' incomplete answer to a question was a result of their hesitation to discuss the topic or due to their English language ability. After codes were attached to segments of interviews, these were transcribed. The transcription of interview segments, rather than the whole interview allowed a greater control over the data, because processing the same codes through transcription enabled easier identification of relationships between code families. Similar to observational data, a code network was developed prior to analysis, which showed the thematic categories of the interviews and subsequent codes emerging from the data were added.

During the first interviews emphasis was given to determine the reasons that made an interviewee a refugee, thus the situation in the home country and the whereabouts of the interviewee's family were explored. In addition, the interviewee's experiences in Britain were explored, focusing on English language (ESOL), experience in the college, the network of friends and the ethnic social network. It was assumed that the complexities and interrelations of these themes show a person's tendency and desire to integrate into British society, as well as the extent to which a person's attachment to existing social networks can further or obstruct his/her integration. Figure 5.3 below shows the structure of the interview themes.

Figure 5.3: Code network of social relationships for 1st interview data prior to analysis

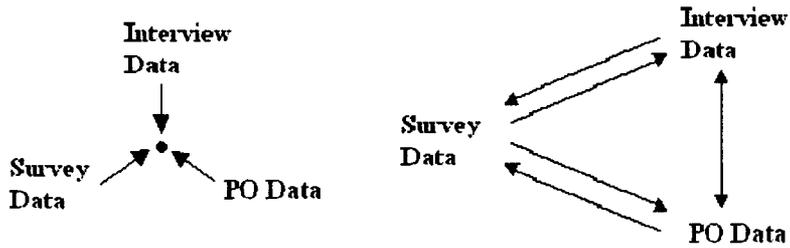


After preliminary analysis of the first interviews confirmed that refugee ESOL students are members of multiple, sometimes socially marginalised, networks, the questions for the second interview schedule were developed. These new questions emphasised ‘ESOL’, the ‘college’ and the ‘network of friends in the ESOL/College environment’, and were more structured. Prior to the second interviews a coding network was developed to direct the analysis of each theme (see appendix 1G). The second interviews sought to identify changes in participants’ network of friends, especially their friendships in the ESOL/College setting and changes in their future plans and aspirations.

5.6.3 *Integration of qualitative and quantitative data analysis*

As outlined in section 5.3, the use of multiple research methods for data collection in this study served two purposes: firstly, it aimed to strengthen the validity of the findings and, secondly, to complement data collected through different methods in order to explore the issues this project attempted to address in depth. In addition, as all research methods aimed to investigate the same phenomenon, namely the building of social relationships by refugee students in the ESOL/FE college setting, the data were integrated in the following way.

Figure 5.4: Triangulation and complementarity of data



As shown in figure 5.4, in cases where data about an issue deriving from the three methods deployed existed, triangulation was carried out. When a theme was explored by different types of data, statistically significant relationships between two variables identified through the survey data were further explored in the interview or observational data (red arrows). In turn, for some themes qualitative data were capable of complementing each other (black arrows) as well as explaining the identified statistical associations (blue arrows). This strategy provided a deeper overview over the interpretation of findings and their relation to the theoretical framework of this study, because, firstly, it was possible to confirm data as ‘true’ through triangulation where appropriate, and secondly, facts established through statistical associations could be further explored in qualitative data.

5.7 Ethical issues

Ethical issues can arise from the researcher’s stereotypes and prejudices (Reynolds 1982), the formulation of a hypothesis (Smith 1991) and during data collection, analysis and reporting (Punch 1986, Sarantakos 1998). For these reasons it is important to outline that participants in this study were not exposed to any harm, whilst the following issues were taken into consideration during the planning and conduct of the study.

Firstly, ethical approval was sought from the university’s research ethics committee and the research settings were provided with Criminal Record disclosure. Secondly, informed consent was sought verbally from participants for taking part in the survey and

interviews, giving them a choice over participation. Thirdly, care was taken not to cause any emotional distress to participants when enquiring about sensitive issues: on the first visit to a classroom, a short biographical account about myself was provided to participants and the purpose of my visit and the study's potential benefit to future ESOL students were explained (see appendix 1E); further, prior to the survey, emphasis was given on issues of confidentiality and participants were given the choice to complete or not the questionnaire; likewise, before the interview interviewees were briefed about the purpose of the study, and were given the choice to select questions from the interview schedule they did not wish to discuss, or to stop the interview at any point if they wanted. Also, the interviews were carried out in the environment of interviewees' choice (for instance, classroom, college cafeteria, library or their homes) and their approval about recording or note-taking during the interview was sought. This strategy aimed to create a positive interview experience for participants, as disclosure of information depends to a large extent on the interviewer quality (Bögner *et al.* 2010). It was decided not to seek written consent as the necessity of signing a document might have caused distress to interviewees. Fourthly, care was taken to show respect towards the age, gender, culture, religion, disability or sexual orientation of participants and staff at the colleges. Fifthly, no covert methods were used. Lastly, measures were taken to conceal the identity of participants, through the use of pseudonyms throughout this thesis and all data were handled with confidentiality.

5.8 Summary

This chapter has argued that a mixed-method case study approach is the most suitable research design for the exploration of relationship building between refugees and others in the ESOL/FE college environment. Specifically, it was illustrated that research with refugee populations can raise a number of problems associated with scarcity of appropriate statistical sources and refugees' difficulties to trust others, as well as with refugees' ability to communicate in English. Also, it was argued that the mixed-method case study approach can alleviate these problems by taking into account participants' wishes and providing them with choices, and that it can increase the validity of the study, by triangulating and complementing data. Further, the chapter demonstrated how the focus and research procedures were refined during the pilot study, and offered a

detailed account of, and justified methods for data collection and analysis. Finally, the chapter showed how ethical considerations were addressed.

Part III: Findings

Chapter 6: The refugee experience: differences between migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics and refugees' experiences of exile

6.1 Introduction

When refugees reach a safe country, they strive to rebuild their lives in an often culturally and socially alien environment, despite the experience of loss, trauma and separation from family. This chapter aims to create a specific picture of the refugee phenomenon, as experienced by refugees learning the language of the host country, by identifying the factors that underpin this experience. This is important to the main argument of the thesis, as the refugee experience is essential in understanding refugees' willingness to build or not relationships with others from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the ESOL/FE college environment.

The refugee experience will be assembled firstly by comparing migrant and refugee ESOL students' characteristics acquired by birth, such as gender, age and ethnicity, as well as socially acquired characteristics, such as educational and occupational background, number of years living in Britain, immigration status and employment experiences in Britain; and secondly by exploring refugee ESOL students' experiences of flight, migration to Britain and their initial attempts of settlement in their local communities in the wider London area. This will be achieved by presenting the college context, comparing migrant and refugee students' background characteristics through survey data, and exploring refugee students' experiences through interview data.

6.2 The college context

This introductory section aims to provide a general description of the colleges in which the study was carried out through the examination of the physical ESOL/FE College environment as a facilitator of student socialisation, the presentation of the organisation of ESOL provision and data on student distribution across ESOL levels.

As stated in chapter 5, the research was carried out in two inner London Further Education colleges, located in boroughs predominantly populated by working class populations and hosting a high number of ethnic minority populations, including immigrants and refugees. As can be seen from figure 6.1 (ONS 2007), the predominant ethnic minority population in 'Shakespeare Borough' is Black or Black British (African, Caribbean and others), making up almost a quarter of the population, while Asians (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and others) and other ethnic groups make up about 10% of the population. In contrast, the dominant ethnic minority population in 'Marlowe Borough' is Asian or Asian British (36%), with other ethnic groups (Black, Chinese and others) making up about 9% of the population. These proportions were reflected in the ethnic diversity of ESOL classrooms: in Shakespeare College the average number of students per classroom was 10.58 with 7.73 nationalities per classroom, while in Marlowe College the average student number per classroom was 10.97 with 4.14 nationalities per classroom.

Figure 6.1: Proportion of ethnic groups in Shakespeare and Marlowe Boroughs

Image redacted due to third party rights or other legal issues

It should be noted that statistics of ethnic minority populations living in these boroughs include British-born ethnic minorities and immigrants who have acquired British citizenship. As there are no official statistics available for the number of refugees (Esterhuizen 2004), their real number living in the boroughs can only be guessed at.

6.2.1 The college environment

Both colleges were located in old, renovated Victorian buildings that could only be entered with a form of identification. A group of steel doors gave the impression of protecting Shakespeare College from outsiders, while in Marlowe College visitors were confronted by security guards enquiring the purpose of the visit. The rooms accommodating ESOL groups were located across several floors of the buildings and were usually decorated with notice boards, ethnic craftwork created by students and posters depicting English grammar rules. Although most of the rooms in the buildings were reserved for staff or lessons, nevertheless both colleges provided students with a prayer room. Sparsely furnished, these rooms were of medium size and mostly used by Muslim students.

Besides the classrooms, the cafeterias in both colleges served as centres for socialisation. However, the differences in the designation and layout of spaces facilitating socialisation provided dissimilar opportunities for student interaction. Whilst in Marlowe College the cafeteria was an inviting, large and open space divided by wooden tables and pastel coloured sofas, Shakespeare College housed two student cafeterias: the first, located in the first floor of the front building, was a small space with round white tables and plastic chairs, overlooking the main road of the area; the second, located in the third floor of the back building, was a large space with artificial light making up for the absence of windows, decorated with white square tables and yellow plastic seats. In addition, the cafeteria in Marlowe College also provided a space for staff, separated from the student space only by a sign, while the staff at Shakespeare College had their own restaurant in the back building, which was an elegant room with contemporary wooden furniture. Two further spaces that could facilitate socialisation between students were identified as the learning centres and the smoking areas. Regarding the learning centre, these were large libraries supporting autonomous group learning through the provision of books and audiovisual learning materials and access to personal computers. The tables in both centres were arranged in a way that facilitated group study. Regarding the smoking area, there was only one space designated to smokers in Marlowe College, located at the courtyard bordering the cafeteria, while Shakespeare College had several smoking areas throughout the building.

Finally, both colleges had sports facilities located in different buildings from those which housed the ESOL courses. Students could use these facilities with a low membership fee. However, ESOL students did not make use of these: in fact, some ESOL students were unaware of their existence.

6.2.2 ESOL provision

There was separate ESOL provision for adult and adolescent students at both colleges, emphasising on the progression of adolescents to mainstream FE courses through intensive ESOL (16.5 hours per week in Marlowe College and 20.5 hours per week in Shakespeare College), and on the achievement of a vocational qualification by adults through courses with embedded ESOL, such as childcare, health and social care, office skills, information technology and dress making. During the academic year 2004/05 Shakespeare College was running 41 ESOL classes with tuition of 16.5 hours per week and Marlowe College was running 49 ESOL classes with tuition ranging from 2 to 16.5 hours per week. The student numbers in both colleges ranged from 10 to 20 in each group, but the actual number of students present in lessons was usually around 10 to 14.

Table 6.1: Refugee and migrant students across ESOL levels

<i>N=681</i>		Shakespeare College		Marlowe College	
		<i>Migrants</i>	<i>Refugees</i>	<i>Migrants</i>	<i>Refugees</i>
Entry Level	<i>EL1</i>	13 (13.5%)	49 (27.4%)	66 (21.1%)	19 (20.4%)
	<i>EL2</i>	38 (39.6%)	70 (39.1%)	124 (39.6%)	39 (41.9%)
	<i>EL3</i>	34 (35.4%)	42 (23.5%)	93 (29.7%)	33 (35.5%)
L1		11 (11.5%)	18 (10.1%)	13 (4.2%)	1 (1.1%)
	L2	-	-	17 (5.4%)	1 (1.1%)
Total		96 (100%)	179 (100%)	313 (100%)	93 (100%)

Both colleges provided ESOL at entry levels and level 1; level 2 was only offered by Marlowe College. As can be seen from table 6.1, most of the research participants studied at entry levels in both colleges, while only a minority studied at levels 1 and 2. Also, a higher proportion of refugee students studied at entry level 1 at Shakespeare College, while more refugees studied at entry levels 2 and 3 at Marlowe College. However, only 2 refugees studied at Levels 1 and 2 at Marlowe College, while 18 refugees studied at Level 1 in Shakespeare College.

There were also differences regarding the length of waiting time to enrol for an ESOL course. Table 6.2 indicates that Shakespeare College had a longer waiting period than Marlowe College. In both colleges a higher proportion of refugees waited over 3 months for a placement. At Shakespeare College one fifth waited between 4 to 11 months and one fifth waited one year or more, while in Marlowe College less than one fifth waited between 4 to 11 months and over one tenth waited one year or more. In addition the proportion of refugees waiting between 0 to 3 months was lower in Shakespeare College, and there was a lower proportion of migrants waiting over 4 months for a placement in both colleges.

Table 6.2: Waiting time for ESOL across colleges

	Shakespeare College (N=229 ^a)		Marlowe College (N=359 ^b)	
	<i>Migrants</i>	<i>Refugees</i>	<i>Migrants</i>	<i>Refugees</i>
<i>0-3 months</i>	59 (67.8%)	81 (57%)	214 (77%)	58 (71.6%)
<i>4-11 months</i>	13 (14.9%)	31 (21.9%)	45 (16.2%)	14 (17.3)
<i>12+ months</i>	15 (17.2%)	30 (21.1%)	19 (6.8%)	9 (11.1%)
Total	87 (100%)	142 (100%)	278 (100%)	81 (100%)

^a N=275 but 46 respondents did not answer this question

^b N=406 but 47 respondents did not answer this question

The Adult ESOL Core Curriculum and the learning materials ‘Skills for Life’ were adopted by ESOL departments of both colleges. As teachers explained, ESOL was a large source of income for a college because this was a priority for the sector. In addition, the then newly introduced changes regarding the acquisition of citizenship in Britain affected both colleges but in different ways. Marlowe College became a *citizenship assessment centre* where for a £25 fee citizenship candidates could either take a language test or, if existing students, could receive a certificate confirming their English language level (see also section 2.3.2). In contrast, Shakespeare College chose not to be an assessment centre because, as one teacher explained, teaching staff felt that the changing law increased their workload and responsibilities. Therefore, during the academic year 2004/05 Shakespeare College referred citizenship candidates to a college in a neighbouring borough.

Having briefly reviewed ESOL provision in both colleges, Shakespeare College had a higher number of refugees studying ESOL than Marlowe College. There was no indication that migrant and refugee ESOL students were treated differently, as at both colleges similar proportions of migrant and refugee students were on waiting lists. The programmes offered were of similar structure except the absence of L2 ESOL provision in Shakespeare College; both colleges were offering ESOL at entry and higher levels. However, with regard to citizenship testing Shakespeare College did not incorporate any changes because of teachers’ concerns about increased workload, while Marlowe College’s accreditation as a citizenship assessment centre was responding the needs of its existing students as well as those of the local population.

The background characteristics of migrant and refugee ESOL students will be explored next.

6.3 The background characteristics of ESOL students: insights from quantitative data

This section reports the background characteristics of migrant and refugee ESOL students and builds up a portrait of refugee ESOL students. As ESOL students’ limited language skills may make it difficult for an acquaintanceship to transform into a

friendship, it has been hypothesised that background characteristics comprising the refugee experience may affect relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment. Characteristics that were examined in this section are immigration status, country of origin, gender, age, number of years living in Britain before starting ESOL, citizenship plans, educational and occupational background, employment history in Britain and future educational and occupational aspirations. These were analysed through frequency comparison and where appropriate, through further exploration of any statistical associations³⁰ between ESOL students and specific characteristics by using *chi-square* test and odds-ratio analysis.

6.3.1 *Migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics*

As argued in section 1.3 refugees are distinct from migrant populations because of the sudden, often ad-hoc nature of their migration to Britain. Once in Britain, many refugees find their right to stay restricted through their falling into various existing immigration categories, but nevertheless are entitled to attend ESOL classes. Tables 6.3a and 6.3b present the immigration statuses of migrant and refugee ESOL students in both colleges at the time of the survey.

As can be observed, the vast majority of migrant students had no restrictions on their stay as they were residents (46%), or British citizens (37.3%). In contrast, a high proportion of refugee students (23.4%) was awaiting a decision on their asylum application, or was staying in Britain on a temporary residency (13.6%). Only half had permanent residence and over one tenth had acquired British citizenship. The high proportion of asylum-seekers indicates that they could be susceptible to dispersal policies or forcible repatriation if they were to receive a negative decision on their asylum claim. For instance, in the first quarter of 2008 almost one fifth of asylum-seekers were removed from Britain while there was an increase of 3% in compulsory removals in 2007/08 compared to 2006/07 (Home Office 2008:5). This could potentially affect refugee students' willingness to build friendships with others in the

³⁰ For the purposes of chi-square testing, the research question 1a, presented in section 4.5 was broken down in testable null hypotheses and indicated appropriately in specific subsections.

ESOL/FE college environment, as the threat of dispersal may affect their attitudes on settlement.

Table 6.3a: Migrants' immigration status

N=400 ^a		Migrants	
Visa	67	(16.8%)	
Resident/EU Citizen	184	(46%)	
British Citizen	149	(37.3%)	
Total	400	(100%)	

^a N=409 but 9 respondents did not answer this question

Table 6.3b: Refugees' immigration status

N=265 ^a		Refugees	
Asylum-seeker	62	(23.4%)	
ELR/DLR	36	(13.6%)	
ILR/Refugee Status	129	(48.7%)	
British Citizen	38	(14.3%)	
Total	265	(100%)	

^a N=272 but 7 respondents did not answer this question

A further issue arising is that refugee ESOL students who have been recognised as refugees will have to undergo the citizenship test if they wish to acquire British citizenship. According to Freelore Mensah (2008) although citizenship grants rose by 7% in 2007, 16% of citizenship refusals were because of insufficient knowledge of English. In contrast, almost half of migrant students participating in this study were permanently residing in Britain and one out of three were British citizens with no or basic English language skills.

In the ESOL classroom the various immigration statuses were irrelevant to the learning experience³¹, but there could be effects on class size and drop-out through the compulsory dispersal policies, which could also have implications for the building of relationships in the class. This in turn may impact negatively on the motivation of asylum-seeker students because of the uncertainty that accompanies their status, which in turn would affect their need for orientation and pastoral support (Roberts *et al.* 2004, Hodge *et al.* 2005).

³¹ In fact, the only time students were asked for proof of immigration status was during enrolment.

6.3.1.1 Gender

While the majority of refugee and migrant ESOL students were female (over 60%) as indicated in table 6.4, there were no variations in the proportion of male and female between migrant and refugee ESOL students. There was no statistically significant association³² between ESOL students and gender (see appendix 2A).

Table 6.4: Gender of migrant and refugee students

N=681	Migrants	Refugees
<i>Male</i>	141 (34.5%)	92 (33.8%)
<i>Female</i>	268 (65.5%)	180 (66.2%)
<i>Total</i>	409 (100%)	272 (100%)

6.3.1.2 Country of origin

Of the 681 students who participated in the survey, 409 migrant students came from 51 different countries and 272 refugee students came from 33 different countries, sharing a total of 52 first languages (see also appendices 2B and 2C respectively). Table 6.5 shows the first ten countries of origin for migrant and refugee ESOL students in descending order.

A closer examination of refugee students' countries of origin confirms that refugee participants came from war-torn countries or countries with a record of human rights abuse towards specific groups. This finding is complemented by IPPR (2005), which found that during 1999 to 2003, refugees' top ten countries of origin included Somalia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran and Kosovo. In addition, the table indicates that some of the countries, such as Bangladesh, Somalia, Sri Lanka and Vietnam, which were marked by

³² The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and Gender' has been assumed.

war and political upheaval in recent years, appear to produce both forced and voluntary migratory movements.

Table 6.5: Countries of origin of migrant and refugee students

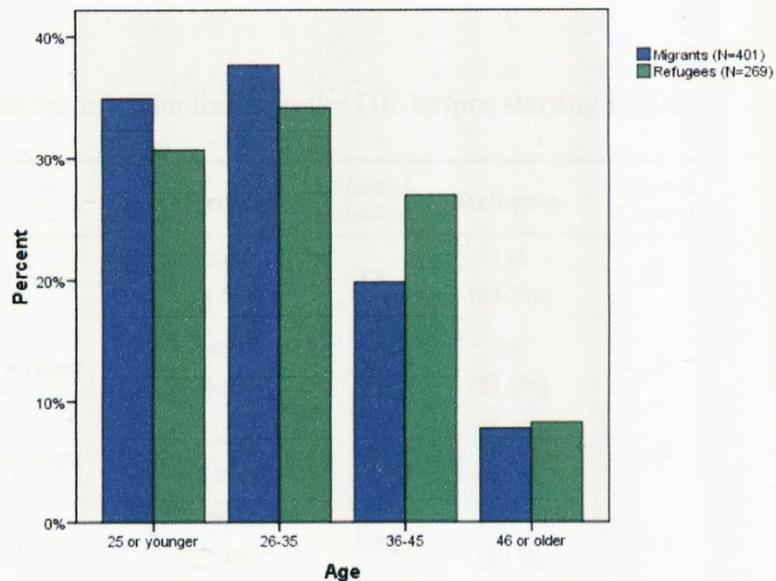
Migrants		Refugees	
<i>Country</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Bangladesh	231 (56.5%)	Somalia	90 (33.1%)
China	18 (4.4%)	Afghanistan	31 (11.4%)
France	14 (3.4%)	D.R. Congo	21 (7.7%)
Somalia	11 (2.7%)	Sri Lanka	19 (7%)
Poland	10 (2.4%)	Iran	14 (5.1%)
Sri Lanka	10 (2.4%)	Vietnam	14 (5.1%)
Turkey	10 (2.4%)	Iraq (all Kurdish)	12 (4.4%)
Vietnam	9 (2.2%)	Kosovo	12 (4.4%)
Lithuania	8 (2%)	Bangladesh	7 (2.6%)
Portugal	7 (1.7%)	Ivory Coast	6 (2.2%)
Other	81 (19.9%)	Other	46 (17%)
Total	409 (100%)	Total	272 (100%)

However, this may indicate that many people were forced to leave their country but entered Britain without claiming asylum. For instance, 3 out of 11 Somalis reporting to be EU residents had claimed asylum in Finland, Netherlands or Belgium, obtained citizenship and then migrated to Britain as EU citizens (see also appendix 2D). In addition, Kleist (2004) argues that due to the long history of migration of Somalis, the possibility of continued migration rises with the acquisition of a western country's citizenship. This indicates that the number of actual refugees could be higher. Nevertheless at the time of writing no statistical data about secondary migration of refugees within the European Union member states could be identified.

6.3.1.3 Age

Turning now to the age of ESOL students, it can be observed from figure 6.2 that whilst there seems to be a similar proportion of refugee students aged in their early 20s and 30s, a higher proportion of refugees than migrants were aged 36-45 years.

Figure 6.2: Age of migrant and refugee students



*N=681, but 8 migrants and 3 refugees did not answer this question

These distributions may be an effect of reasons for migration (Kunz 1973, 1981), where migrants chose to come to Britain at a younger age at the peak of their physical abilities in search for employment, while refugees came to Britain at a more mature age, indicating the forced nature of their migration, during which individuals tend to be settled and professionally established. Thus, the age of migrants tends to be clustered around 20-35 years, while that of refugees is more widely spread. However, no statistical association³³ was identified between ESOL students and age (see appendix 2E).

³³ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and Age' has been assumed.

6.3.1.4 Years living in the UK before starting ESOL

When the number of years living in Britain before starting to study ESOL is compared, it can be seen from table 6.6 that a higher proportion of refugees than migrants started studying ESOL within their first three years in Britain and over one fifth between 4 to 6 years living in Britain. Similarly, almost half of migrant students started studying ESOL during the first years of stay, but surprisingly, almost one quarter started studying ESOL after living for 10 years or more in the country.

Table 6.6: Number of years living in the UK before starting ESOL

N=635 ^a	Migrants	Adjusted Residual	Refugees	Adjusted Residual
<i>0 to 3 years</i>	203 (51.5%)	-3.3	156 (64.7%)	3.3
<i>4 to 6 years</i>	65 (16.5%)	-1.6	52 (21.6%)	1.6
<i>7 to 9 years</i>	34 (8.6%)	0.9	16 (6.6%)	-0.9
<i>10+ years</i>	92 (23.4%)	5.3	17 (7.1%)	-5.3
Total	394 (100%)		241 (100%)	

^a N=681 but 46 respondents did not answer this question

This trend may be an effect of the improvement and expansion of ESOL provision enabling many more people from ethnic minority populations to access courses. A statistically significant association has been identified between ESOL students and number of years living in Britain before starting ESOL³⁴ ($\chi^2=30.595$, $df=3$, $p < 0.01$, see appendix 2F), indicating that refugees were significantly more likely to have started their ESOL studies between their arrival and 3 years (adjusted residual = 3.3 > $z_{crit} = 1.96$), while migrants were significantly more likely to have started their ESOL studies after 10 years or more of living in Britain (adjusted residual = 5.3 > $z_{crit} = 1.96$).

³⁴ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and number of years living in Britain before starting ESOL' has been assumed.

6.3.1.5 ESOL students' citizenship plans

Table 6.7 shows the proportion of migrant and refugee ESOL students' plans regarding the acquisition of British citizenship. As can be seen, two fifths of migrants and almost one fifth of refugees were British citizens and of those who were not, over a third of migrants and twice as many refugees planned to acquire British citizenship in the future.

Table 6.7: Migrant and refugee students' plans for acquiring British citizenship

N=563 ^a	Migrants	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	Refugees	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>
<i>Already have British citizenship</i>	149 (40.8%)	5.3	37 (18.7%)	-5.3
<i>Have applied for British citizenship</i>	14 (3.8%)	-1.2	12 (6.1%)	1.2
<i>Want to apply for British citizenship</i>	126 (34.5%)	-8.3	141 (71.2%)	8.3
<i>Do not need British citizenship</i>	76 (20.8%)	5.3	8 (4%)	-5.3
Total	365 <i>(100%)</i>		198 <i>(100%)</i>	

^a N=681 but 118 respondents did not answer this question

This finding indicates that while for migrant and refugee students obtaining British citizenship may be regarded as the safest way to secure their stay in Britain, the fact that 20.8% of migrant students felt that they did not need British citizenship may be explained by the security many migrants, especially from European Union member states, felt about being allowed to move freely and work within the European Union borders. Nevertheless, Levesley (2008) argues that the intention to acquire British citizenship grows over time and depends on fair treatment and settlement opportunities. Further, for those who planned to apply for British citizenship this meant that they needed to reach EL3 ESOL and pass the citizenship test. For the colleges in turn, this is an indicator of the need to develop citizenship courses with an increased future demand. There was a statistically significant association between migrant and refugee ESOL

students and citizenship plans³⁵ ($\chi^2=81.083$, $df=3$, $p < 0.01$, see appendix 2G) indicating that refugees were significantly more likely to want to obtain British citizenship (adjusted residual = 8.3 > $z_{crit}=1.96$), while migrants were significantly more likely to either be already British citizens (adjusted residual = 5.3 > $z_{crit}=1.96$) or not needing citizenship (adjusted residual = 5.3 > $z_{crit}=1.96$).

6.3.1.6 Educational and occupational backgrounds

Turning now to students' educational and occupational backgrounds, table 6.8 shows that a lower proportion of refugees than migrants completed secondary school and over a quarter of both groups held a professional qualification. However, one in five refugees had no schooling compared with one in sixteen migrants, which may be a result of interrupted education due to war or forced migration (Rutter 2001).

Table 6.8: Educational backgrounds

N=676 ^a	Migrants	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	Refugees	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>
<i>No schooling</i>	25 (6.2%)	-5.7	56 (20.7%)	5.7
<i>Completed primary school</i>	87 (21.5%)	-0.2	60 (22.1%)	0.2
<i>Completed secondary school</i>	183 (45.2%)	3.8	83 (30.6%)	-3.8
<i>Holds professional qualification</i>	110 (27.2%)	0.2	72 (26.6%)	-0.2
Total	405 (100%)		271 (100%)	

^a N=681 but 5 respondents did not answer this question

There was a statistically significant association between migrant and refugee ESOL students and educational backgrounds³⁶ ($\chi^2=37.253$, $df=3$, $p > 0.001$, see appendix 2H), indicating that while refugees tended to have no schooling experiences (adjusted

³⁵ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and citizenship plans' has been assumed.

³⁶ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and educational background' has been assumed.

residual = 5.7 > $z_{crit}=1.96$), migrants significantly tended to have completed secondary school (adjusted residual = 3.8 > $z_{crit}=1.96$).

Regarding employment backgrounds in the home country table 6.9 below highlights that only two thirds of migrants and almost half of refugees were working. The high rate of unemployment for both groups is not surprising given the high proportion of students in their 20s (see figure 6.2), as many may have attended secondary school at the time they were living in their countries. With respect to refugees' economic activities in their home country, this finding is similar to Bloch's (2004) in her investigation of refugees' barriers and opportunities in employment and training – 42 % of refugees in her study were economically active in their home countries. However, this is significantly lower than Kirk's (2004) finding, who identified in her skills audit of refugees that 67% were economically active in their home countries. This difference may be due to the different countries of origin of participants; for instance, Zimbabweans, who have a very high rate of literacy, were included in Kirk's sample.

Table 6.9: Employment in the home country

N=572 ^a	Migrants	Refugees
<i>Employed</i>	135 (39.9%)	116 (49.6%)
<i>Economically Inactive</i>	203 (60.1%)	118 (50.4%)
Total	338 (100%)	234 (100%)

^a N=681 but 109 participants did not respond to this question

There was a statistically significant association between ESOL students and employment in the home country³⁷ ($\chi^2=5.209$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$, see appendix 2I). Further exploration of this association with odds ratio analysis revealed that refugees were 1.5 times more likely to be employed in their home country than migrants.

Furthermore, for the 251 ESOL students who were economically active in their home countries, there were slightly more migrants than refugees who held managerial and

³⁷ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and employment in the home country' has been assumed.

professional, as well as intermediate occupations, while a higher proportion of refugee students held routine and manual occupations or were self-employed or working in family business. Table 6.10 presents the occupational backgrounds of migrants and refugees. There was a statistically significant association between migrant and refugee ESOL students and occupational backgrounds in the home country³⁸ ($\chi^2=8.424$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$, see appendix 2J) indicating that refugees tended to be self-employed or working in family business (adjusted residual = 2.3 > $z_{crit}=1.96$).

Table 6.10: Prior occupational backgrounds

N=251 ^a	Migrants	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	Refugees	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>
<i>Managerial & Professional Occupation</i>	60 (44.4%)	1.5	41 (35.3%)	-1.5
<i>Intermediate Occupation</i>	31 (23%)	1.3	19 (16.4%)	-1.3
<i>Routine & Manual Occupation</i>	36 (26.7%)	-1.2	39 (33.6%)	1.2
<i>Self-employed or Family Business</i>	8 (5.9%)	-2.3	17 (14.7%)	2.3
Total	135 (100%)		116 (100%)	

^a N includes only those who were employed in their home country

6.3.1.7 Employment in Britain

Only 229 of all students reported to have had paid or unpaid employment and 136 to be working at the time of the survey. As table 6.11a shows, three out of four refugee students and one out of two migrant students have never worked in Britain. For those who have worked, a small proportion volunteered for charitable organisations. Similarly, as shown in table 6.11b, a higher proportion of refugees than migrants were unemployed at the time of the survey, although the rates of unemployment are very high for both groups.

³⁸ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and prior occupational background' has been assumed.

Table 6.11a: Past employment in Britain

N=527 ^a	Migrants	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>	Refugees	<i>Adjusted Residual</i>
<i>Never worked</i>	195 (53%)	-5.4	189 (75.1%)	5.4
<i>Has worked</i>	156 (42.4%)	5.6	45 (20%)	-5.6
<i>Has volunteered</i>	17 (4.6%)	-0.2	11 (4.9%)	0.2
Total	325 (100%)		202 (100%)	

^a N=681 but 88 respondents did not answer this question

Table 6.11b: Current employment

N=603 ^a	Migrants	Refugees
<i>Currently unemployed</i>	278 (73.7%)	189 (83.6%)
<i>Currently works</i>	99 (26.3%)	37 (16.4%)
Total	377 (100%)	226 (100%)

^a N=681 but 78 respondents did not answer this question

Although it was expected that unemployment rates for refugees would be high, the proportion of refugees in employment is lower compared to that in Bloch's (2002) study. This may be due to the fact that participants at the present study were studying ESOL in order to find appropriate employment.

There was a statistically significant association between migrant and refugee ESOL students and employment in Britain³⁹ ($\chi^2=31.807$, $df=2$, $p<0.01$, see appendix 2K) indicating that refugees tended to have never worked in Britain (adjusted residual = 5.4 > $z_{crit}=1.96$) while migrants tended to have been in paid employment (adjusted residual = 5.6 > $z_{crit}=1.96$). In addition, there was a statistically significant association between migrant and refugee ESOL students and current employment⁴⁰ ($\chi^2= 7.910$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$, see appendix 2L). Further exploration with odds ratio analysis indicated that refugees were 1.8 times more likely to be unemployed at the time of the survey than

³⁹ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and past employment in Britain' has been assumed.

⁴⁰ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and current employment' has been assumed.

migrants. The low employment rates for refugees found in this study confirm previous findings (Bloch 2002, Dudwar 2006, Dimitriadou 2009) and may be due to different factors, such as non awareness of the British labour market, discrimination and prejudice of employers, and limited English language skills.

Regarding occupations, it seems that both groups of students experienced downward occupational mobility in the British labour market. Out of approximately one third of migrants and refugees previously working in managerial and professional occupations, only 14 migrants and 2 refugees have stayed in this occupational group in Britain. Not surprisingly, the majority of both, migrants and refugees have held routine and manual jobs in Britain. In addition, only 3 migrant students reported to be self-employed or working in family business, which is a sharp decline in the number of migrants self employed in their home country. However, there was no statistically significant association⁴¹ between migrant and refugee ESOL students and occupations in Britain.

Table 6.12: Occupations of employed migrant and refugee students in Britain

N=122 ^a	Migrants	Refugees
<i>Managerial & Professional Occupation</i>	14 (15.9%)	2 (5.9%)
<i>Intermediate Occupation</i>	12 (13.6%)	3 (8.8%)
<i>Routine & Manual Occupation</i>	59 (67%)	29 (85.3%)
<i>Self-employed or Family Business</i>	3 (3.4%)	0 (0%)
Total	88 (100%)	34 (100%)

^a N=136 for those currently working but 14 respondents did not answer this question

Routine and manual occupations in which migrant students tended to be employed were in the catering industry, retail and cleaning sectors. Similarly, refugee students tended to work as drivers, in the catering industry and cleaning (see appendix 2M). Interestingly, all migrants in managerial and professional occupations were working as

⁴¹ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and occupation in Britain' has been assumed.

teachers; teaching either Islamic studies, Bengali, Arabic or Turkish. Similarly the refugees in the same occupational group reported to be working as Imams at mosques. Again, the fact that most refugees in employment were working in low-paid, manual jobs confirms previous findings of loss of socio-economic status (Bloch 2000).

6.3.1.8 Future educational and occupational aspirations

If ESOL students' future career plans are compared, it can be seen from table 6.13 that almost half of migrants wanted to continue studying ESOL and two fifths wanted to enter employment, while two fifths of refugees wanted to continue studying ESOL or another further education course. This could be an effect of the difficulties refugees face finding long-term employment because of lack of English language skills, low paid employment or discrimination (Bloch 2002, Dudwar 2006).

Table 6.13: Educational aspirations

N=534 ^{a, b}	Migrants	Refugees	Total
<i>Continue studying ESOL</i>	146 (46.6%)	84 (42.4%)	230 (44.1%)
<i>Continue study FE</i>	110 (35.1%)	83 (41.9%)	193 (38.6%)
<i>Continue study HE</i>	86 (27.5%)	55 (27.8%)	141 (29.4%)
<i>Find a job</i>	127 (40.6%)	58 (29.3%)	185 (34.5%)
<i>Total (count)</i>	313	198	511

^a EL1 students were excluded because of weak English language skills.

^b N=534 but 23 respondents did not answer this question

Almost one third of all students aspired to study for a university qualification and almost one third of refugees wanted to enter employment. This trend may indicate that refugees aspired to enter employment with qualifications recognised by British employers and also, may not want to work in routine and manual employment. There

was no statistical association⁴² between ESOL students and future educational aspirations.

In turn, as can be seen from table 6.14, the most popular further education destinations after ESOL chosen by all ESOL students were childcare, followed by information technology and health & social care. Similarly, the most popular higher education destinations were information technology, followed by nursing and engineering. This finding indicates that migrant and refugee ESOL students' future occupational aspirations may be influenced by the current employment market, choosing occupations that are popular, such as information technology, or in which there is a perceived shortage of professionals, such as childcare, nursing or engineering.

Table 6.14: Most popular FE and HE courses

FE Courses (N=193^a)	No	%	HE Courses (N=141^b)	No	%
<i>Childcare</i>	25	12.4	<i>Information Technology</i>	18	12.2
<i>Information Technology</i>	24	11.9	<i>Nursing</i>	12	8.1
<i>Health & Social Care</i>	17	8.5	<i>Engineering</i>	6	4.1
<i>Business Studies</i>	10	5	<i>English Literature</i>	6	4.1
<i>English (GCSE/A-Level)</i>	7	3.5	<i>Business Studies</i>	5	3.4
<i>Don't know</i>	49	24.4	<i>Don't know</i>	57	38.5
<i>Other</i>	61	34.3	<i>Other</i>	37	29.6
Total	193	100	Total	141	100

^a N includes responses of those who reported to want continuing study at FE and also, EL1 students were excluded because of weak English language skills.

^b N includes responses of those who reported to want continuing study at HE and also, EL1 students were excluded because of weak English language skills.

Nevertheless, there was a significant proportion of students who did not know what subjects to study at further (13.9%) or higher education (31.2%), which may indicate that they want to improve their employment prospects by simply holding a vocational or academic qualification.

⁴² The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between ESOL students and future educational aspirations' has been assumed.

In summary, this section identified that on the one hand, any variations in trends of migrant and refugee ESOL students' demographic characteristics of age and gender, as well as their occupations in Britain and future educational aspirations are likely to have occurred by chance⁴³.

On the other hand, differences between refugees and migrants studying ESOL identified through testing for statistical associations⁴⁴ were related to life in the home country and life in Britain. Firstly, regarding life in the home country, it was highlighted that refugee participants were more likely than migrants not to have undergone formal schooling, which could be related to the destruction of formal social structures and institutions in countries due to the onset of war, such as in Somalia, or the suppression of women's rights to education, such as in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. Secondly, it was shown that refugees were more likely than migrants to be employed in their own or family-owned businesses, an indication of the extent of property loss. Thirdly, regarding life in Britain, it was identified that refugee participants were more likely than migrants to start studying ESOL soon after arrival, even when still awaiting a decision on their asylum application. Fourthly, refugees were more likely than migrants to want to acquire British citizenship, which is an indicator of their acceptance of their stay in Britain as permanent. Lastly, it was highlighted that refugees were more likely than migrants to be unemployed or, if in employment, to occupy routine and manual jobs, which is an indicator of their less than full inclusion in socio-economic life in Britain.

Having reviewed the differences between ESOL students and their background characteristics, the experiences of refugees' life in the home country, their flight, arrival and settlement in Britain will be explored next.

⁴³ As no associations were identified, the null hypotheses that there was no association between *migrant and refugee ESOL students and gender/ age/ occupation in Britain/ future educational aspirations* were not rejected.

⁴⁴ As statistical associations between *migrant and refugee ESOL students and number of years living in Britain/ citizenship plans/ educational background/ employment in the home country/ prior occupational background/ past employment in Britain/ current employment* were identified, the null hypothesis was rejected and the existence of differences between refugee and migrant ESOL students and the above listed characteristics were accepted as alternative hypotheses.

6.4 Refugee ESOL students' experiences of uprooting, migration and settlement in Britain: insights from qualitative data

The 35 refugees, 15 males and 20 females who were interviewed in this study, came from mostly African and Asian countries, such as Somalia, DR Congo, Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq, and were aged between 20 and 60 years. The majority were married; more than half had children and were living with their families in London. Also, most of the participants reported to have been economically active in their home country, either having their own business, such as owning a shop, car trading, trading in food products or working in professional occupations, such as teaching, law, veterinary medicine and engineering, but also in mechanics, printing or design. In addition, there was a high number of participants who were students at school or university or for many females, especially from Somalia, who were housewives or, if not married, stayed at home.

Although push factors for refugee movements may vary, their underlying factor is highlighted by danger, loss and flight. Participants in this study described their existing life in their home country as a routine family life until it was interrupted by either war or through their involvement in activities that were against the political regime (see section 1.2). The section below explores these push factors with reference to participants' accounts.

6.4.1 Fleeing conflict

Participants in this study who fled their country as a direct result of violence and loss occurring through war came from Somalia, Kosovo, Afghanistan, Sudan, DR Congo and Iraq. All Somalis described the situation in Somalia as anarchic and chaotic: attacks for no apparent reason irrespective of age, gender or status, and looting were commonplace. Property, even insignificant items such as a jacket, was taken and shooting and death occurred frequently. The horrors many of the Somalis have faced are best described by Ayanna, a 26-year-old woman.

We were attacked by the rebels. My father was a businessman. He had two shops; (...) My mum was making the henna to the women

[body painting]. One day, my father and my brother were in the tailor's shop. When the shooting happened, they closed the door, they didn't come with us because it's too..., if you, you can't imagine even, if you don't stay there you can't realise. [During shootings] nobody can go outside, the buildings are like, well, you can watch it now on TV, it's like Iraq. It was like that really, you can't escape, you can't go anywhere. (...) So, it makes me very shocked, even here [in London], because I saw the body of my dad, my brother, everything is [a] shock. [Interview, Ayanna, 1/12/04]

At the time of this tragedy Ayanna was a fragile 13-year-old girl. Six years later their household was attacked again by rebels, this time killing her sister:

When my sister died I stayed with her. The rebels didn't like me, because I was very, very sick. They thought I was going to die today or tomorrow. They didn't do nothing, just kicked me here in my body [points to her abdomen] and they hit me with the back of the gun at my back, so, sometimes I have back pain. So, it makes me, depression, sometimes I become depressed, I hate myself, I say '*Why are you still here?*' This is what is war. [Interview, Ayanna, 1/12/04]

As Ayanna described, horrendous experience such as hers do not leave only physical, but deep psychological scars. In both colleges, a high number of Somali students showed their shot wounds or other disfigurements on their bodies whose presence was a permanent reminder of war. These may be bullet wounds, missing or disfigured and dysfunctional limbs, or burns. Safia, a 38-year-old Somali woman, explained that the mark on her forehead was inflicted by hits with the back side of a shotgun during an attack at her home in Mogadishu in which her husband was killed. She believes that she was spared because the rebels showed mercy towards her baby son who was with her during the attack.

Another group of students who fled war were the Kosovans. Interestingly, their accounts, unlike the Somalis, tend to concentrate on ethnic discrimination which led to war, rather than on the indiscriminate violence inflicted during civil conflict (as discussed in section 3.4.1). The cruelty and hatred that may arise in ethnic conflict is best expressed in Leonora's accounts. Leonora, a 33-year-old, former teacher, was a Christian of Serbian origin who married a Muslim. Her marriage led to the loss of her job and the hatred by her and her husband's family. Sadly, she said that her firstborn child was left to die because a Serbian doctor judged that a Muslim child did not deserve to live:

I met my husband but his family was Muslim and my family, my mother, is Christian from Bosnia, but we lived in Kosovo (...). The war started then (...) I left my country because the war started. [Before the war] my first child died in Kosovo. When I was pregnant and went to hospital, the doctor knew that I was Christian and my husband Muslim. The doctor was a Serb. I can't forget this moment when I heard in the corridor [the doctor saying] *'Let the baby die, her mum is Christian and her dad is Muslim'*. [Interview, Leonora, 12/11/04]

Similarly, Enver, a 39-year-old former vet, and Leke, a 40-year-old former lawyer, fled Kosovo because of oppression by the Serbian government. Both experienced discrimination in terms of employment and equal treatment due to their families' political activities. Enver explained that because of his father's imprisonment due to his membership in the Kosovo Liberation Army, the freedom of his family was restricted and they were always under threat on being mistreated by the police. Due to his great worry, he refused the interview to be recorded, but did not mind note-taking. His anxiety is perhaps not surprising, as the following extract from his interview indicates.

He said that he is fearful because some people want him dead and that nobody knows where he is; he would like it to stay that way. He does not know whether his family members are alive and where they live. He has no information about them and cannot believe anyone.(...) The last time he got in touch with his mother was one year ago. He said that he called her from a BT cell, told her that he and his family are alright (...). His father, a supporter of the independence of Kosovo, had political problems and was jailed for 15 years; after that, the freedoms of his family were restricted, especially social rights and education; he also explained that belonging to an ethnic minority, he and his family were not allowed to use their first language, Albanian, in public.(...) [Interview, Enver, 15/11/04]

Likewise, Leke fled Kosovo because his brother's political activities led to the loss of his job, increasing mistreatment of his family and disruption of their routine family life. All Kosovans indicated that they fled their country just before the war broke out, raising money from their extended family in order to pay traffickers.

The stories of Iraqi Kurds participating in this study describe desperation and death experienced during the Iraqi dictatorship. Karzan, a 33-year-old male, described the internal displacement of his family because of the regime's arabisation strategy of Northern cities in Iraq during which his parents died. In addition, his family's settlement in a new area had been made impossible because of the confiscation of

farmland and unemployment. Thus, one by one his brothers and sisters had started to move to neighbouring countries. The horror of the regime was also experienced by Ahmed, a 34-year-old male, whose account describes the terrifying events that took place against the Kurdish population in Northern Iraq. Ahmed changed his luck by entering the Iraqi army and was sent to Kuwait from where he managed to escape, as a deserter, and flee to Iran.

I left my country because of political reasons. I am from the city of Hallabja and I lost brothers and sisters [friends] there, part of my [extended] family there. I can't say all my friends died. We were lucky as a family; we moved homes. Before the chemical attack started we moved to another house, otherwise we would be dead now. (...) The year before that, in 1987, when Kurdish people rose against Saddam Hussein, they attacked the same city. They attacked Hallabja for a few hours. [Then] we didn't have a car to escape, we stayed there and many people were killed. (...) The chemical attack happened in 1988. [Interview, Ahmed, 2/02/05]

Ahmed explained that after fleeing Hallabja, his family ended up in a refugee camp in Iran, but decided to return to North Iraq after the regime granted all Iraqi refugees a month's amnesty for return.

I was expecting to go back to my college and finish my course [in printing] and my family was expecting to go back to Hallabja, but when we went back to Iraq they took us all to a detention centre, in the desert, surrounded by tanks. *Leave there and die there*, no services, nothing. So, people from villages around the camp brought us some food and drink, every day (...). [However] they allowed people to join the army. So, I didn't have any other choice (...).

Anyway, I went to the army for one and a half years. I went to Kuwait, when Saddam took Kuwait in 1990. So, I had to be there with the army and Saddam treated the Kuwaiti people like he treated the Kurdish people. And when I was in the army, before we went to the City they said, *'You have a right to kill! You are the Iraqi Army and have the power. Use your power'* Many people used their power. I said *'No, I don't! because one day this army did that to my country. To my city, to my land, to my people. I am not going to do the same to Arabic people'*. I know, when Saddam Hussein was doing this to Kurdish people, Arabic people from Kuwait were helping Saddam Hussein, but I am not going to take revenge like this, close my eyes and take my revenge. [Interview, Ahmed, 2/02/05]

Ahmed's experience of persecution may bear similarities to those of other Iraqi Kurds, with one crucial difference: while Ahmed found himself in a position to be the persecutor, he was able to rationalise his role through reflecting on events that took part in his home town and did not take the actions required of him.

The Afghans participating in this study fled their country because of religious extremism of the Taliban which was infiltrating all aspects of people's family life. All – Razaq, a 23-year-old man; Daria, a 22-year-old woman; Mahmood, a 31-year-old man and Yasir, a 40-year-old man – said that those who opposed the rules imposed by the Taliban were threatened with death. Razaq never went to school in Afghanistan because of the fighting. Daria's plans for studying at university were shattered because she was a woman. Yasir and Mahmood were leading simple lives as skilled workers but felt increasingly threatened because of problems with the Taliban. As Yasir put it in his limited and broken English, '*very bad regime came in 1999 to Afghanistan, very bad regime*'. All left Afghanistan before the war with the USA broke out.

The stories of Congolese participants highlight the danger and difficulties faced when caught up with politics. Marc is a 41-year-old asylum-seeker, son of a Rwandan, whose business was confiscated by the government because of his ethnicity. Similarly, Koffi, a 23-year-old male, was studying economics when he was caught up with the aggression related to ethnicity. Their accounts highlight their inability to protect their livelihoods, their property or themselves from the rebels. The terror many faced is best captured through Nyambi's words, a 38-year-old divorced mother, who lost family members.

I left because of political problems. My family, some of them are killed. (...) If they [the rebels] came to look for you, they didn't find you, they could kill anybody they find. And for myself, before I run, some people came, they covered their face and with their guns, they said '*We want money*'. They give you, like eh, 24 hours. They said '*You'll see us, we'll come again*'. At that time, if they told you this, you must run; if you didn't run, they'll come and kill you. [Interview, Nyambi, 1/02/05]

What these short accounts have in common is that all participants were subjected to a form of discrimination based on ethnicity, gender, or simply ownership or property, that led to violation of human rights, loss of property and death, inflicted by the political

regime in the cases of Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan or the absence of any state control in the cases of Somalia and DR Congo. Packed with these experiences, these people were dispersed at many instances to several countries before they started rebuilding their lives in Britain. The experiences of those who fled persecution will be explored next.

6.4.2 *Fleeing persecution*

Participants who fled oppressive regimes tended to come from various countries, such as Iran, Burma, Sri Lanka, Ivory Coast, Albania, Ethiopia and Turkey. The common characteristic in their accounts was discrimination experienced on the grounds of ethnicity, religion or political affiliation. Carine, a 33-year-old mother from Sierra Leone fled because she was volunteering for the opposition party; Tushkata, a 29-year-old Burmese woman, fled because of the withdrawal of rights for ethnic and religious minorities; Blerta, a 24-year-old Albanian woman, fled because her husband's occupation, a policeman, got them into problems with the government; and Birten, a 47-year-old Kurdish woman from Turkey, left because she was discriminated against because of her ethnicity. It emerges from their accounts that these people or their close relatives were either opposing the dominant ideology in their country or had an active role in opposing the government. Zëri, a 28-year-old father of three from Ethiopia, who was at the time working as an epidemiologist and lecturer at the University of Addis Abeba, explained that people from his ethnic group were persecuted for wanting to form their own republic. His account below demonstrates how the struggle for domination in politics between ethnic groups can lead to discrimination and persecution of individuals involved.

The thing is, I belong to the ethnic majority, it's called the Oromo ethnic group. It counts about 60% of the total population (...) but the minority is still ruling the country and not only that thing, but we are not allowed to exercise our rights, you know? There is an organisation, Oromo Liberation Front, who is fighting for the Independence of the Oromo Republic and that's the whole idea of the conflict. Most people, Oromo people eh, they are supporting this organisation and the organisation is officially banned from the country, but still, people are supporting it one way or the other (...)

Some of them [supporters of the Oromo Liberation Front] are banished; some of them are in jail. That's why I'm here. I wouldn't think to come here, I wouldn't think for a second to be here in my life (...). My oldest brother was killed by the government. [Interview, Zeri, 8/03/05]

In contrast, the accounts of Iranian participants differ in that they were persecuted because of their everyday actions, highlighting how the restriction of individual freedom in fundamentalist political regimes can push people out of a country. 33-year-old Reza explained that he had worked for the intelligence service and was leading a good life until it was interrupted by sensitive information he had acquired. He refused to provide more details, but said only that this information was not important for the Iranian government any more. At that time however, he explained that once he realised that his life was in danger, he exchanged that information for refugee protection with the British. Reza's case may be rare and incomparable to that of other Iranian refugees because of his past occupation. Nevertheless it demonstrates that even those whose activities do not oppose the regime can find themselves in a position of being persecuted. On the contrary, the account of Sarfras, another Iranian man aged 24, shows how political regimes can restrict personal freedom and economic opportunities. Sarfras, explaining below that he was imprisoned because of his business activities, questions the authority of any state to withdraw freedom of information from people.

It's my belief, I did nothing wrong but they [the Iranian government] believe that I did. Basically, it's like, eh, I used to be a manager when I was in my country, I used to sell movies at a video shop and some videos are illegal in my country [adult movies]; you are not allowed to watch any of these movies and I believe, I was convinced, anything that people can watch, anything that people want to watch, as long as they want, it's no problem. How come Europe or any other country can allow you to watch these movies? What's the problem with my people, yeah? (...) I was in a very dangerous situation; otherwise I would keep my business. [Interview, Sarfras, 17/11/04]

Sarfras's account demonstrates that in oppressive regimes the legal systems in place can obstruct and lead to harsh punishment for activities that would be normal in Western European countries. Despite efforts of fundamentalist political regimes, like the government of Iran, to isolate its people from Western influences, market forces due to globalisation create a demand in people's needs and Sarfras saw a business opportunity

by satisfying this need. For this he was punished with imprisonment. More so, in the case of Reza, governments may go to extremes to protect their security and stability. Reza did not state what type of information he discovered, only that it was related to the activities of the government at the time.

In summary, this section has highlighted that the involvement in political groups that threaten the credibility of a regime or the engagement of activities that challenge the ideology of a state can lead to persecution of those involved. Thus, refugees flee their countries in order to avoid imprisonment and sometimes death. The significance of these testimonies is related to the refugee experience; refugees fleeing their countries may often have traumatic experiences that could affect their psychological state and ability to trust others (see section 1.4). This fact may have implications in their lives in the host country, as refugees' willingness to develop new relationships with people, especially from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, might be restricted (see section 3.2). The following section examines refugees' journey to Britain.

6.4.3 The journey to Britain

With the exception of Reza, whose move to Britain was arranged through the British embassy in Teheran, many interviewees found themselves in a position where their lives often depended on their sudden flight to the unknown. In their quest for help they would often seek the advice and support of family members or relatives, people they could trust, for the arrangements of their journey. What is more, many of them would unknowingly embark on a journey in which they would cross multiple country borders and for which it would take months, sometimes years, to reach Britain.

Khadra's journey is typical to that experienced by many Somalis. Khadra is a 36-year-old Somali woman, who relied on her aunt to arrange for her to join a trek of Somali families fleeing to Kenya. From there, traffickers would take her to Britain. A similar journey was experienced by others, such as Fadumo, a 37-year-old who fled with her then children siblings; Nimo, a 30-year-old woman who fled with relatives; Fowsiyo, a 40-year-old woman; or Hodan, a 36-year-old woman who both fled with their nuclear families. All fled from Somalia to Kenya or Ethiopia. Some refugees, like Kaalim, relied on people in positions of authority to obtain necessary travel documentation.

Kaalim was assisted by his brother-in-law, a policeman, to get passports and visas for Malaysia for himself and his wife. They stayed in Malaysia for four months and then travelled to Britain, entering the country with a visa and then applied for asylum. Similarly, Leonora initially fled from Kosovo to Albania, then to Italy and from there, in the back of a lorry, to Britain.

The lorry driver, he didn't know. Someone knew the lorry, someone, traffickers, and put fourteen people there (...). We paid him and he put us in the lorry. He knew that the lorry went to England. When we arrived here, the lorry driver opened the door, he put his hands on his head and asked what had happened. It took three to four days. [The trafficker] gave to everybody food and drink, a bag with food and drink. [Interview, Leonora, 12/11/04]

Leonora's journey is not unique. During the time she entered Britain, hundreds of people arrived in similar ways seeking protection. The survey data indicated that although 130 of 207⁴⁵ refugee students did not spend much time in transit, it took an average of 10.2 months (*mean* 0.8506 years) for refugees to reach Britain and the most frequent countries for temporary stay were Ethiopia (15) and Kenya (12), followed by Hong Kong (5), Italy (3), Pakistan (3) and Saudi Arabia (3) (see appendix 2N). Karzan had such an experience: after his family was dispersed in neighbouring countries in the Middle East, he set out on an odyssey heading for Europe.

All our land and fortunes were taken by the Iraqi regime. Since that time our hands were crossed and there was nothing to do. We've lost the job, we lost the house, we lost everything and we found ourselves in a very big crisis, financial crisis (...) we separated as a family, my sister went to Iran, my other sister went to Germany, my family broke up. Eventually, I headed to European countries. I went to Iran for one year and then I found myself in Turkey. Through Turkey, I went to Bulgaria and then through France to the UK. (...) I can say my journey took nearly two years. There is no something specific to say as why I came to England. As I headed from Turkey I didn't know where I was going. The only direction I knew about was a European country. I was in Paris. Eventually people told me that there are few [a low number of] people from my nationality [Kurdish] there. It is very difficult to find them. I had one friend [in France] (...) and he just gave me some advice and help and then I arrived here. [Interview, Karzan, 15/03/05]

⁴⁵ The total number of refugees taking part in the survey was 272, but 65 did not respond to that question.

Moreover, the journey itself very often could pose its problems and dangers. Razaaq explained that his brother sold their house in Afghanistan in order to pay for the journey that would lead them through Pakistan. After he was interviewed he added the following account.

In the camp I was staying in Pakistan, you know, I have seen a young boy, not older than me, fifteen, sixteen, being shot by the people who were bringing us to Britain. A refugee. Nobody from his family will know he is dead, his mother will not cry for him. Do you know how bad this feels? It makes you think about yourself, about your mother.
[Interview, Razaaq, 1/02/05]

Razaaq's account touches deeply on the psychological state of many refugees: on the one hand, there is the drive to reach safety and on the other, there is the insecurity that accompanies the refugee through the lonely journey to the distant destination. It also highlights the importance many participants place on their family, and by its absence it may enhance individual refugees' insecurity and vulnerability. This may explain why a few participants in this study, who were settled in other EU countries, decided to move to Britain once they obtained that country's citizenship. For instance, Abdul, a 30-year-old Somali man, was recognised as a refugee by Belgium and moved to Britain once he had obtained Belgian citizenship. Similarly, Shima, a 34-year-old Somali woman moved to Britain with her four children as Dutch citizens after divorcing her husband. Both participants chose Britain in order to live close to family members or relatives already living in the country.

To sum up, this section has demonstrated that during the stage of flight, refugees tend to receive assistance from people in their immediate social network, often members of the extended family or relatives and friends who hold a position of authority. To a large extent the relationship between the refugee and the person asked to help is marked by trust (Hynes 2003, see section 1.3). If trust has broken down or does not exist, it is replaced by monetary gains for those who are being asked to assist, for instance paying traffickers a large amount of money for the journey to a safe country. This finding needs to be highlighted, as refugees' reliance on their family or ethnic social network may affect the building of relationships with people from different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds in the ESOL/FE college environment. Attention will be turned next to refugees' journey to Britain.

6.4.4 *Arrival to Britain*

Participants in this study had various experiences regarding people they met and the struggle to be recognised as refugees during their first days in Britain. Depending on the time and year of arrival, their reasons for fleeing their country, the way they entered Britain and the presence of family members or an ethnic community in Britain these experiences were both positive and negative and contributed to the shaping of participants' attitudes towards British people, the country, their position within society and their adoption of identity. Most participants expressed their gratitude towards the British state or people they encountered during their quest for asylum, irrespective of ethnicity or nationality, for the financial, psychological and social support they were given.

Perhaps an account that enables one to refocus on the reasons refugees come to Britain is that of Leke. As outlined previously, Leke fled Kosovo during 1999, when the Serbian atrocities towards the ethnic Albanian population reached a peak. Leke and his family managed to flee from Kosovo and initially went to a refugee camp in Macedonia. From there they were able to obtain visas for Britain and applied for asylum on arrival. After 3 months, the family were granted ELR, which expired after one year. However, in 2003 Leke's family found themselves in a lucky position to be included in the Home Office's backlog of cases of Kosovans who arrived before 2000 that were granted Indefinite Leave to Remain⁴⁶.

When we came here we sought asylum. Actually, the social services, the government helped us very, very much. They accommodated us straight away in a hotel, good condition, they started to pay us benefits immediately. Actually we couldn't expect those things you know? Because at that time we were thinking to save our lives and we were shocked because we lost our home, relatives, everything in our country and eh, we were touched by the welcome we found here, you know? And eh, after one week, we registered straight away with school. And we started, me and my wife, a course for 2 months and the children registered at school just for the term and finished, and we started again in September. [Interview, Leke, 9/03/05]

⁴⁶ In 2003 the then Minister of State, Beverly Hughes announced that about 15,000 families who claimed asylum before the 2nd October 2000 and still await a decision, and who have at least one dependant under 18 years living in Britain (see document in appendix 30).

Leke's account highlights not only the shock many refugees have experienced, but also the fact that what they sought is humanitarian assistance and not financial opportunities, unlike migrants. In addition, it highlights the surprise many feel by the support they receive, while in their own country any support was denied to them.

Many refugees, especially those who entered Britain illegally, not knowing their next move in how to claim asylum or ill-advised by traffickers, also found great help and support in members from their ethnic communities. There are numerous cases where participants reported that their ethnic community played a role in providing them with information about the asylum procedure, about how to claim social benefits, and generally how to survive in Britain. As was previously highlighted, Leonora, also fleeing war-torn Kosovo, entered Britain hidden in the back of a lorry. The account below shows how, during their first month in Britain, she and her family relied on another Kosovan refugee for housing, advice and emotional support.

Where the lorry was staying, it was a factory in London and someone called the police, you know? (...) The police came and gave us £30 and said '*Go, you are allowed to go*' (...) After that we went to the road, but I didn't know where I was and someone called us in Albanian, you know, because maybe he knew, from the clothes, from the faces. That time too many people came from Kosovo and he said '*Are you Albanian?*', because I had the baby in my hands (...) and we said '*Yes*'. He said '*Come with me*'; we said '*We want to go to London*'. He said '*It's London here, don't worry, come*'. He picked us up and got us to his house, gave us food. (...)

He was from Kosovo, he came three years before. The next day he said '*I help you because I am married, I have children, I know how difficult it is for you because you can't speak (English)*'. He was friendly and he said '*Tomorrow you go to the solicitor first, after that to immigration*' (...) I lost the telephone number for him. [One day] my husband went to social services to take the money, the police came, one woman and two men, to my house and said '*Make everything ready to go to Glasgow*' I started to cry because I didn't know where Glasgow was, I hadn't any friends or relatives, you know? And I cried, but, you know, it's immigration, they said that we had to go there. (...) And now, I don't know where he is. I want to know because I can't forget his help, you know? I want to know just to say hello and say thank you. We stayed at his house for one month in Enfield. [Interview, Leonora, 12/11/04]

The story of Leonora highlights the importance of ethnicity, which in her case led to provision of help, support and information about how to survive in Britain and legitimise her stay, which would have otherwise be unavailable to her in that short amount of time. It also shows that in cases like the genocide in Kosovo the need to help the other persecuted individual is immense. In this respect, it is not the need to form social acquaintances that drives one individual to help the other, but the need to provide help itself. This is evident in the fact that acquaintances such as that of Leonora's family are not necessarily durable, as other factors – in Leonora's case state intervention – may contribute to the disintegration of ad-hoc relationships. Thus ethnicity might be the initial factor of social acquaintances, but if these are not preserved, they will break down.

The following case demonstrates how Carine was able to preserve the relationship with a co-ethnic person who helped her immensely on her arrival to Britain through formalising the relationship with marriage.

When I came to this country I met my husband at the airport (laughs). He is an Ivoirian man but he is a citizen here. I met him at the airport, I heard him speak in French and I asked him how to get to London from the airport. And we started to talk and talk and he offered to help me to get to London. In the car he wanted to know where I was going. I said that I don't know any people, so I just want to go somewhere. He offered me a place [at his house] because he lived alone with his daughter. (...) So since I lived there we started to be friends and after that started a relationship. [Interview, Carine, 23/03/05]

Similarly to Leonora's case, Carine received help and information from a co-ethnic man on her first few hours in Britain. The fact that they lived together helped Carine to develop a friendship, which with time turned to gratitude and love that was formalised by marriage. The dispersal to Scotland in turn, did not enable Leonora and her family to keep contact with the person who helped them, thus their relationship broke down.

A further case demonstrates that gender might be another factor for providing help and information. Khadra arrived in Britain on her own, having lost some family members in the civil war and leaving some others behind in Somalia. Her experience is extraordinary in the fact that she was housed and cared for by a British woman.

When I came to London I met one British woman. I spoke broken English and (...) she saw me, my face was angry and she asked me '*What's your problem?*' and I told her (...). She took me to her house, she found me a house and she found me a solicitor, that night (...). That woman is very good, she is really nice, maybe her husband is working for the government. She took me to her house, she made me food, nice, she is a nice woman. She told her chauffer to take me to the flat [she found for me] but I left because I never saw Somali people, at that time my English was not good (...) Maybe she is working with some organisation, helping refugees. I don't know exactly her home, when I tried to find I couldn't find her home. (...) She was a very good person. [Interview, Khadra, 17/03/05]

Khadra's experience demonstrates the difficulties she encountered when living in isolation. Having no close family members or friends to communicate she chose to leave behind what was offered to her in order to be with other Somalis. This is not surprising as people with similar experiences may be able to offer emotional support.

However, ties with the ethnic community and family might also restrict individual refugees' choices and initiatives to further their socio-economic participation as the presence of family may restrict an individual's social or financial opportunities because of cultural restraints. When Birten first moved to England with her mother, they stayed for one year with her sister's family. During the first months Birten was looking after her niece as her sister worked. However, when Birten started learning English, she was able to help her niece with homework, as she was an experienced teaching assistant in Turkey. Slowly, Birten started gaining confidence about her ability to learn English, which she saw as vital for entering the labour market.

My sister couldn't understand the benefits of voluntary work. That's why she didn't want me to do voluntary work. Then, I couldn't, because of language barrier, I couldn't go to voluntary work, even, she was saying '*Get a paid job, get a paid job*' but how could I? With language barriers you can't talk, you can't do things, you know? [With voluntary work] you are learning something, language and work experience. Then, when I learned a little bit of English, I just ignored her, took [the chance]. I did lot's of voluntary work. [Interview, Birten, 22/03/05]

Birten's experience indicates that family ties can also be a restrictive factor for individuals. As refugees attempt to preserve their way of life as much as possible in exile and reproduce cultural practices to a large extent, sometimes this can be an

obstacle to understanding and accepting the structures of the host country. Although Birten was strong-minded and therefore able to see opportunities in voluntary work, many refugees simply may not recognise such openings as opportunities.

In summary, this section has identified that during arrival, refugees received assistance and support from state agencies, as well as family members, people from their countries or the native population. In all cases, refugees feel gratitude towards those who assisted them in this period. It is important to consider the period of initial settlement in the host community, as it is during this time that refugees feel the need to recover their lost professional and social status and start building aspirations about their future lives in the host country (see section 1.4). Next, refugees' settlement into the local community will be examined.

6.4.5 Settling into the local community

After their arrival and application for asylum, refugees face the task of familiarising themselves with their surroundings and lifestyle in their local communities. All interviewees reported to have faced difficulties during this period, partly because they dealt with issues of loss and uprooting, and partly because they needed to become accustomed to the lifestyle in a new, alien environment. This was intensified by the language barrier, as they had to fight for their right to stay in Britain. However, as Kaalim's account below demonstrates, the help received from the country of asylum can be life changing.

When I came here everything difficult. Absolutely difficult; weather, speaking, people, everything. But this I think is normal for the beginning, everything confused. When I started work here everything is clear, here is freedom and nice people, get some help and give me home, check my heart. I have heart problem. I checked in hospital and everything is going good.
[Interview, Kaalim, 22/11/04]

Kaalim's report highlights the gratitude about the health treatment received, which helped him overcome the confusion felt during the initial period in Britain. With the granting of ELR after 5 years, the fear of deportation was overtaken by joy through

events that unfolded, which changed his outlook for the future radically and made him more active in, as he called it, *'helping himself'*.

I was confused and worried about maybe [they] send me back to Sudan. All five years, I was afraid. [The Refugee Council] helped me very, very much, about everything. Doctors, hospitals, some application forms, lawyer. I try to work for three months in a carwash. It's difficult because my wife needed IVF treatment for baby. I want to help my wife, but when I work in this carwash it is difficult for me, heart problem, very cold. (...) I hope me to get good certificate in engineering or mechanic because I think when I finish everything here, I want to open workshop because with this certificate I will help myself and my family. (...) I have applied for citizenship, I am still waiting. (...) It's very important for me because I live in England, I think forever. Now I wait for new baby coming, when baby is 20 years old I want to help my baby, I teach my baby, I want my baby to have better life. [Interview, Kaalim, 22/11/04]

Kaalim's account also touches on difficulties in finding employment or with low-paid, manual work. As most participants in this study, Kaalim experienced downward occupational mobility: from being a car salesman in Sudan he became a car cleaner in Britain. Accepting that he would not regain his previous occupation, he made a realistic decision to train as a car mechanic and open a car workshop. Thus, although the five year waiting period was accompanied by insecurity, it allowed Kaalim to understand and experience the forces of the British labour market, improve his English language skills and structure the emotional and financial security of his family around his vocational training and subsequent self-employment.

Reza's experience of settlement differed in every aspect from that of Kaalim's. Because of his special situation as presented previously, Reza's waiting period for recognition as a refugee lasted only five days as opposed to five years, and therefore did not affect him as strongly as Kaalim. During the first weeks in Britain, Reza stayed with his brother and slowly acquainted his brother's social network that led him to his first job.

Five days after me sign [documents in the Home Office] I've got refugee status. That was easy because of my situation. I stayed with my brother, [I've got money] from my brother for one month, then I got money from Job Centre. It was just my brother, I hadn't had any friends. (...) [I have not worked in England], I had some training as a chef, a pizza chef because of

my English. If I improve my English I can do something else, like a designer and I think about it (...). This job didn't help me with the language because they were Persian, just I learned how to do pizza. I've found this job through friends, they are my brother's friends. I didn't like it [the job], it was horrible. This is difficult to explain but, eh, because for example, you are a teacher; if you do something else, like pizza chef, it's difficult because it's not your experience; it's not your job. (...) I am interested to study, I want to continue my education at university. I am doing now another course at Goldsmiths University. I would like to apply for British passport but after five years, now I am here for two years and two months. [Interview, Reza, 22/10/04]

Reza trained as a civil engineer in Iran. However, due to his non-existent English, the difficulties in recognising foreign higher education qualifications and reliance on job seeker's allowance forced him to accept employment in an Iranian restaurant. Experiences such as Reza's have also been highlighted by Healey (2010), who showed that for Tamil refugees, early employment in the ethnic community provided limited opportunities and impacted on subsequent work (see also section 8.2). Interestingly, Reza called his employment 'training' and did not associate it with an occupation, partly because he had difficulties accepting that his previous training and experience did not have a great value in the British labour market. After eight months of stay in Britain, Reza's wife was able to join him through the family reunion programme and now they have a one-year-old daughter. This change made Reza looking for ways to regain his profession and its accompanying status.

We can say that changes in the family structure was a motivating factor for both, Reza and Kaalim, by planning to use their existing skills and knowledge in the labour market after English language attainment in order to rebuild their lives in Britain.

Siri's account demonstrates how through English language attainment, individual refugees are capable to further their socio-economic adjustment and provide a better future life for themselves and their families. Siri, a 42-year-old and her husband, a former policeman in Sri Lanka, owned an off-licence shop in South London.

[Me and] my husband are running the family shop. My children are studying very hard, now every time tuition. My son is studying A-levels, very hard, £20 an hour. My daughter GCSEs £16 [an hour]. It is difficult, no help, only from shop. (...) I have 22 years experience as a secondary school teacher in Sri

Lanka, now in shop. (...) [I would like to work] but my English is very bad, shop is for living, to earn money. (...) Sometimes my husband doesn't like us working in shop, it's hard job. Now, morning come to college, 12-1 o'clock I go home, then change shop times [shifts], husband goes to shopping, me work in shop. 4-5 o'clock he is coming back. 9 o'clock we close the shop. Every day the same. It's important for children's education, earn money, private tuition money, we don't get any help, house, rent, shop rent, it's difficult. [Interview, Siri, 9/02/05]

The account above demonstrates how two former professionals and parents use financial opportunities available in the host country to support their children through education. Having accepted their routine, efforts for a successful career and better socioeconomic existence were transferred to the second generation.

Similarly, the difficulties arising through limited employment opportunities were also experienced by Jamila⁴⁷, a 40-year-old Somali, mother of five, who left Somalia with her husband and her oldest, then the only child, in 1992 during the onset of the civil war. Below is an extract of Jamila's account about her life in Britain.

She feels that everything in the UK is like a fight, everything is complicated, the language which has hidden rules, the way you do things are completely different and people are more cold than Somali people. She feels that she has to fight for everything in her life in the UK.

When they came to the UK they were sent to Sheffield, where they lived for some years. They decided to move to London because London offers more opportunities in terms of employment. She worked in Sheffield as a translator for Somali people. She never worked in London. At the moment her husband is looking for work as well. He used to work for the council, as an interpreter, and for the last two weeks he's in Dubai looking for a job there (...). [Interview notes, Jamila, 13/04/05]

Jamila's account draws attention to the fact that settlement in one community is not guaranteed and that employment opportunities can be a significant determinant of settlement for refugee families. In addition, Siri's and Jamila's experience highlight there is no guarantee that once in employment, this will be permanent, as well as satisfying and financially rewarding. Having nothing to hold them back in Sheffield, Jamila's family moved to London for better job opportunities. While Jamila stayed in

⁴⁷ Jamila refused the interview to be recorded but did not object note taking.

Britain for her children's education, her husband was pursuing opportunities outside the country.

This section has highlighted that during the stage of settlement refugees face difficulties rebuilding their lives. Some were dispersed to other cities in Britain and returned in search of employment. Also, during this period refugees may rely on their ethnic communities for assistance (see Bloch 1997, 2002, section 3.2). Finally, they experience downward socio-economic mobility and their hopes to regain their previous professional or social status are transferred to their children (see Stein 1981, section 1.4).

6.5 Summary

This chapter has highlighted the refugee experience, as encountered by refugees studying ESOL, by identifying the background difference between migrant and refugee students, and by exploring refugee students' experiences of flight, migration and settlement in Britain. The refugee experience comprises the following elements. Firstly, the exploration of differences in background characteristics highlights the experience of loss of property and social-economic status, as refugees, likely to have been self-employed in the home country, tended to be unemployed in Britain. Secondly, the desire to acquire British citizenship and the tendency to start studying ESOL soon after arrival indicate refugees' acceptance of their stay in Britain as long-term and their willingness to rebuild their lives. Thirdly, their ability to trust others may be affected by events occurring during the stages of flight and migration. However, this does not affect refugees' feelings of gratitude and reciprocity towards others in Britain. Lastly, refugees in this study rely on their ethnic communities for assistance. With regard to refugees' willingness to seek friendships in the ESOL/FE college environment, the experience of loss and mistrust may impact on their psychological state and affect relationship building negatively. Also, their attachment to the ethnic community may lead them to seek friendships with co-ethnics. However, the desire to rebuild their lives in Britain may motivate refugees to seek friendships with students from different ethnic, linguistic and cultural backgrounds in the ESOL/FE college environment.

With regard to the theoretical perspectives related to migrant and refugee movements, the findings in this chapter have highlighted that although refugees may be pushed out of their country, they can also be pulled by the host country. This is in antithesis to Kunz's (1973) 'push and pull' thesis and tends to support Richmond's (1994) analysis of migratory behaviour. The reasons for this differing behaviour may be related to more contemporary migratory patterns, such as the existence of trafficking networks (Koser and Pinkerton 2002), longer transit periods (Moorehead 2006) and the development of settled ethnic communities (Bloch 1997, 2002) in European host countries that were formed by the initial wave of spontaneous refugee movements after the end of the Cold War. However, the findings are in agreement with Stein's (1981) model of adaptation, indicating that although migratory patterns have changed over time, the particular psychological process of adaptation and settlement may not be affected.

Next, attention is turned next to refugees' social networks in Britain.

7.1 Introduction

Refugees' willingness to build social relationships with others from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds in the ESOL/FE college environment may depend firstly on their participation in existing social networks and secondly on the outlook of these networks towards integration in the host society (see section 4.3). This chapter aims to explore the building of social relationships between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL and wider FE college environment by identifying refugees' pre-existing social networks and by analysing factors impacting on relationship building. This is important to the main argument of the thesis, as participation in social networks is an indicator of social capital development.

The chapter starts by identifying refugee ESOL students' pre-existing social networks of family, ethnic community and neighbourhoods and analysing the reasons for participation. Then, it explores refugee ESOL students' tendencies and willingness to build friendships with others in the ESOL/FE college environment. Finally, it analyses the impact of the factors i) gender, ii) ethnicity and iii) age on relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment.

7.2 The existing networks of family, relatives and friends

This section explores refugee ESOL students' existing networks of family, the ethnic community and neighbourhood and the gains derived from participation in these networks. As illustrated in chapter 6, many refugees arrived in Britain with their nuclear families and received assistance and support from their co-ethnics during the stage of settlement. It has been hypothesised that existing social networks may impact

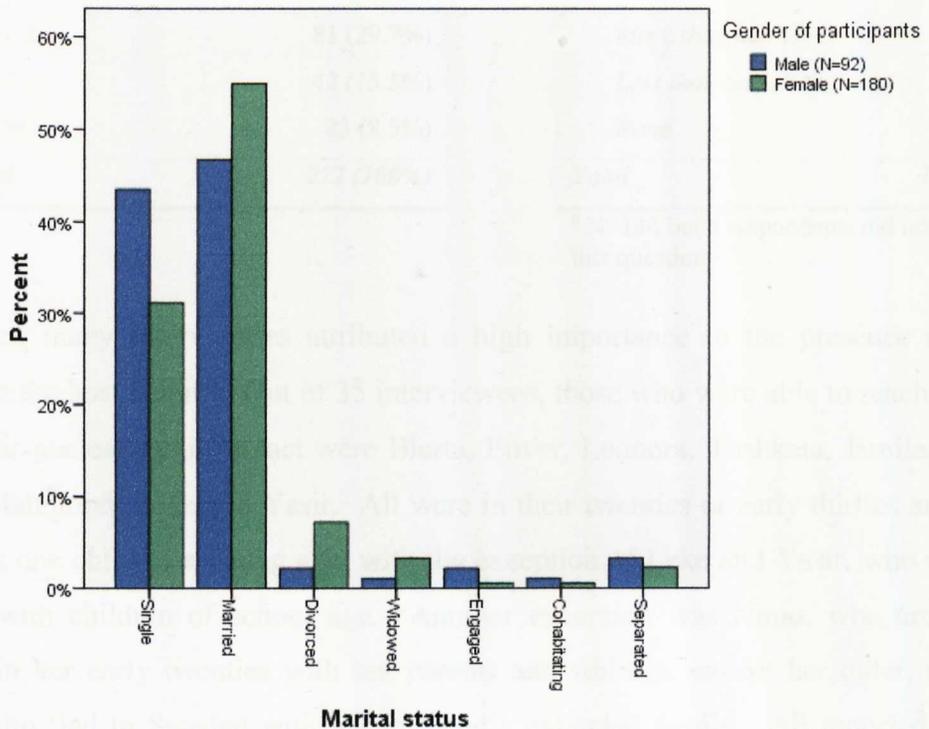
on the process of relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment (see section 4.5). Therefore, before the process of relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment is examined, this section identifies how existing social networks shaped the lives of refugees in the host country and how they might impact on ESOL relationships. The following sub-sections explore refugees' networks of family, the ethnic community and their neighbourhoods.

7.2.1 *The presence of family*

For refugees living in exile the presence of immediate family members, such as a parent, sibling, spouse or children, can have comforting effects on their psychological state. Suarez-Orozco *et al.* (2001) argue that the psychology of individuals is not affected negatively if they arrive to the host country with the family unit, while family separation occurring through migration has a negative impact and may lead to conflicts within the family unit. In addition, for some refugees the existence of the family might be the only remaining social institution, as in many cultures family is central to social life and its presence plays a significant role in the management of adjustment problems encountered during the initial period of settlement (Weine *et al.* 2004, 2005).

The importance attached to marriage and family by refugees is also evident in this study. As can be seen in figure 7.1 below, the vast majority of refugee ESOL students were married and only a small proportion were divorced, in contrast to divorce rates in England (ONS 2010). A significant proportion of respondents reported to be single. Although a large proportion of respondents were aged 25 or younger (see figure 6.2), and therefore, single, for older respondents being single could be an effect of the interruption experienced due to flight and migration. There are no significant gender differences (see appendix 3A), as over half of males and females were married. However, a smaller proportion of females than males were single, and a higher proportion of females than males were divorced.

Figure 7.1: Marital status of male and female refugee ESOL students



Furthermore, over half of refugee ESOL students reported to have children with the majority of students having two children, followed by one child (see table 7.1a). However, some of their children were not living in Britain. As can be seen from table 7.1b, 17 respondents reported that some of their children were living in another country, while 12 reported that all their children were living in another country. It is important to point out here that many participants were reaching middle age and thus, it would be quite likely for their children to have reached adulthood and started their own families in a different country. However, as most refugee ESOL students were in their twenties and thirties, this figure may also indicate the extent of family separation as a result of flight and migration.

Table 7.1a: Refugees' no of Children

No of Children (N=272)	Respondents
0	126 (46.3%)
1-2	81 (29.7%)
3-4	42 (15.5%)
5+	23 (8.5%)
Total	272 (100%)

Table 7.1b: No of children in Britain

No of Children (N=142 ^a)	Respondents
All	113 (79.6%)
More than half (1-4)	7 (4.9%)
Less than half (5-8)	10 (7%)
None	12 (8.5%)
Total	142 (100%)

^a N=146 but 4 respondents did not answer this question

Moreover, many interviewees attributed a high importance to the presence of their family in the host country. Out of 35 interviewees, those who were able to reach Britain with their nuclear family intact were Blerta, Enver, Leonora, Tushkata, Jamila, Nimo, Daria, Mahmood, Leke and Yasir. All were in their twenties or early thirties and most had only one child of a young age, with the exception of Leke and Yasir, who reached Britain with children of school age. Another exception was Nimo, who arrived in Britain in her early twenties with her parents and siblings, except her older, married sister, who fled to Sweden with her husband's extended family. All reported having extended family members living in different countries in the world. Also, two Afghani students arrived to Britain just before the war with the USA broke out with their extended families: Daria with her husband's parents and sister, and Mahmood with his wife and parents. This may be an indicator of the effects of war and flight on family life.

In turn, those who fled leaving spouses and children behind were Mahmood, Farah, Zeri, Marc and Carine. In the cases of Mahmood and Farah, both were married without children and planned, when obtaining residence permits, to bring their spouses to Britain through the Family Reunion programme. Marc was divorced when he left Congo and since then his two sons had lived with his wife; Carine was also divorced and left her son with her parents when she fled the Ivory Coast. As the immigration status of both did not permit them to bring their children to Britain, they hoped to do so once a positive decision on their asylum application was received. In contrast, Zeri, who was forced to leave his wife and three children in Ethiopia because of the suddenness of his departure, was granted refugee status and was planning to apply for family reunion soon. Although he was positive about the future of his family, he was not able to hide his guilt.

I miss my family very much (...) I will start the process of bringing them here. I hope they are coming here in the next couple of months (...)

You know, sometimes what I feel, eh, I feel like *Judas* sometimes [laughs]. I am very cruel, I say sometimes [to myself] I am very cruel, but sometimes you have to compromise, you know? The thing is my life was in danger when I was in Ethiopia, but I feel some guilt when I think about my family. I left them there to save my life, eh, you know, it's really difficult, you have to compromise to avoid the worst. [Interview, Zeri, 8/03/05]

Zeri's account highlights the brutality of the often rapid decision of flight and realisation of this once safety has been secured. On the other receiving end are family members who patiently wait to be reunited with their loved ones, placing their trust in the existing international structures for assistance. Two interviewees, Siri and Ashia, arrived in Britain as part of the Family Reunion programme. In both cases, the Home Office granted one family member ILR or refugee status. Once this was achieved, family members started to follow. However, In Siri's case this process took years; she explained that her husband was forced to flee their country because he was a policeman but was granted ELR which had to be renewed after 1 and 3 years until he was allowed to stay permanently in Britain. After a total of 7 years Siri and her children could finally join him. Ashia's family, on the other hand, started coming to Britain in clusters; they moved from Somalia to Yemen after the civil war started, joining her father's brother. After a while her father left for Britain seeking asylum. Once he was allowed to stay permanently, her mother and three brothers joined him, leaving Ashia behind with her two sisters in Yemen, waiting for one sister to complete her studies at university. When they finally moved to Britain, Ashia, now a 23-year-old, had to drop her course at university, but explained that living with her family was more important to her. In total, the family was separated for 8 years.

I can't live on my own. I just lived one year without my parent [mother]. It was hard. I was always crying, I couldn't, so... and now I am happy, really, I am happy with them. And my father asked me if I wanted to stay on my own. [Interview, Ashia, 17/11/04]

Ashia's account highlights the importance many participants place on being close to their families, especially when at a young age, where the presence of parents is very important. Any disruption to family life can affect the emotional well-being of those

affected and, as in the case of Ashia, being reunited with the family has priority over education. Thus, in an attempt to restore family life, one is prepared to start a new life in a new environment.

However, the normality of life and functioning of the individual refugee can also be affected by events taking place in the home country, especially if there are close family members left behind. Such an instance was observed in the MOHE group where a student showed signs of agitation and aggressiveness during the lesson because of newscasts of violent events taking place in her country, the Ivory Coast.

When we enter the classroom, the female Ivoirian student looks upset. She tells me that she is worried about the news broadcast of the situation in the Ivory Coast– *“this is no good, why do all foreigners leave? This is no good”*. She also adds: *“It is the president, if I could, I would kill him! If I have the power, I will kill him”*, and added: *“I don’t know. My boys are there, I am worried”*. As she explains, she has four more children in the Ivory Coast living with their grandparents. *“You know, if I had choice, I would be there. I had my business there. I would not have to learn English. When I came here, I had to see psychologist for one year, for all this stress. Why all this stress?”* At this point she looked quite distressed and the woman sitting next to her tried to talk to calm her down. During the rest of the lesson, she was not concentrated and could not follow the lesson. She looked frequently at the clock and after a while she asked the teacher if she could leave earlier. [Observation notes, MOHE group, 12/11/04]

The above incident is an example of how events taking place in the home country affect the functioning and performance of refugee ESOL students as learners. As a parent, the student was naturally worried about her children and this worry affected the normality of her life in the host country. Although she received counselling, which helped her to tackle stress, events like these jeopardise the progress already made in accepting loss and restarting a life in the host country.

From the above, it can be argued that the presence of the family unit in the host country provides refugees with emotional security and may be a contributing factor to the acceptance of their stay in the host country as permanent. This acceptance in turn, may be a motivational factor for participation in the socio-economic life of the host country. On the other hand, a broken family, especially where family members still live in the

home country, can affect the psychological state of many refugees negatively, and this in turn can interfere with their daily routine and affect their attempts to further their socio-economic adjustment in the host country (see Hein 1993, section 1.3).

7.2.2 *The ethnic social network: Relatives and Friends*

As has been discussed in sections 3.2 and 4.3, the ethnic community can provide refugees with economic opportunities, as well as opportunities for identity and the reproduction of cultural practices. Therefore, in common with the family, it plays an important role in refugees' lives in the host country, as it acts as a source of support through the sharing of experiences in exile.

Most interviewees reported to have ties with people from their ethnic communities, while those who did not have contact did so for various reasons. Specifically, Koffi, who claimed asylum a few months prior to the interview, explained that most of his acquaintances were made with people from various countries and experiencing similar circumstances in the hostel he was staying. As he felt uncertain about his stay in Britain, he did not contact the Congolese community, because he felt that it could not help him with the asylum process. In addition, Sarfras chose not to interact with the Iranian community in London, explaining that after being granted refugee status, he accepted his stay in Britain as permanent and therefore concentrated on rebuilding his life by studying English, looking for employment and adopting a British lifestyle. Involvement with the ethnic community, he believed, would delay this process. Similarly, Marc decided that interacting with people from the Congolese community would delay his socio-economic adjustment, as it would interfere with his efforts to learn English.

Bon, when you're with the Congolese people, you think you'd talk about problem in Congo. No. You talk about language, but me, I like to talk in English (...) that's why I go, like, rarely. When I am with Congolese people I am going to forget English, they do talk about language, our language, that's why I don't like. [Interview, Marc, 4/02/05]

Marc's account supports Hack-Polay's (2010) findings, who identified that for London-based Congolese and Somali refugees learning English was a strategy for communicating with people outside the ethnic community. However, Marc's decision was based on the lack of any discussion about problems in the home country in his interactions with the Congolese community. This is in contrast to other refugee ethnic communities that, despite their ideological divisions, do use political activism as a resource to advocate for change in the home country (e.g. the Kurdish Community, see Wahlbeck 1997, 1999). However, in some cases the sentiment to support the cause in the home country can also have negative effects on the ethnic community or create friction within it. As Safia described:

There is a formal ethnic community but I do not go there. [I hear news about Somalia] by phone or from other friends. Sometimes [there are events organised], it's eh, like Eid, it is a big party, or Ramadan, big party when Ramadan is finished. [...] Once I went to a party here in London, with a Somali singer, and it was nice at the beginning. But then people started fighting, throwing bottles, children screaming. [The fight started] because of the problems in Somalia. So I don't like to go there. [Interview, Safia, 11/04/05]

Safia's account points to disagreements and different views that members of an ethnic community may have. Given that refugees flee in order to escape conditions that were created by similar frictions, their willingness to be part of the ethnic community might be limited if these frictions continue to reoccur within the community in the host country.

Moreover, those who sought to, or were involved with their ethnic communities, did so for a number of reasons. Firstly, the feeling of empathy towards newly arrived refugees and the need to reciprocate the help received motivated Kaalim and Zeri to volunteer for their ethnic community organisations, offering their English language skills and advice based on their initial experiences in Britain (see also Bloch 1997, 2002, section 3.2).

At the solicitors place I found an Ethiopian guy and he felt really sorry for me and he told me to go to his place. I spent about three or four months at his place and then finally, they [Home Office] allowed me to stay here and here I am. [Now] I go [to church] every Sunday if I am able to go. I find a lot of people there. I go to the community when we have some meeting. (...) I've done that thing [volunteering for an Ethiopian community organisation] personally, I

know the pain. So I've done several times, helping other people there.
And all the pain, you know, I know how they feel, how they think.
[Interview, Zeri, 8/03/05]

Zeri's account refers to the ethnic community's ability and capacity to provide a role to those who want to offer assistance by using their personal experiences. In addition, his initial experience in Britain bears similarities to that of Mimoza and Carine (see section 6.4.4) in the fact that they were all assisted by a co-ethnic who, although a stranger, nevertheless offered help by providing shelter, information about the process of claiming asylum and emotional support.

A second reason emerging from the data for interaction with the ethnic community is the reproduction of cultural and religious practices in the host country (see also Williams 2006, section 3.2). Many participants found through the ethnic community the freedom to express themselves through language and carry out a lifestyle based on activities prescribed by tradition and culture which they were accustomed before flight; examples include arranging marriages within the community or taking part in religious or cultural festivals. For instance, during classroom observation of an entry level 1 group in Marlowe College, one Kurdish-Iraqi student and one Somali student announced their engagement to men from their ethnic communities to the group. Both engagements were arranged by members of the women's ethnic community and, as both explained, it was normal practice in their cultures for marriages to be arranged. If they were not involved with their ethnic communities in London, their opportunities for marriage and starting a family in Britain would be limited, as tradition required them to marry within the ethnic group and religion. Likewise, many students pointed to the importance of religious and cultural activities within the ethnic community for keeping the memory of the past alive. This is in agreement with William's (2006) findings (see section 3.2).

Sometimes, if it's Eid it is *culture traditionnelle*. If it's Eid, it's something that happens every year two times and you have to commemorate. This is not only for Somali people, for every Muslim. It is very important for me [to take part] because my mother did, all my family did, I have to do it because of my tradition, my culture. (...) For feeling inside and my culture. This is easy in London, there are mosques. [Interview, Safia, 11/04/05]

Cultural traditions deriving from a religion are often inherent across ethnic communities of the same religion. However, some participants viewed religion itself as a personal issue that should not take over social life, while for others it was central to their cultural and ethnic identity. For instance, those who fled their countries because of oppressive fundamentalist regimes, such as Reza and Sarfras from Iran, explained that '*religion should not be mixed with politics*' (Reza) or '*religion is only a big game*' (Sarfras). As both were required to flee their country because their actions were judged to be against the regime, in exile they were able to revise their attitudes towards religion, with the consequence of Sarfras converting to Christianity and Reza choosing to visit an Iranian mosque in West London, rather than one of the many mosques in South London, because he wished to socialise with Iranians. Similarly, Leonora viewed religion as an unimportant aspect of her life in Britain, because it was the cause of war in Kosovo and her subsequent uprooting. Although she admitted to have visited a church service in Glasgow a few times, she regarded belief in God as a personal matter.

Ashia and Abdulkadir believed that a religious lifestyle was central to their lives. Maki's view was that being a good Muslim and following the Islamic laws was essential to being a good person and found it significant to raise his future children within the religious doctrines. Thus, for Maki, being a Muslim was seen as more important than being Somali and subsequently, being part of a Muslim congregation, rather than the Somali community. Likewise, Ashia explained that following the teachings of the Quoran was of great importance to her. She felt lucky to be an Arabic speaker, as she could engage with the Quoran, while at the same time she believed that Somali people were united by their common experiences, as well as religion.

Arabic language is the Quoran language. I didn't think before like that, but I've seen many girls in the mosque, they don't know what the Quoran talks about. The Quoran, you have to understand it and to feel it. (...) I have to do what Allah says, wearing the hijab, I have to; Ramadan, you have to fast, I have to, because I believe life is going to finish and when God asks me what I have done, I can't say I was playing. (...)

Somalis are quite friendly. Somali people is different from African people, African people, they get angry quite quickly, I don't know why, I say *Why are you like that?* So, I stay away from them (...) We [Somali people] understand each other. I don't think other Muslims will like me, I am black. [Interview, Ashia, 17/11/04]

In contrast to Abdul, Ashia's view indicates that although religion and lifestyle deriving from it might be a central aspect in community formation, ethnic communities might also differentiate themselves on the basis of characteristics such as race. Thus, Ashia differentiates the Somali ethnicity from other African ethnicities in terms of culture, and other Muslim ethnic groups in terms of race, justifying in this way her strong attachment to the Somali community.

In addition, religious activities can potentially bring people from the ethnic community or the community itself closer together. For instance, when Nyambi was asked if she kept contact with her ethnic community, she explained that going to the church was important because she felt nostalgic about her life in Congo.

Just for the moment, because I'm Jehovah's Witness, but now I find, eh, church for, eh, our people [Congolese Jehovah's witnesses]. Even people speak French, but also in Lingala. But when I go there, when I brought my kids there, they speak Lingala, but they can't understand the way they talk. It's difficult [for my children], but for me, I feel it's home. (...) When they give you the book [the Bible], to read, and when you open, it's everything for me [Interview, Nyambi, 1/02/05]

Besides providing her with a sense of continuity of life in the home country, the church also enabled Nyambi to meet and reconnect with a long lost good friend from Congo.

I am lucky because, we've been best friends in my country and we have met again here [in the church]. Now, I take my kids and I go there [to my friend] and they come to my place. [Interview, Nyambi, 1/02/05]

A third reason for interaction with the ethnic community is that it allows the formation of a distinct ethnic group identity in the host country through various cultural and social activities (see also Robinson-Finnan 1981, section 3.2). For some refugees this was a liberating process, as they were forced to leave their home countries because of their ethnicity. For example, Birten explained that she learned to read and write in Kurdish once she moved to England, as learning Kurdish at school was prohibited by the Turkish government. Thus, for Birten, the ethnic community in the host country enabled her to re-identify with the Kurdish culture and tradition through the acquisition of the Kurdish language. Similarly, Leke explained that like most ethnic Albanians, he was

forced to flee Kosovo because of his ethnicity, and in London he found freedom to maintain and express his ethnic identity through participating in the ethnic community.

I consider myself as an ethnic Albanian. Despite I live here, I can't consider myself as British. I am ethnic Albanian and my friends and community is there [in London]. (...) I respect other communities, I can socialise occasionally, but, ehm, I prefer to stay with my friends, Albanian and Kosovan friends, families. Because I have family here, I don't go out often with friends. So I go out with my family, go for visiting to other ethnic Albanian families. [Interview, Leke, 9/03/05]

Interestingly, in his account Leke also included the ethnic identity of his children, explaining:

I'm talking for myself, now I am nearly 40. For example if I get British passport and if I will be 80 I'm still ethnic Albanian. But for my children I will educate them (so) that they get the Albanian blood. I'll be proud if they, after 20 years, if someone asks them '*Where you're from?*' I will be happy if they say '*I'm from Albania*' or '*from Kosovo*', it doesn't matter if they've got British passport. (...) I live in England, but I am not from England. It's up to them, but I will be happy if I hear from them that. [Interview, Leke, 9/03/05]

Leke's hopes of his children's identification with the Albanian ethnicity in the future highlight the emphasis many interviewees put in the preservation of the ethnic identity, often rediscovered and redefined in the host country through the second generation. Despite many children of refugees being born or moving to Britain at a very young age, and despite their education and socialisation in Britain, many parents interviewed in this study felt the pressure to educate their children in their first language and according to the customs and traditions of the home country. This may be an effect of refugees' hopes for return and their attempts to transfer these hopes to the next generation. For example, when asked about the significance of learning English, Daria explained that it was important for her baby son to be brought up as an Afghan, rather than British:

There is a special place for people from Afghanistan. Eh, it's a place for some children were born here then they don't know Farsi or Daari. And sometimes they make a party for any special days, like New Year, Eid, you know, after Ramadan is Eid, and like that. [Interview, Daria, 20/10/04]

When asked about the importance of an English education for her son's future, she replied:

English is very important because we live in this country and then, Daari because my mother in-law doesn't know any other language and we speak at home. And I want to speak Daari for my son, because I want my son to learn Daari as well. It is very important for him (...) because I don't want him to forget his country, his people and his language. He was born here (...). [I want to tell him] about the history, about Taliban, about before Taliban and when we came here to this country, all of this. [Interview, Daria, 20/10/04]

Thus, Daria believed that contact with the ethnic community was essential, especially as it had the means to educate the children of Afghan refugees, disregarding the fact that her son might not want to live in Afghanistan in the future. In contrast, Leonora felt more realistic about her children's future choices of ethnic identity, but equally felt that her children needed to learn Albanian in order to communicate with relatives living in different countries, and was also thinking of the possibility of their return to Kosovo.

I want my children don't forget, my own language, you know, where they were born. (...) When with my sister we talk on the phone, you know, they say three words in Albanian and all else is English [laughs]. In the future, maybe they like to go back to my country, you know, they want to speak Albanian. [Interview, Leonora, 12/11/04]

In contrast to Daria, Leonora did not place a strong emphasis on her children growing up as ethnic Albanians, partly because she is an ethnic Serb and her husband an ethnic Albanian, a fact that caused their uprooting in the first place. Thus, she felt that her children should decide themselves which religion, if any, to follow, and which ethnicity to adopt. However, she found it of paramount importance that her children learned Albanian because it is the language of the family.

Interestingly, Jamila returned to Somalia after 13 years with her children, who met Jamila's mother for the first time. The interview notes below describe her children's reaction and her emotions when reunited with her mother.

Jamila visited her country for the first time after 13 years. She explained that when she left, she thought that she would never return to Somalia and see all people living a normal life, so when she

arrived at the Mogadishu airport, she felt very emotional and started crying. It was the first time her mother met Jamila's five children, and although the children's feelings were indifferent towards their grandmother, her mother did not stop crying. Jamila said that she was very upset with her children's indifference, but she tried to understand that for them, their grandmother was a stranger. Her children did not like it much in Somalia, she said that '*society is stronger than myself*'. [Interview notes, Jamila, 13/04/05]

Jamila's case highlights that children of refugees, although fluent in the mother tongue and brought up according to traditions and culture of the home country, may not adopt the parents' hopes and aspirations for a return to the home country. In addition, the rarity of visits to the home country does not enable the building of any special ties or close association with relatives who, to the children of refugees, may seem as strangers. Thus, although the second generation may develop an ethnic and cultural identity related to the home country, within the boundaries of that country they may feel alienated.

In summary this section has highlighted that, depending on the causes of uprooting, refugees may choose to interact with their ethnic communities for the following reasons. Firstly, after being allowed to stay in the host country, refugees feel the need to reciprocate the help received; for example, through volunteering for ethnic community organisations, and providing information and advice to newly arrived refugees from the home country. Secondly, on arrival refugees may feel confused by the British lifestyle; however, by interacting with the ethnic community, they can continue their lifestyle, exercise cultural and religious practices and follow cultural norms familiar to them within the ethnic community's boundaries. Finally, refugees at many instances were persecuted because they belonged to a specific ethnic group; in the host country they have the freedom to express their ethnicity through language, cultural activities and ideology through the ethnic community. This enables them to develop a distinct group ethnic identity – a right that may have been denied in the home country.

Refugee ESOL students' interaction with their local community will be examined next.

7.2.3 *The informal network of neighbours*

Refugees' interaction with the local community and relationship development is an essential part of settlement, as well as a factor in refugees' belongingness to the community. Most of the studies examining community integration emphasise refugees' group organisational capacity to create relationships across communities (Griffiths *et al.* 2005), but the limited research existing on individual refugees' interaction with their neighbourhoods and local communities has shown that if these are inclusive, individual refugees feel attached to them (Spicer 2007). Most of the participants reported to have had limited contact with their local community, which includes neighbours and people from different ethnic groups.

Interestingly, those who were dispersed in other areas of Britain and moved or returned to London believed that it was more difficult to develop relationships with neighbours in London. For instance, Jamila reported to have a very friendly relationship with her elderly English neighbours in Sheffield; Leonora reported to have Scottish, Nigerian and Kosovan friends from the council estate in Glasgow. Tushkata reported to have a very good relationship with her elderly Scottish neighbours in Glasgow and Ayanna's friends in Britain were women she met in a hostel for asylum-seekers in Birmingham. In London, however, most of the interviewees believed that it was difficult to develop acquaintances, if not friendships, because of linguistic, cultural and lifestyle differences or simply absence of trust. Specifically, after living for over one year in London, Jamila, Tushkata and Ayanna still had not made any acquaintances with people from their neighbourhoods, but were socialising with a few people from their ethnic communities. Leonora was able to develop relationships with some neighbours, but felt that her limited English was problematic in transforming these relationships into strong and lasting friendships. As she explained:

I need friends. It is important. I want, I like, but, maybe in the future, when I go outside, maybe. (...) My problem is because I can't speak English and I'm shy. Because her [English neighbour's] accent is too..., she speaks quickly, you know. If someone speaks slowly, but she, my neighbour, she lives opposite me and she speaks very quickly. I don't understand her. There is another friend, she lives upstairs, she speaks well but I see her not often because she is working. This lady, every day go to school with children, but she speaks slowly, I can understand her. [Interview, Leonora, 12/11/04]

Although Leonora's account highlights various opportunities to befriend people from the local community, such as the neighbourhood and children's school, it also points to limited opportunities for interaction due to her English language ability and others' work commitments.

Birten believed that good relationships with neighbours were essential for communication and support. She explained that although she put an effort into being friendly in the neighbourhood, the actions of one neighbour were jeopardising neighbourhood relations.

If I see them [my neighbours] on the stairs, yeah, I say hello, I like it because culturally we [Turkish-Kurdish people] have that, we get close [to people]. When I see elderly people I say hello, good morning, you know. You have to communicate with the neighbours and recently something happened which I strongly disagree [with], like letter, wrong address and my neighbour just put it in the bin. *Why are you doing this?* You shouldn't do, you know, you should just next door, give it to them. She said, *No, I don't want*, but this is not their fault, the postman did. One day this will happen to you and because you just don't get on well, but I said if you give it to them, it will be reasonable, they will say *How nice* and then you will start to communicate. But everybody is different. [Interview, Birten, 22/03/05]

Others who reported having a relationship with neighbours included Fadumo, who was living with her teenage siblings and was open towards making friendships with people from her neighbourhood irrespective of ethnic background, believing in the good nature and support that characterise human relationships. As she explained:

A lot of them are Bengali friends. Also, my neighbour is British white. She is working in the housing and also she is friendly and then another neighbour, who is white British. Everything she asks me I give it to her, and everything I ask for she is giving to me. We are helping each other. They are very nice people, my neighbours. (...) Yes, it is important of course to have friends. If you are neighbour, they can help you if you need something, they invite you to their home. So, you feel good. [Interview, Fadumo, 25/02/05]

Fadumo's and Birten's accounts both highlight the importance they place on good relationships in the neighbourhood and believe that these relationships are held together by mutual help and support with everyday tasks.

Furthermore, Blerta believed that working was essential for meeting and befriending people. Asked if she had developed relationships with neighbours, she responded:

Eh, no, I don't have. I've got a Turkish girl, she bought the flat next to me, but she doesn't stay there that often. I invite her [to my house] and she invites me [to hers]. (...) I think it is difficult [to meet people] because if you don't work, the job is that brings you all the people and you can make friends. [Interview, Blerta, 3/02/05]

However, when the relationship between work and building friendships was raised with those who were working, it became evident that although work relationships can become friendships outside the working place, these were usually contained within working time. Birten, for instance, explained that while she met many people of various ethnic backgrounds through volunteering for a charitable organisation, it was she who kept contact by visiting the charitable organisation and communicating by phone, but there was no opportunity to meet or socialise outside the workplace. In addition, Leke was able to form a friendship with one of his colleagues, but the contact was broken once he stopped working. As he explained:

For about two years I have worked with a barrister who is English. He is a very nice person. At the time we went for a coffee, lunch, depending on the time we had court. Because I was the interpreter and he as barrister represented our client, we were very close together, professionally and as friends. Actually I have worked for four years with other barristers, English and African, and other ethnicities, but with him I have worked a long time (...).

With this gentleman I had a relationship during the working hours, not after working hours. He was a good person. We had good relation; go for coffee, sometimes I pay, sometimes he paid. I have talked a lot with him, about my problem and the things that happened in my country and I heard him giving me very good advice and actually he was concerned about my problem, not just listening routinely, which was very good. He is a very nice person. [Interview, Leke, 9/03/05]

At the time of the interview Leke was seeking permanent employment and had applied for a job as a security officer in his local council. Since he stopped working for the legal firm, he had had no contact with the English barrister.

Razaaq explained that because he had had a negative experience, it strongly affected his outlook on building friendships in his neighbourhood.

One night I have been to my friend's house, at 11 o'clock I come back home, two people stopped me in the road, they asked me to give them money. I say I don't have money and they get the screwdriver and punched it in my head. I lied there for about half an hour, I was so tired, I lied there, people were coming out of the houses, say what's wrong. A lot of people calling the police. When the police came they ask me *Do you know these people?* I say, *No, I don't know*, they say *What kind of people?*, they want information like this. I was so nervous. I am nervous from time to now, I don't come out, if I go out, them with some friends, but I don't go out alone. Because Friday and Saturday night there are drunken people, hitting the people, frightening the people. (...) Now when I go somewhere I ask my brother about the area, I tell him if I am late. [Interview, Razaaq, 1/02/05]

As highlighted by Razaaq's account, trust is a large part in forming relationships and, in his case, the ability to trust was affected by the incident he described. Thus, this violent incident affected his ability to trust strangers, as well as his relationship with his brother, who has become overprotective towards Razaaq since this incident.

Although Razaaq's experience is an exception, a few participants reported being wary of making English friends because they had experienced unsocial behaviour. For instance, Hodan and Mahmood thought that English people were not friendly or polite towards them.

Very difficult [to make English friends]. When I came from Somalia is a big difference. In Somalia everyone is friendly, but here, everyone is going his own business. They don't talk. [Group Interview, Mahmood, 11/02/05]

I find it difficult because the English people are not social, are not friendly. Young children, they are shouting. [Interview, Hodan, 8/02/04]

In contrast, some participants were distinguishing between English people and British born people from ethnic minority groups. For example, Karzan and Abdul said that they had British friends, however differentiating them from the white English population.

For English people, originally English people, I think it's difficult, but for other people who were born here, like Pakistani, Bangladeshi, it is easy because [of] their background, their Middle Eastern tradition. [Interview, Karzan, 15/03/05]

While many participants believed that cultural differences made it difficult for them to develop friendships with English people, some, such as Kaalim and Zeri, felt that they needed to understand English culture first, while others, such as Ashia or Hodan, believed that cultural differences were too wide for a friendship to be developed. As Ashia explained, the fact that her culture is driven by her religion made it very difficult for her to socialise with English people.

The British people, we are Muslim, we got different culture. Everything is completely different. So there can't be, I can't be with them. They say '*Come, let's go to the pub*', but I can't go to the pub. So why do you want to be friends if you can't go to the pub, you can't go to dance or party. Everybody together, you know, boys and girls in party, in my religion you can't be alone with boys, I can't. (...) Even my brothers, even the boys, they are all the time outside and my brothers, they say '*Yeah, I've got my British friends, we play with each other in park*', you know, football, but when they say '*Let's go to the pub*', he stops, he says, '*Yeah okay, see you*'. And I think that they [the English] think we are strange, wearing like that [shows her hijab], doing like that [shows her henna-painted hands], so strange. [Interview, Ashia, 17/11/04]

Ashia's account above points to cultural differences imposed on the lifestyle of males and females, explaining that her lifestyle as subscribed by her religion was incompatible with the British lifestyle in which social places like the pub are central. While she perceived English people to be ignorant about the Islamic tradition, she used examples of her brothers' interactions with English people to demonstrate the limits culture may impose on the development and extend of friendships. In addition, she also said that she had no interaction herself with English people in her neighbourhood. Similarly, Birten felt that it was difficult to develop friendships with English people, not because of the different culture though, but because of being foreign.

Foreign people, we are sharing something in common, like you are foreign, I'm foreign, we share something, it's easier, but with English friends, you have to have social life and then you will get friends, it's hard. Hardest one I think, English friends, yeah. [Interview, Birten, 22/03/05]

Thus Birten felt that English people, who already have a social circle of family and friends, would have a limited interest in befriending foreigners, unless foreigners would follow a social life similar to that of the English. Foreigners, on the contrary, were drawn to each other because they shared the experience of being foreign.

The social and cultural boundaries to the development of friendships were also felt by Reza. As he explained, he felt open towards developing acquaintances and friendships with English people, but his wife was hesitant.

I like English people because of their culture. They are very free, very democratic. I like this situation. I like English people because some are very polite. I like politeness. So, in other words this is going to help me improve my language because I like them, but my wife can't get this, doesn't believe, because it is her culture. She believes [as many] Afghani and Iranian people that men go with men, women with women making friends, but this is not correct. [Interview, Reza, 22/10/04]

Reza's wife was reluctant to socialise with English people partly because she only had lived a few months in Britain, coming from a very conservative and religious society in which non-observance with religious norms and laws was physically punishable. However, Reza, having accepted his new life in the host country, was more enthusiastic about adopting aspects of the British lifestyle and saw benefits in developing friendships with English people.

Finally, some participants pointed out that their reluctance to seek friendships with English people was temporary, as they felt the need to understand the British culture first. For example, Kaalim's view was that the absence of English people from his neighbourhood made it difficult for him to understand practical aspects of the British lifestyle.

Difficult, because English people, I didn't see English people in my building. Because I don't understand what English people here, I need friend English, but English here think you are coming on time or you get out on time. Not like Sudanese people, when I go to my friend, anytime. Here, difficult. Here, phone first. [Interview, Kaalim, 22/11/04]

While Kaalim was comparing the differences of the English and Sudanese lifestyle and ways of socialising, Zeri felt that he needed to develop tolerance towards any potential cultural differences, before seeking friendships with English people.

I need to know their culture first. I watch East Enders every day because I want to see the culture. The [English] culture is different; they [the English] are a bit patronising. So, if this happens in my country, people can fight each other, but I am learning some tolerance here, I have to learn a bit the culture before I jump into making [English] friends. [Interview, Zeri, 8/03/05]

Despite developing an awareness of cultural differences and their potential barriers to interaction, shown by Kaalim and Zeri, many refugees reported to have little contact with people in their neighbourhoods, either because of linguistic or cultural barriers. This finding is confirmed by previous studies (Houghton and Morrice 2008, see section 2.4.1). In turn, those who have found ways to overcome these barriers have done so by firstly, developing a tolerance towards differences in the lifestyle of others and secondly, by recognising the importance of good neighbourhood relations for mutual support and communication.

The subsections presented have identified that generally, refugees in the host country i) place a high importance on being with their immediate family members, and if their nuclear family is broken, they will request help from formal channels for reunion, ii) want to be part of their ethnic community as it provides them with a distinct ethnic identity that allows their children to reattach with the home country and iii) feel prohibited by cultural and linguistic boundaries in developing relationships with their neighbours or people from different ethnic or linguistic backgrounds. These attitudes, however, may prohibit individual refugees from building social relationships within the ESOL/FE college environment. The next section examines the relationships formed by refugee ESOL students in the ESOL/FE college environment.

7.3 The social relationships of refugee ESOL students in the ESOL class and wider college environment

This section explores the relationships of refugee students in the ESOL classroom and college, and examines the factors that may influence relationship building, as well as the way refugee ESOL students maintain their social relationships formed in the ESOL/FE college environment. The section combines quantitative, interview and observational data, which indicate that the majority of refugee ESOL students had made friendships with students from the classroom and the wider college environment. A friendship was identified as a strong and frequent interaction between two or more people and a strong friendship was identified as continuous interaction between two or more people. These friendships varied in form and intensity and were based on different motivations and incentives.

7.3.1 *Having friends*

In the survey, 9 out of 10 refugee ESOL students reported to have friends in the class, and almost 8 out of 10 to have friends in the college⁴⁸. A statistically significant relationship was identified between having friends in the class and having friends in the college⁴⁹ (Fisher's exact test $p < 0.05$, see appendix 3B). Further exploration of this association through odds ratio analysis revealed that those who had friends in the class were 12 times more likely to have friends in the college.

⁴⁸ This rate includes refugee students studying at E2 level or above. E1 students were excluded from the analysis, as they did not answer this question because of their weak English language comprehension. Thus, the population size was reduced from 272 to 203. For table see appendix 3B.

⁴⁹ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no relationship between having friends in class and having friends at college' has been assumed.

Table 7.2a: Refugee ESOL students' friends in class and college

N=197 ^{a, b}	Have friends in class	No friends in class
<i>Have friends in college</i>	150 (87.2%)	9 (36%)
<i>No friends in college</i>	22 (12.8%)	16 (64%)
Total	172 (100%)	25 (100%)

^a EL1 students were excluded

^b N=204 but 7 respondents did not answer these questions

This indicates that refugee ESOL students may be more likely to build friendships with other students from the class, rather than from the college. This outcome may be due to the fact that ESOL groups are restructured every academic year; therefore the same students are not necessarily placed in the same classroom the following academic year. Thus, refugee ESOL students may start friendships with other students in the classroom, which in turn are preserved in the subsequent years when they study in different groups through interaction in the college environment. For instance, during the break in the canteen at Shakespeare College, it was observed that Reza from the group MOHE and Razaq from the group MAHA knew each other well and said they were good friends, explaining that they were in the same class the previous year. In addition, many students may know other students from their neighbourhood, as in the case of Marc, or, simply, they were friends before one or both of them started studying at the college, as was the case with Fadumo.

Table 7.2b: Sources of information for ESOL courses

How did you learn about ESOL courses?	No	%
<i>Friend</i>	78	53.4
<i>Family</i>	13	8.9
<i>Myself</i>	10	6.8
<i>College</i>	7	4.8
<i>Relative</i>	7	4.8
<i>Other</i>	31	21.2
Total^a:	146	100

^a N=272 but 126 respondents did not answer this question

As can be seen from table 7.2b above, of those who responded to the question of how they learned about ESOL courses, over half reported that they initially were informed by friends (see also appendix 3C).

The tendency of refugee ESOL students to make friends in class and college was also confirmed through the interviews and participant observation. The general pattern in every ESOL group observed was that most students would have one or two close friends with whom they would share a desk, work together and spend time during the break. Some students would not restrict their interaction with one or two people, but would interact with every student in class and regarded all fellow students as friends. Outside the classroom, most of the students would spend their breaks together in the canteen or the library, and many were observed to socialise with students from other ESOL groups at the college. Table 7.3 shows interviewees' responses on having friends in class and college.

Table 7.3: Interviewees' existing friendships in Shakespeare and Marlowe College

Shakespeare College					Marlowe College				
Group	Student	Friends in class	Close friend in class	Friends in College	Group	Student	Friends in class	Close friend in class	Friends in College
SUAU	Darine	Yes	Yes	Yes	LOLE	Fowsiyo	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Yasir	Yes	Yes	Yes		Khadra	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Mahmood	Yes	Yes	Yes		Shima	Yes	No	No
LOLE	Kaalim	Yes	No	Yes	ROFO	Nimo	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Enver	Yes	Yes	Yes		Ashia	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Farah	Yes	Yes	No		Abdul	Yes	No	Yes
MOHE	Leonora	Yes	Yes	No		Ayanna	No	No	No
	Daria	Yes	Yes	No		Sarfras	No	No	No
	Reza	Yes	No	Yes		DEPE	Jamila	Yes	Yes
MAHA	Razaaq	Yes	Yes	Yes		Tushkata	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Hodan	Yes	No	Yes	MOLU	Fadumo	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Siri	Yes	No	Yes	WJDM	Mahmood	No	No	No
	Blerta	Yes	Yes	Yes	PHEA	Safia	No	No	No
	Marc	Yes	Yes	Yes					
XUWA	Carine	Yes	Yes	Yes	LEGO	Zeri	No	No	No
	Koffi	Yes	No	Yes					

As can be seen from the table, all interviewees from Shakespeare College reported to have friends in class and most to have a close friend, except Farah, Leonora and Daria, who had no friends in the college. At the time of the interview, Farah had been in London for less than a year, awaiting a decision on her asylum application, and was living with her cousin. She was married, but her husband was still living in Somalia. This put her under considerable stress, but she hoped to be reunited with him soon after receiving a positive decision on her asylum claim.

Int: *Have you got friends in class?*

Farah: I speak in class but not outside

Int: *Is there anyone in the class who is very close to you?*

Farah: Yeah, Halima [a Somali woman]

Int: *And do you talk to other people?*

Farah: In class yes, but not outside, I can't.

Int: *During the break, what do you do?*

Farah: When I have break I go to prayer room and pray. When I come back I go to second class. After class I go home.

[Interview, Farah, 6/12/04]

Whereas Farah's reason for not socialising with people from other ESOL groups during breaks was the concern for her husband, Daria and Leonora from the MOHE group simply said that they had a good friend in class and therefore did not need to find more friends. Daria was observed to spend time during the breaks with her Afghani female friend from class, but she also said that, sometimes, she would spend time with her husband who was studying on a different course. Similarly, Leonora was observed to spend most of her breaks with her Lithuanian female friend from class, but was also repeatedly seen in the canteen with other students from class.

In Marlowe College many students had friends in the class and college, but there was a significant number of students who reported to not have friends in the ESOL/FE college environment. Mahmood and Safia explained that, because they were new to the college,

they simply had not had enough time to make friends, but were optimistic about building friendships with their classmates in the future.

Yes, it's important [to have friends]. If there are friends it can be comfortable [in the class]. (...) Maybe after, when I stay after 2-3 months [I will make friends]. My character, if I meet someone, I am going to be close. I am very communicative and adaptable to the person. [Interview, Safia, 11/04/05]

Safia's account highlights the importance of personality, as well as the impact of time on developing relationships. While many refugee ESOL students spend a lengthy time learning English, during this period they had the chance of getting to know their fellow students and slowly develop a relationship that sometimes evolves into a friendship. When Safia was introduced to the class in the middle of the academic year, the initial reaction of fellow students was a formal, welcoming greeting expressed by the whole group, but also indifference from individual students. After a few lessons, though, a few students started to be curious about Safia; after one month, she started to develop a friendship with a female student from Angola, of similar age. In the case of Mahmood, his interview was conducted at the beginning of the academic year. Although he was communicating with all students in class, he felt he had had no opportunity to develop a friendship yet.

Shima and Jamila reported to have friends in the class but not in the college. Jamila cited as a reason her close friendship with the Columbian woman from class, similar to Daria and Leonora from Shakespeare College. However, Shima explained that she found it difficult to trust people after running away with her children from her abusive husband. As a result, she said that although she had friends in her class, she avoided developing close friendships. Interestingly, students without any close friends, had friends in the college, except Shima. Thus, not being able to trust may affect Shima's willingness to meet new people.

In summary, it was identified that refugee ESOL students built social relationships with other students in the ESOL and FE college environment⁵⁰ and interaction between students took place inside and outside the ESOL classroom. This confirms the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a site for relationship building (see Glenton 2004,

⁵⁰ As a statistical association was identified, the alternative hypothesis that 'There is a relationship between having friends in class and having friends in college' was accepted.

Carey 2004, Hodge *et al.* 2005, section 2.4.2). In addition, while it was identified that most students had a friend or a close friend in class, reasons for not having friends in college included: the need for more time to socialise; the effects of the refugee experience; for instance, concerns about legalisation of stay and reunion with family members; and the existence of a close friend.

Next, attention will be turned to those students without any friends in either, the class or college, and their reasons for their choices will be explored.

7.3.2 *Choosing not to have friends*

The students who reported not to have friends appeared to have made a conscious choice, although for different reasons. Ayanna explained that because she suffered from mental health problems linked to her experiences in Somalia, as well as various problems related to housing, she did not feel ready to build friendships with people from the class and preferred to concentrate on studying when in college. As she explained:

We are general friends, only for college (...) I'm normal student, but nobody knows all my things, about my life. And I don't like to talk about my problem. But I want to tell you, one woman from hostel, she has problems. She doesn't like to talk to the people, she has mental problems and also alcoholic problem. One night she drunk too much bottles, I don't know, she is not normal. She said to me 'You son of a bitch'. Me, I didn't care, me with all my problems. It's not really my business because me, sometimes, I am feeling something, she makes me like that. Just I keep my mouth and go to my room. So at that time I didn't like going to TV room, I go to my room, but it's little bit problem because I don't like to be alone. In Birmingham I have so many friends. They come here, they don't have any place to sleep with me, they go back quickly. [Interview, Ayanna, 1/12/04]

Ayanna's case highlights the difficulty she faced to socialise with people she does not know well, and the experience with her neighbour made her withdrawn. The experience of losing her family in the civil war, in combination with the implications this caused to her health, made her introverted, although she did have a good working relationship with other students in class. Thus, the trauma inflicted by war affected Ayanna's ability

to socialise and build friendships (McMichael and Manderson 2004, see section 3.5.1). In contrast, Sarfras made a choice of not wanting to develop any relationship with other ESOL students because he wanted to adopt a western, British lifestyle. He believed that interaction with people from the ethnic community or other ethnic minority groups was holding him back and he wanted to experience life as British people did.

[My classmates] are, just, I see them just as normal people. I am just doing my business. I might just say something for a laugh and that's it. (...). I just say 'Hello, how are you', come to college, do my study, even when I have a break I may not even talk to them. That's what I'm saying. I am on my own. (...) We've got two Iranian people in our class, but I'm not close. 'Hi, how are you' that's it. [Interview, Sarfras, 17/11/04]

In the classroom Sarfras adopted the role of the outsider. His spoken English was fluent and clear, with very few grammatical mistakes, more advanced than that of other students in the class. During lessons he would ask many questions about vocabulary and the British system, sometimes interrupting the pace of the lesson.

The teacher puts up a newspaper article about a trial of a murder. The class has been to the Old Bailey following the trial and the article is related to it. Although the lesson concentrates on comprehension, indirectly it is about the British judicial system. The lesson is interactive, if students can explain something to others, they do. Some students get confused with the system, like the decision of the jury, and they refer to the system in their own countries. Discussion is going on for an hour or so. Sarfras is a bit confused, asks for meaning of different words. Maja seems to know the system well. Sarfras keeps interrupting and is a bit upset that other students explain his questions, he wants to hear it from the teacher. The older Bengali woman seems upset by Sarfras's behaviour and tells me that he should change level, because he is asking too many questions. Then the woman next to her tells her something in Bengali and the woman stops.

Then, the teacher gives to students two handouts and puts them into two large groups. Students have to do the exercises in groups. At this point Sarfras approaches me, asking for the meaning of the words 'tradition', 'liberty' and 'freedom'. I attempt to describe the words, but he does not fully understand, so after about five minutes he asks the Iranian woman for her dictionary. She initially ignores him but when he asks again, she reluctantly gives him her dictionary.

Sarfras looks up the words and returns the dictionary to her, thanking her in Farsi. [Lesson observation, ROFO group, 24/11/04]

..

After this observation it became clear that Sarfras was not liked by his fellow students, possibly because of his attitude, believing that he had nothing to learn from his fellow students in his attempt to lead a British lifestyle. In this process, Sarfras not only tried to disassociate himself from his ethnicity by not interacting with other Iranians in the class, but also assertively showed disrespect towards fellow students by not accepting their knowledge and experiences as valid. A month later Sarfras dropped the course and started working as a booking agent in a betting shop.

The last student reporting to not have friends in the class or college was Zeri. At the time of the interview Zeri secured an offer in a university for a course in medicine, conditional on achieving level 2 English. Thus, Zeri regarded socialising with fellow students as a loss of time, which he could spend more productively by reading and studying.

I don't consider myself isolated because that's a good time to read [during the break]. If I want to socialise then I can do it, but I find it very interesting getting out of the class and having something to read. At home, I prepare something to read here [at college], I don't want to waste my time. (...) You know, I come here once a week, I have one hour break, I am not thinking about isolation. I don't know people here, but it doesn't concern me, everyone has his own business. So I have lots of plans to do, so, in my spare time it's better to read. I don't hate anyone, I don't have any bad feelings [against anyone], but I don't see the point making friends around here. [Interview, Zeri, 8/03/05]

Compared to Sarfras, Zeri was very approachable, compromising and polite towards fellow students and would happily engage in group activities the teacher's instruction. However, he did not attempt to continue any interaction after the lesson, partly because he prioritised his future plan to study at university over building relationships in the ESOL environment. An additional factor that may limit his and other ESOL students' intention to build friendships in the ESOL/FE College environment is the amount of time spent in college. In Zeri's case, the class would meet once a week for five hours with a one-hour break. Thus, the whole group had limited time to socialise outside the

classroom, but nevertheless, most students would spend time together during their break.

In summary, it was identified that for particular reasons, refugee ESOL students made the choice of not developing any friendships with fellow students because they did not see any potential benefits deriving from friendships formed in the ESOL/FE College environment. While mental ill-health, arising through psychological trauma and loss that characterises the refugee experience, was identified to be a de-motivating factor in the formation of friendships (see also section 1.3), a friendship in the ESOL/FE College environment was regarded as a potentially delaying factor to the realisation of plans to further socio-economic adjustment in Britain.

The next section will explore the process of relationship building and examine the factors that may impact on it.

7.4 Factors influencing relationship building in the ESOL setting

The friendships formed in the ESOL/FE College environment tended to be affected by ethnicity, same gender and age across the ESOL levels. As became clear during classroom observation, there was a difference between friendships formed between the entry levels and the higher levels. An analysis of the ESOL group composition highlighted a variation between the age of students and number of students' countries of origin in an ESOL group between levels.

Specifically, as can be seen from table 7.4 below, the mean age of students at levels 1 and 2 was lower than that of students in entry levels and also, there was a smaller number of countries of origin and first languages in the entry levels compared to levels 1 and 2. This means that in some classrooms, one ethnic group dominated over other ethnic groups of students.

Table 7.4: Characteristics of ESOL groups observed

	Level/ Group	Gender	Mean age	No of countries of Origin	No of languages	Dominant ethnic group
Shakespeare College	E1/ SUAU N=10	7 F; 3 M	41.1	5	5	Somali (5)
	E2/ LOLE N=14	4 F; 10 M	33	9	8	Somali (6)
	E3/ MOHE N=14	11 F; 3 M	37.6	8	10	No dominant ethnic group
	E3/ MAHA (Office Skills) N=15	12 F; 3 M	32.9	8	9	No dominant ethnic group
	L1/ XUWA N=11	7 F; 4 M	30.7	10	9	No dominant ethnic group
Marlowe College	E1/ GAWI N=12	10 F; 2M	35.7	6	4	Bengali (5)
	E2/ LOGI N=14	12 F; 2M	36.7	2	3	Somali (7) & Bengali (7)
	E3/ WJDM N=12	8 F; 4 M	37.8	5	6	Bengali (6)
	E3/ ROFO (Academic study) N=16	13 F; 3 M	30.7	5	6	Bengali (7)
	E3/ DEPE (Focus on Work) N=11	10 F; 1 M	34.1	5	5	No dominant ethnic group
	E3/ MOLU (Childcare) N=11	11 F	32	2	2	Bengali (10)
	L1/ PHEA N=14	8 F; 6 M	30.9	9	8	No dominant ethnic group
	L2/LEGO N=11	7 F; 4 M	30.6	9	10	No dominant ethnic group

Further, while a dominant ethnic group⁵¹ of students was present in most of the entry level groups, there was no dominant ethnic group in the higher levels. However, there were more classrooms with a dominant ethnic group in Marlowe College than Shakespeare College, and the number of students forming a dominant ethnic group in a classroom was higher in Marlowe College, a number that reflects the ethnic composition of the specific London area.

⁵¹ The dominant ethnic group was defined as 40% or over of students in a class being from the same country of origin.

There were no observable differences in class size, but in all classrooms except the group LOLE, female students outnumbered male students and there were only female students in the group MOLU with embedded childcare. Finally, there were younger students in the group ROFO, compared to other entry level 3 groups. This is not surprising, as that group emphasised on ESOL for academic study and many students aspired to study further at university. The factors that were identified to influence the process of relationship building in the ESOL classroom and college were ethnicity, gender and age, which will be analysed next.

7.4.1 *Ethnicity*

The identification of ethnicity⁵² as a factor influencing relationship building is not surprising, firstly, because at entry levels the ability to communicate in English with students of different linguistic backgrounds is limited, and secondly because students from the same ethnic background know and apply cultural norms and traditions of communication as prescribed in their home country, which may be perceived as alien by other ethnic groups. However, the dominance of an ethnic group over others in a classroom, especially at entry level 1, did limit communication of its members with students from other ethnic groups. In classrooms with a large number of students from a dominant ethnic group the prominent language of informal communication was the mother tongue, rather than English, and this could only be broken by instruction from the teacher. Although students from a dominant ethnic group were friendly towards those from other ethnic groups, the others were reluctant to start a conversation.

There are 12 students in class, 10 Bengali women and men, one Brazilian man and one Somali man. The tables are arranged in a U form and the Brazilian and Somali men sit together at the right far end. The students are given a group activity to do, asked to work in pairs. After a few minutes, whispers start to get louder and the students from the middle talk to each other. Suddenly the Brazilian student shouts loudly: *Speak in English* but the other students ignore his request with a friendly laugh. The Brazilian, seemingly upset, explained later that he and his Somali friend decided not to talk with the others because they always talked in Bengali, which he did not

⁵² Chi-square testing could not be carried out between ethnicity and having friends in class or college, as the high number of ethnicities did not fulfil the requirements of the test.

find appropriate for an ESOL class and disrespectful towards them. However, some Bengali students believed that it was not that serious and said that they talked in Bengali because it was difficult for them to talk in English. [Observation notes, CITA group, 25/04/05]

The presence of a dominant ethnic group may act as an excluding factor as it potentially forces those outside the dominant ethnic network to take the role of the outsider. Some teachers from Marlowe College pointed out that the formation of ethnic blocks was indeed prevalent, especially in beginner's classes, but that although one culture prevailed over that of others, students were happily engaging in English language talk once asked.

On the other hand, minority ethnic groups in the classroom may use their minority status to successfully break into dominant ethnic groups through persistence and attempts to understand and mimic the culture of the dominant ethnic group. For instance, Fadumo was the only Somali amongst 10 Bengalis in the class MOLU. During breaks Fadumo was observed to directly approach groups of two to three students and start a conversation about everyday issues. The Bengali students would happily engage in conversation in broken English and assist each other by translating from Bengali into English. As Fadumo explained, she saw this as an opportunity to talk in English, as well as to learn about similarities and differences between the Somali and Bengali culture. In turn, she thought that understanding the culture was useful because she had many Bengali friends in her neighbourhood. However, it has to be pointed out that Fadumo was the only student who did not belong to the dominant ethnic group. Were there more students from her own or other ethnicities, she might have not made any attempts to befriend the Bengali students and instead might have chosen to interact with the others, as during the breaks she was sometimes observed to socialise with other Somali students. When asked, she explained that sometimes she spent her breaks with her classmates and sometimes with her Somali friends from different ESOL groups.

Data evidence suggested that students belonging to a dominant ethnic group in a classroom place a great importance on the promotion of their culture and related lifestyle through practising traditions from the home country in the classroom, or simply through story telling and comparisons between life in the home country and Britain. Examples of this included the celebration of religious festivals, such as Eid, with offers of traditional food to other classmates, or through displaying traditional ethnic clothing

and jewellery. For instance, the Iraqi student from the group GAWI announced her engagement by offering to each student in the class traditional Middle Eastern sweets and showing her henna-coloured hands. * On another occasion, the group WJDM organised a birthday party for one ESOL teacher of Irish background. Although the present to the teacher was a football shirt of the national Irish football team, the birthday cake and music played were Bengali.

Students seemed to be more open to interact with each other in the higher level classes, including the entry level 3 classes, without a dominant ethnic group present. While there were groups of two or three students belonging to the same ethnic group, they would not necessarily interact only with each other; although they were often observed using their first language, they would talk in English if a student from a different ethnic group joined them. Thus, the willingness to interact and build friendships with classmates was not obstructed by the different ethnicity. However, there were some exceptions to this pattern. Specifically, in the MOHE group, two Afghani women, Daria and Layla were very close to each other, but were not interacting as much in the classroom. When asked, they explained that they were sitting with other people because they wanted to avoid talking in Daari. Similarly, in the ROFO group two Somali and two Bengali students were very close to each other, but would sit in class with different people in order to avoid talking in their first languages.

There was a similar pattern in level 1 and 2 groups at Marlowe College. Students came from various countries, but the presence of the dominant ethnic groups of the college – the Bengalis and the Somalis – was much smaller, with only two Bengalis and one Somali in the group PHEA and none in the group LEGO. The prevalent ethnicities now were German, Lithuanian, Polish, Spanish and Chinese. Students from the same ethnic group would interact, but conversations were based in English. Despite instances where students would refer to their countries, this was exceptional.

The teacher enters the room, greets the students and asks them how they are. All students nod and greet the teacher back, but the Polish woman looks sad, so the teacher asks if she feels all right. The student replies that she is very sad because the Pope John Paul II died and explains that it is a very sad day for Poland, because the Pope was Polish and helped his people a lot, especially during communism. At this point she stops and starts crying. The other

Polish student is equally moved and the class now tries to show some empathy with some students saying that it is a bad occasion for every Catholic in the world. [Observation notes, PHEA group, 4/04/05].

In the case above, the Polish student used the death of the Pope to explain parts of her country's history and promote ideological aspects of democratic Poland, which had rediscovered religion as part of its ethnic identity. Although about half of the students in this class reported to be Christian/Catholic, and did regard the death of the Pope as a loss, the Polish student placed his death in the context of the development of her own country and ethnicity, and intended to make the statement that, as Polish, she was more strongly affected than other Catholics. There were no other instances observed in which students in either of the two groups would make a reference to ethnicity or the home country. Interestingly, interaction outside the classroom between students in both groups was limited and students knew very little about each other's lives, because as an evening group, the group PHEA only had 15 minute breaks and therefore, had limited time to interact outside the class.

There was little interaction, too, in the level 1 group XUWA at Shakespeare College. Although students reported to have friends in the classroom and to know people from college, they resisted any interaction during the lesson, even after teachers' instructions. On one occasion, the teacher decided to rearrange the tables into clusters. However, when students entered the room, they rearranged the tables into two rows facing the board. Further, students would spend time together during breaks, but not outside the college, although some would call each other. Compared to the higher level classes in Marlowe College, students in the XUWA group would not interact during lessons, but would socialise during breaks, while in the groups LEGO and PHEA students were strongly interacting during lessons, but avoided each other during breaks. One reason that could explain this difference is the time spent in class: while in Marlowe College students would not spend more than five hours per week together, in Shakespeare College students spent 16.5 hours a week in the classroom.

In summary, the presence of a dominant ethnic group seems to be a major factor for relationship building within the classroom, especially for those who come from the same ethnic group. If those outside the ethnic group made an attempt to approach and respect the culture of the dominant ethnic group, then a relationship across ethnic

groups started to develop. In addition, two dominant ethnic groups could develop a relationship in the class and cooperate. For those students who were not interested in befriending fellow students, the group was open to interaction in the classroom, but not outside it. Finally, if there was no dominant ethnic group, students were on the one hand forced to communicate in English, but on the other hand they might not have an interest in developing friendships with the fellow ESOL students and communicated only upon instruction from teachers.

7.4.2 Gender

Gender as a factor influencing relationship building was evident at all levels. Although two thirds of students were female and therefore males were in the minority, females seemed to be more open to interaction with other females and also more open to build friendships rather than only making acquaintances with fellow students. Males, on the other hand, were more restricted in interacting with other students in the classroom, but nevertheless would interact with their classmates and other students from other ESOL groups during the breaks. In addition, while men tended to say that all fellow students were friends, females were more likely to have a specific number of friends. As can be seen from tables 7.5a and 7.5b below, more females than males reported to have friends in class and college.

Tables 7.5a and 7.5b: Gender and friendships in the ESOL classroom and College

N=197 ^{a, b}	Female	Male
<i>Have friends in class</i>	120 (91.6%)	52 (78.8%)
<i>Have not friends in class</i>	11 (8.4%)	14 (21.2%)
Total	131 (100%)	66 (100%)

^a EL1 students were excluded

^b N=204 but 7 respondents did not answer this question

N=197 ^{a, b}	Female	Male
<i>Have friends in college</i>	110 (84%)	49 (74.2%)
<i>Have not friends in college</i>	21 (16%)	17 (25.8%)
Total	131 (100%)	66 (100%)

^a EL1 students were excluded

^b N=204 but 10 respondents did not answer this question

There was a statistically significant relationship between gender and friendships in class and it appears that a higher proportion of females than males had friends in class⁵³ (Pearson's $\chi^2=6.505$, $df=1$, $p<0.05$). Further exploration with odds ratio analysis confirmed that female refugee students were almost three times more likely to have friends in class than male refugee students (see appendix 3D). Nevertheless, although a higher proportion of females reported to have friends in college⁵⁴, there was no statistically significant association between refugees' gender and having friends in college.

This relationship is also confirmed through observational data. In the classrooms across ESOL levels female students tended to interact with other females, while males tended to be more quiet. In addition, on many occasions, female students would only talk to males when asked by teachers.

The lesson today is about speaking practice. Students have to stand up, go over to a person and start a conversation. After they have finished with one person they move to another. The activity starts but most students are reluctant to approach their fellow students. The Somali women laugh and the Bengalis try to have a conversation with each other. The teacher joins the students as an interviewer and tries to make them talk. However, about half are still reluctant and just laugh. The men seem to be reluctant to start a conversation with women, except the Somali elderly man who is being interviewed by Somali women. The activity does not work as GaWI wants to, so after a bit he tells the class to sit down. [Observation notes, GAWI group, 28/02/05]

The reluctance of many female students to approach males and enquire about personal information is probably due to cultural restrictions on communication between men and women. Although students understood the importance of speaking practice and were prepared to follow the teacher's instruction, cultural inhibitions made this activity difficult and resulted in laughter. In the case where this activity was successful, the

⁵³ The *null hypothesis* that 'There is no association between refugees' gender and having friends in class has been assumed.

⁵⁴ The *null hypothesis* that 'There is no association between refugees' gender and having friends in the college has been assumed.

factor of old age (the Somali elderly man) seemed to help women overcome their inhibitions.

The only exception where communication between men and women took place was in the LOLE group where female students were underrepresented. From the four women in that group, two would sit and talk to each other, a third woman would frequently join them, but the fourth woman, Hatice from Turkey, was the best friend of Enver. In every lesson they would sit and work together. Sometimes they would be joined by another student, Irfan, also from Turkey. Hatice and Enver would also spend time in the breaks, usually in the canteen or smoking area. There they would be joined by Enver's friends from his ethnic group and sometimes by his wife. Hatice did not mind if they were talking in Albanian.

In all other ESOL groups strong relationships between students identified were all based on the same gender. However, as was observed across higher ESOL levels, relationships seemed to lose their strength, although there were friendships based on same gender. For instance, Carine explained that her best friend in the class was a woman from Vietnam, but in the class she concentrated on the lesson. Although she wanted to socialise with her friend, after the lessons Carine had to go home as she had a baby. However, she kept contact by frequent phone calls. In Carine's case, a telephone conversation with her friend was possible as their English was of an advanced level. However, the same might not be possible for students in the entry levels.

In summary, gender appears to be a significant factor in relationship building and females were more open to build friendships with other female students in class⁵⁵. Although interaction between male and female students in the classroom and college was taking place, the development of strong friendships between men and women was rare. This might be due to cultural constraints of students involved; for instance the prescriptions of a specific culture or religion, such as Islam, prohibit relationships between males and females, unless they are related.

⁵⁵ As a statistical association was identified, the alternative hypothesis, that 'There is an association between gender and having friends in class' was accepted. However as there was no association between gender and having friends in college, the original hypothesis stated in footnote 53 was not rejected.

7.4.3 Age

Age as a factor influencing relationship building in the classroom was not as predominant as ethnicity and gender, but was nevertheless influencing relationship building in the wider college environment. With regard to friendships in class (see table 7.6a below), although the vast majority reported to have friends, about one fifth of those aged 26-35 and over 46 reported not to have friends. However, there was no statistical association between refugees' friendships and relationship building in class and age⁵⁶.

Table 7.6a Friends in class across age groups

N=194 ^{a,b}	Up to 25	26-35	36-45	46+
<i>Have not friends in class</i>	5 (8.8%)	14 (20%)	3 (6%)	3 (17.6%)
<i>Have friends in class</i>	52 (91.2%)	56 (80%)	47 (94%)	14 (82.4%)
Total	57 (100%)	70 (100%)	50 (100%)	17 (100%)

^a E1 students were excluded

^b N=204 but 10 respondents did not answer this question

Furthermore, with regard to friendships in college, table 7.6b indicates that the vast majority of those aged up to 25 reported to have friends in college, while over one fifth of respondents from the older age groups reported not to have friends in college. There was a statistical association between refugees' friendships in college and age⁵⁷, indicating that indeed, from all age groups, those aged up to 25 tended to have friends in the wider college environment (Pearson's $\chi^2=7.864$, $df=3$, $p<0.05$, adjusted residual = $2.8 > z_{crit} = 1.96$).

⁵⁶ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between refugees' friendships in class and age' has been assumed.

⁵⁷ The *null hypothesis* 'There is no association between refugees' friendships in class and age' has been assumed.

Table 7.6b Friends in college across age groups

N=194 ^{a,b}	Up to 25	Adjusted residual	26-35	Adjusted residual	36-45	Adjusted residual	46+	Adjusted residual
<i>Have not friends in college</i>	4 (7%)	-2.8	18 (25.7%)	1.8	11 (22%)	0.6	4 (23.5%)	0.5
<i>Have friends in college</i>	53 (93%)	2.8	52 (74.3%)	-1.8	39 (78%)	-0.6	13 (76.5%)	-0.5
Total	57 (100%)		70 (100%)		50 (100%)		17 (100%)	

^a E1 students were excluded

^b N=204 but 10 respondents did not answer this question

Indeed, in the classroom, there was no indication that student interaction was affected by students' age, although the number of younger students in a group was small. While it was identified that older students tended to have one or two close friends in the class, this did not affect their interaction with younger students. In turn, many younger students were observed to spend more time in college, arriving earlier for, and staying longer after lessons, while only few older students were observed to be in the college long before or after the lesson. In addition, younger students were at many instances observed to socialise with students of similar age from other ESOL groups during the breaks. Exceptions to this were Sarfras and Ayanna, who reported to not have any friends in class or college.

Moreover, younger students were more aware of events in the college, such as the student union elections. For example, in Shakespeare College Razaq was very active in informing his friends and fellow students about the upcoming elections despite the fact that most of the older ESOL students did not think it necessary to take part. In addition, in Marlowe College one of the younger ESOL students of Bengali origin was a presidential candidate and with the help of his friends, he informed other ESOL students about the election.

Just before the lesson finishes a student enters the room and asks the students in the class to come to the foyer and vote for the student union presidency. WJDM gives to students a handout for homework and lets them go. Downstairs, there is a massive queue with about 80-100 people waiting to vote, which the students, who came down with me, join. After about 20 minutes, the first ones who voted come and sit with me. I ask them why they voted and one man replies that

it is a good thing to vote and that the president has promised to create a larger prayer room and reduce the prices of the canteen. Then, another two students arrive and sit next to me. They all look very pleased to have voted. [Observation notes, Marlowe College, 2/03/05]

The event above is an instance that demonstrates the higher involvement of younger students in college life. In addition, their willingness to get involved in college issues may be a possible explanation of their tendency to have more friends in the college.

Of the 8 younger students that were interviewed, Ashia, Razaaq, Blerta and Koffi said they had friends in class and college. Interestingly, Ashia, Razaaq and Blerta met their college friends in the classes of previous years, while Koffi, new at the college reported to know people from various ESOL courses. Finally, while Sarfras and Ayanna have no friends, Farah and Daria said to have friends in class only. With the exception of Razaaq however, no one showed an interest in actively participating in college life.

In summary, age has been identified as a significant factor in relationship building for refugee ESOL students in the wider college environment, where students aged 25 or younger tend to have friends from other ESOL courses⁵⁸. In addition, younger students showed a greater awareness of and active involvement in college events, such as the student union elections. However, no differences were identified where age was influencing the development of friendships between students in the ESOL classroom. Next, attention will be turned to the maintenance of social relationships formed in the ESOL/FE College environment.

7.5 Maintaining social relationships formed in the ESOL/FE college setting

This section explores the ways in which refugee ESOL students nurture and preserve their friendships formed in the ESOL and wider college environment. Whilst the extent of friendships in the class and college indicate that the majority of refugee ESOL students tend to build friendships, the need for doing so and the way in which friendships were formed and maintained will be analysed below.

⁵⁸ As a statistical association was identified, the alternative hypothesis, that 'There is a relationship between refugee ESOL students' age and having friends in college' was accepted.

Most of the refugee ESOL students found it important to have friends and felt that ESOL gave them the opportunity to meet people. Despite the initial disinterest in making acquaintances by some students, as in the case of Safia, interaction in the classroom, sometimes on the teacher's instruction and sometimes on students' initiative, was the initiator for the development of a potential friendship. Fadumo believed that first impressions were of great importance and that the whole group needed to make an effort for creating an inclusive environment for new students.

If you are happy and openly and if I say to you on the first day you come *'How are you? What's your name? Where do you come from and how old are you? You got married and how do you feel? Welcome to the class. We are friendly, we are glad to have you.'*, so then, she is open to you. Because first, you started, then she becomes open, doesn't feel shy, encourage them if they are shy. [Interview, Fadumo, 25/02/05]

Fadumo believed that respect and reciprocity between friends were essential aspects for the maintenance of a friendship.

Yes, all in my class [are my friends], they respect me and also I respect them. We are helping each other really (...) Last month she [a friend from class] called me to see how I feel, what I did. I told her everything. When I came today in the morning, everyone say *'What happened in hospital?'* Now we have a party at my home, after class on Wednesday I am cooking chicken curry and rice. [Interview, Fadumo, 25/02/05]

Fadumo's way of appreciating her fellow students' interest in her health and recovery was to organise a feast, for which she attempted to adapt to their culture by cooking a dish more familiar to Bengali than Somali culture.

Similarly, Ahmed believed that a friendship could be maintained with a person from a different ethnic background, if one made an attempt to adapt to the other's culture. During the course, Ahmed developed a very close friendship with another fellow student and as they both were young and without family responsibilities, they became inseparable inside and outside the college. Thus, Ahmed started to slowly adapt to his friend's lifestyle and learn from it.

As I said, I had friends. They told me, you know, I was interested in some girls, *'Why don't you ask them out?'* I said *'No, look, please, I*

don't want to ruin my relationship [friendship with this girl]. She is nice, she tells me 'Hi' and that's enough'. [The friend replied] 'No way, if you want to get something, if you want to take it a step further, you have to ask her out.' You don't do anything, you just have a drink, socialising, talking like this, approaching like this [demonstrates with hands]. If it takes you somewhere, it's alright. If not, you are just a friend'. So, that's what I mean, you know? You need to know how the culture works and how the language works and they both work together. [Interview, Ahmed, 2/02/05]

Ahmed's case highlights that in inter-cultural friendships, attempts by both parties to accept each other's differences and to adopt parts of the other's culture may be needed. As Ahmed is Muslim and came from a traditional society, interaction with females was limited. While he was open to start a potential relationship with a woman, his cultural norms prohibited him from approaching this woman. With the advice of his friend he was able to develop tolerance, awareness and appreciation towards the different lifestyle and to learn about the cultural norms of interaction in the host country.

Birten believed that another essential part of maintaining a relationship was trust and thought of the ability to listen to others' problems as an essential quality in a friend.

Trust, oh, it's very important. I like it. With friends you have to trust, you should trust, otherwise you know, when I speak openly, how can I say..., sometimes we don't tell everything but it's good to know things [about each other]. But it depends on your friends, you know, I like to tell, sometimes it just comes out. Sharing, listening, when someone has a problem you have to listen, not only, for example you have a problem, yeah, you tell me, you are my friend, and I'm saying, Oh, I have the same thing. I believe this doesn't help. Even if someone has problem, just listen. You will see, the problem will solve itself, I believe this is in the psychology. [Interview, Birten, 22/03/05]

This view was also shared by Koffi, who, as a recently arrived asylum-seeker, did not have any family members in Britain.

Yes, I think it's important because I need friends, you know, I don't know what will happen to my case, maybe I am obliged to leave this country, you know, even if the decision to send me back to Congo, a friend can give me advice and ideas about how to stay, how to legalise. This is fine for me. Also, I'm human, you know, I must

talk, I must communicate, Home Office problem makes me crazy, you know [laughs]. [Interview, Koffi, 17/03/05]

While refugees feel the need to trust and share their problems, they may also seek advice and emotional support from friends. In turn, respect shown towards a friend and the need to reciprocate are all ways of maintaining a friendship with another fellow student from the ESOL or wider college environment. Given that many refugees found it difficult to easily trust others, the search for a close friend was difficult. Most interviewees distinguished between knowing people and the difficulty associated with finding characteristics they would expect in a good friend. However, the need to have someone to communicate with was the main motivator in looking for friends, as well as for developing a close friendship.

Ashia and Nimo from the group ROFO, both from Somalia and living with their parents and siblings, became very good friends over the period of two months. They worked together in the class and spent their breaks together. When asked what basis their friendship was built on, they simply responded that they liked each other and had got on well from the beginning of the year.

Nobody can stay without friends, you know. For example, in the lunch time, I cannot sit by myself, you know? But if you have friends with you [it's different]. Yes, I need someone to communicate, I think it's better. [Interview, Nimo, 24/11/04]

Nimo's account refers to the need of interacting with others as an essential aspect of her presence at the college and the enhancement of the college experience through the existence of friends. Similarly Ashia believed that although she had her family close to her, her sisters could not replace a good friend.

It's important to have friends because I was used to it there [in Jordan]. So, I came here, I feel lonely. Even if I have my sisters here, all my family, I still feel lonely. [Interview, Ashia, 17/11/04]

An additional aspect that both women shared was their fluency in Arabic and they would, at times, talk in Arabic during the lesson. Although Nimo was not as religious as Ashia, and was a Bravanese, a sub-ethnicity within Somalia, this did not obstruct their friendship in any way. The only problem they both identified was the difficulty to meet outside the college. While Ashia lived close to the college, Nimo needed to travel

about ten miles. Despite not being able to meet outside the college because of the distance, they communicated daily over the phone.

The survey results indicate that that the vast majority of refugee ESOL students met their college friends outside the college. As can be seen from table 7.7 below, two fifths reported to meet their friends outside the college sometimes, while almost two fifths said yes. Only a quarter reported not to meet their friends outside college.

Table 7.7: Meeting friends from ESOL class and college outside the college

N=185 ^{a, b}	Responses	Frequency
<i>No</i>	47	(25.4%)
<i>Sometimes</i>	73	(39.5%)
<i>Yes</i>	65	(35.1%)
Total	185	(100%)

^a E1 students were excluded

^b N=204 but 19 respondents did not answer this question

In contrast, just over a third of refugee students interviewed reported to meet their ESOL friends outside the college. Distance was one of the problems referred to by Nimo, and further problems were related with daily responsibilities, such as family responsibilities.

Eh, last year I had friends I meet outside the college but this year no. When the lesson finishes, you've got everyone at the stairs talking for a little while. Everybody has problems, like picking children up from nursery. (...) [Friends from last year's class] They are still here [but we meet] in here, whenever I see them I come here, we're very close. [Interview, Blerta, 3/02/05]

Other students, such as Leonora, Carine, Nyambi and Siri cited family and childcare responsibilities as the reason for not meeting outside the college. This confirms Lamba's (2003) finding of family responsibilities being a restrictive factor for refugee women. However, family and childcare responsibilities were also cited as an restrictive factor by a few male students. Razaq and Kaalim, for example, reported having many

friends at the class and college, outside the college he would meet with different people, simply because his classmates had responsibilities and problems.

Those who reported to meet outside the college with friends from the class would either, extend their friendships by bringing their families together, such as Mahmood's and Yasir's families, or would arrange to carry out everyday tasks, such as shopping, or meet at religious venues, as in the cases of Tushkata or Jamila. Sometimes these friendships continued to exist even if one student left the class, as in Hodan's case.

'We don't meet outside, just inside (college). All students are my friends. [About Somali woman from class who dropped out] She is friendly, I see her. We know each other since 1991 and we meet sometimes on Saturdays. The people I know at the college are ESOL students, most I know are ESOL, all are from Somalia. If meeting outside, if I see someone, it is in shopping, mosque, that's it. No outside, just college. [Interview, Hodan, 8/02/04]

It can be reasoned from Hodan's account that a close friendship can be maintained outside the college when the relationship is strong, even if daily interaction in the ESOL environment has stopped. In addition, the account also highlights that although refugees knew people from other ESOL groups, these people may be from the same ethnic group and also, although refugees knew other students from the college, nobody reported to have friends from different courses.

In summary, it can be argued that a friendship in the ESOL classroom can be developed if the group has created an inclusive environment in which a newcomer feels welcomed. Once a friendship has been formed in the ESOL classroom, it can be maintained through respect towards each other and reciprocity through sharing information of life experiences and help. In addition, a tolerance towards cultural differences and attempts to adapt to parts of the other's culture may enhance a friendship. In turn, interaction outside the college environment is a factor that enhances a friendship. However, for some refugees this may be problematic because of geographical distance or, especially for women, family responsibilities.

7.6 Summary

The exploration of refugee ESOL students' participation in social networks has demonstrated that the majority lived with their nuclear family, were attached to their ethnic communities and built friendships with other ESOL students. However, their tendency to interact with people in their neighbourhoods was limited because of linguistic and cultural barriers. Regarding relationship building in the ESOL/FE college environment, refugees' willingness to seek friendships in ESOL was motivated by the presence of their families. Nevertheless, it was negatively affected partly, by the refugee experience, for example, through the inability to trust others, and partly by their future plans for settlement and aspirations. Furthermore, factors impacting on relationship building were identified as ethnicity, gender and, to a lesser extent, age. Specifically, although ethnicity was a strong determinant of relationships, the building of inter-ethnic relationships was affected by the presence of a dominant ethnic group of students in a class group. Similarly, gender was a determinant of relationships, especially between women in the classroom. However, family responsibilities inhibited the portability of these friendships outside the ESOL/FE college environment. Lastly, young age was a determinant of relationship building with students from other ESOL groups, but there were limited opportunities for ESOL students to interact with students from other courses. Hence, participation in these social networks impacted on the process of integration in the following ways. Firstly, the presence of family provides refugees with emotional support and motivation for rebuilding their lives. Secondly, the ethnic community allows the continuation of previous lifestyle, enables the reproduction of cultural and religious practices, and allows the formation of a group ethnic identity. However, participation in the ethnic community may hinder interaction with outsiders. Thirdly, interaction with the local community can lead to mutual support and communication; however, only a minority reported communicating with their neighbours. Finally, interaction in the ESOL/FE college environment can lead to the development of friendships and may allow for stronger interaction with the local community, as refugees' confidence to communicate in English will increase over time.

These findings support earlier studies which have analysed the importance of the presence of ethnic social networks in the host country; namely, that they may provide individual refugees with opportunities within the structure of the social network (e.g.

Portes 1995); that the ethnic social network can be the main source of social support for some refugee groups (e.g. Alexander *et al.* 2004, 2007); and that the strength of a social network can determine access to outside resources (e.g. Granovetter 1973). Moreover, the theoretical perspectives of adjustment in exile (e.g. Hein 1993, De Santis 2001) reflect the responses of participants in this study, such as the struggle to accept the changed social position and the opportunity to redefine identity.

Next, attention will be turned next to the benefits deriving from the ESOL friendships.

Chapter 8: The ESOL environment as a context for social capital development

8.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that as a social network fostering socialisation, ESOL also acts as a context for social capital development. As has been discussed earlier, the strength of ESOL for promoting refugee integration lies firstly, in the promotion of English language acquisition and cultural knowledge (see chapter 2), and secondly, in the facilitation of relationship building between refugees and others (see chapter 7). Over time, refugee ESOL students gain benefits from their social relationships built in the ESOL environment that could be used as resources to further the process of their integration into British society. Hence, this chapter aims to explore the function of the ESOL environment as a socio-cultural network that provides resources to its members.

The analysis focuses on the experiences of refugee ESOL students as members of the ESOL network over the period of the academic year. This is important to the main argument of the thesis, because it increases our understanding of the ESOL sector's capacity for social capital development and its relationship to refugee integration. The ESOL network is regarded as a social network that is, firstly, constituted by the relations between ESOL students and teachers, where the latter are regarded as authoritative members; secondly, it is part of the wider FE college environment; thirdly, its main rule is communication in English between its members; and lastly, it enables the formation of inter-ethnic relationships between its members (see also section 3.3). The chapter begins with an exploration of the importance attached by refugee ESOL students to ESOL as a social network and then analyses the benefits identified – namely, impact of increased English language fluency, information exchange and support, and the ESOL certificate – deriving from participation in the ESOL network.

8.2 The importance of ESOL as a social network

ESOL primarily aims to enable learners to acquire the English language and subsequently progress to further or higher education or employment (see section 2.3); as a social network, it has been identified in the previous chapter to facilitate the building of social relationships between its members – migrant and refugee students – which are structured around their need to learn and use the English language.

Further, as a social network, the ESOL setting shows signs of inclusiveness; in both colleges there were no formal entry requirements for ESOL courses other than age (18+) and also students were not charged for the course, enabling a diverse student population to access the courses. In addition, students were dispersed to groups across ESOL levels based on their prior knowledge of English as demonstrated in initial assessment. This facilitated the mixing of ethnicities, cultures, gender and age. Nevertheless, the high number of Bangladeshis and Somalis in both colleges' catchment areas sometimes affected the balance of ethnicities in the classroom. As discussed in section 7.4, the presence of a dominant ethnic group in an ESOL group affected the communication between students in their mother tongue, often excluding those from other ethnic backgrounds. While, in one instance, students from the minority ethnic group withdrew themselves and stopped communicating with those from the dominant ethnic group, in another instance the student from the minority ethnic group developed a friendship with those from the dominant ethnic group by demonstrating an awareness of and respect towards the dominant group's culture (see section 7.4.1). In addition, while there was no indication of aversion related to gender, sometimes cultural norms acted as an inhibiting factor for communication between males and females (see section 7.4.2). However, the ESOL teachers indicated their awareness of this issue and would instruct students to communicate with each other in English. These examples demonstrate that, although communication between ESOL students can be fragmented, especially at the beginning of the academic year, the need to communicate in English, partly facilitated by the teacher, helps some students to overcome any inhibitions. With respect to social capital development, this means that in the ESOL network the teacher's role of facilitating communication between the students across ethnicities and of different gender is crucial, as cultural and linguistic barriers of students may obstruct the building of social relationships in the ESOL network.

Attempts to promote the diversity of cultures across the student population were made by both colleges, either through artwork display related to countries of origin in classrooms or corridors (see section 6.2.1), or in informal gatherings.

It's the ESOL Christmas party and students were asked to bring in their own food. There are about 70 people, ESOL students and teachers, and there is music and food from different countries and soft drinks. Some students take part in games and quizzes, others socialise. I am sitting with students from the LoLE group, Hatice, Enver and Kaalim. One of Enver's friends joins the group and indicates that he has whiskey on him. Hatice fills up three glasses with coca-cola and Enver pours a bit of whiskey in them saying '*In Kosovo you can't have party without drink*'. Kaalim politely says that he doesn't drink but does not mind the others drinking. [Observation notes, Shakespeare College, 16/12/04]

The above is an example where ESOL students of both genders and various countries communicate in English and behave to a large extent as their culture subscribes: the Turkish female student served drink and food, the Kosovan male students drank alcohol, the practising Muslim student abstained from drinking alcohol. However, each student respected the other and reciprocated through linking and mixing his/her culture, thus creating an intercultural environment. If however, there is a dominant ethnic group present, its culture tends to prevail over others, as the case of a classroom party below illustrates.

There are about 15 students, males and females, most of Bangladeshi origin. There is food cooked by the students and soft drinks. Most females are dressed in saris. Asian music is playing and some male students dance. The teacher is talking with a few students. Two female students give me a plate with food and a drink and start asking me about the food. A few more students approach and we talk about food and Bengali restaurants in London. At this point a male student says '*This is not Marlowe-London here, this is Marlowe-Asia*' and the others laugh. [Observation notes, STJA group, Marlowe College, 20/04/09]

In the above instance the students attempted to set spatial and cultural boundaries by creating a mono-cultural environment in the ESOL setting, and thus their ethnic dominance in the ESOL group, by referring to the strong presence of this ethnic community in that borough. Although students were inclusive, they showed no interest in non-Bengali cultural activities. In terms of social capital development, these two

examples of student interaction in informal situations highlight that, although the ESOL/FE college environment provides the opportunity to members of the ESOL network to develop relationships and subsequently, social capital, the presence of a dominant ethnic group can influence interaction and relationship building, and, in this way, affect social capital development in the ESOL network.

The majority of interviewees reported that their teachers were aware of their problems and would provide them with assistance and support. Sometimes, ESOL teachers, in their role as facilitators of learning, would make special arrangements with students to accommodate their personal and learning needs.

During the second interviews Reza's daughter was 14 months old. He and his wife studied at Shakespeare College, Reza on a morning and his wife on an afternoon course. While Reza was at college, his wife made her journey to college with their daughter. At the bus stop outside the college they exchanged the child, Reza went home and his wife to the lesson. During this half of an hour they talked about the baby's sleep, feeding and changing of nappies. When his wife returned home in the evening, Reza left for his job in a Turkish Kebab shop. [Observation notes, Shakespeare College, 2/06/05]

Reza believed that he and his wife had two options: either delay his wife's education until their baby could start nursery, or to make this special arrangement with their teachers. They chose the second option because they believed that by the time the child goes to nursery, his wife's improvement in English would allow her to enter employment. He acknowledged that this arrangement would not be possible without the help of their teachers and the ESOL manager. Similarly, his teacher believed that it was justified to make such arrangements in order to retain students.

However, within the wider FE college environment, the members of the ESOL network tended to be on the periphery, as they did not interact with students from other courses and indeed most did not have acquaintances or friends from other courses, unless they were members of their ethnic communities. At Marlowe College the ESOL students were physically isolated from other courses, as they were studying in different buildings. However, at Shakespeare College they shared the building with students from other courses; even so, no one reported to have friends from other courses. One of the few opportunities to interact with others were the Student Union elections (see section

7.4.3), but only younger students showed an interest to interact with the wider college environment.

Accordingly, ESOL students tended not to communicate with students on other courses and generally did not seem to actively participate in college activities. This finding confirms ESOL students' isolation from the wider FE college environment, as identified by Bellis (2000) (see section 2.4.2). This may be an effect of the absence of common interests between ESOL students and students on different courses. Interestingly, some ESOL teachers attempted to bridge cultures by promoting aspects of British culture through sports (e.g. football), visits to museums or the arts. Specifically, during a lesson at Marlowe College, a teacher attempted to introduce the group to cultural history within the context of western popular culture.

The next activity is about listening to a song [*All Along the Watchtower*]. The teacher plays the music once, then asks the students which words they understood. Not many students understood a lot of the song, so the teacher plays it again, this time a different version. The class reacts little. Some start moving their shoulders rhythmically, one is nodding with his head to the rhythm and others just listen. Nobody knows the song though. Next, students get to hear a third, this time live version of the song, which is faster, and some think that it is a different song. Others cannot understand or follow most of the words. Then, students get a handout with the lyrics of the song. After that the teacher asks students to interpret the song. It seems to be quite difficult with this class and one student says that this song does not require only English. So the teacher starts interpreting the song but students' do not seem to understand the meaning, although they understand the language. [Observation notes, Marlowe College, 8/11/04]

In the above case the attempted cultural exchange did not produce the desired inter-communication, as the group did not possess the necessary linguistic skills or cultural knowledge to contextualise the music within any socio-historic context. The barrier in this case was not based on language, but knowledge of western socio-cultural history, as the teacher omitted to contextualise the song to events in western society occurring in the 1960s and 1970s. Consequently, students could not understand the ESOL teacher's interpretation of the song, nor could they associate themselves with it, although they attempted to respect and adapt to their teacher's 'culture' by moving with the rhythm.

It can be argued then, that although ESOL's primary function is to allow participants to acquire the English language, it also acts as an inclusive social network that may allow social capital development for its members. The placement on levels according to English language ability acts as a mechanism that enables members to learn English through each other, and facilitates the formation of social relationships initially based on students' need to communicate. In addition, ESOL as a social network enables its members to interact in formal (e.g. during the lesson) and informal situations (e.g. during breaks and college events). Similarly, the ESOL teacher, besides facilitating learning, may be regarded as a mediator of British culture. Depending on the extent to which students can overcome cultural inhibitions and be inclusive towards those of different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, the ESOL network, although to a large extent a closed network within the wider further education environment, is capable of promoting interaction and bonding between its members, and enable social capital development in the form of benefits available to its members. It is these benefits and their potential to be used as resources by refugee ESOL students to further their socio-economic integration that will be explored next.

8.3 Benefits deriving from participation in the ESOL network

For refugee ESOL students the ESOL network-mediated benefits that constitute social capital were primarily related to their usefulness as resources that may further the process of integration, rather than with resources of economic and financial value, although some might lead to economic opportunities. While as college students, refugees were entitled to financial and welfare support, this support depended on their income or receipt of welfare benefits. Nevertheless, the benefits that accrued from participation in ESOL and could be used as resources to access services, and consequently further the process of integration, were identified as knowledge, information and the ESOL qualification. These benefits, and their usefulness as resources that, when utilised, may further the process of integration, will be explored in the sections below.

8.3.1 *The impact of increased language fluency on refugee ESOL students' lives*

As outlined in section 2.3, the objectives of ESOL are related to the acquisition of English, progression and the provision of information. As such, the knowledge deriving from an ESOL course should enable learners to improve their English language skills, improve their lives by being able to communicate more effectively to access services and also, to progress to further or higher education, or employment.

Whereas participants had different views about their progress in English, there was a general consensus that studying ESOL indeed affected aspects of their lives in Britain. Specifically, refugee ESOL students thought that structural problems of the programme affected its efficiency, when reflecting on their progress. For instance, Nimo believed that her English would have improved further if the hours of her course were higher. Similarly, Jamila felt that a more rigorous approach towards coursework from the course was needed. Zeri felt that structural problems related to staff turnover, as well as the overlap between EFL and ESOL courses, did not enable him to progress sufficiently for achieving a grade 7 in the IELTS exam.

I don't think I improved, I could do better, the college could do better. For example, we have changed teacher, and eh, there is a gap between Level 2 group's ESOL level and IELTS requirements, so I am worried a bit. [Interview, Zeri, 7/06/05]

Zeri' future plan to study medicine and bring his family to Britain relied on his success in this exam. Not surprisingly, he felt that the college should take more effective measures to avoid problems like these affecting the learning experience, as he believed that delays in English language acquisition would negatively impact on his socio-economic settlement and thus affect the process of integration into British society.

Some students expressed their appreciation about progress made and believed that this impacted positively on their lives. For instance, Razaaq believed that improvement in English could be identified once he reviewed his learning journey, rather than by his English language ability.

When I came to England I did not remember how to read and write. I started from ABC and still need to improve English and study skills. I can't say I improved my English a lot, because English is never ending. But I definitely improved a lot from

when I started ESOL, not only English, but also in computers.
[Interview, Razaaq, 24/05/05]

Razaaq's account highlights the high literacy needs of many ESOL students in addition to learning a new language. For example, some students were also learning to read and write in a new script, or, if illiterate in their first language, to read and write. In addition, Razaaq's account indicates that language learning is a lengthy, developmental process that requires constant practice.

Other students believed that their English improved indeed, '*a bit*', according to Carine, Safia and Leonora, or '*a lot*', according to Tushkata, Fadumo, Koffi, Reza, Sarfras, Daria, Ashia, Kaalim, Ayanna and Marc. Interestingly, students felt that increased fluency in English contributed to their increased independence, as it lessened their reliance on interpreters. For instance, Fadumo and Kaalim felt that their improvement in English provided them with the language abilities to access *and* discuss health and welfare services. Likewise, Sarfras's improvement in English meant that he was able to secure employment in an English-speaking environment, and although he was made redundant he still regarded this work experience as valuable for future employment. Ashia and Razaaq felt that through English language fluency they were able to understand British culture to a greater extent, while Koffi and Reza felt that learning English, and the effects of English language fluency on communication with others, was a positive, life changing experience that helped their adjustment to the host society.

When I started here [studying ESOL at Shakespeare College], I got it, how I can find job, how can I apply for job, how can I write a letter. I didn't know this before, never. When I learn English, I get this communication and living better than before, it changed. It is not my thing, how can I say, my plan, but automatically it happened. When I understand, for example, one rule of the NHS, so, I get it, I do it in my own life. That is changing something in my own life, it is not in my plan, it automatically does happen. Even if I don't want to, learning English is changing aspects of my life. [Interview, Reza, 2/06/05]

The above account illustrates the process in which knowledge about ways of accessing services in British society – what Reza describes as '*communication*' – is passed on to refugee ESOL students in lessons. As a process it requires fluency in English, and to a lesser extent cultural awareness. Also, it occurs over a period of time. Moreover, once

refugee ESOL students apply this knowledge when using services, aspects of their lives may be positively transformed and subsequently further their integration. Therefore, it can be argued that with increasing fluency in English, refugee ESOL students acquire additional social and cultural knowledge about accessing services in Britain. It is this knowledge, deriving from the ESOL network, which becomes a resource that allows individual refugees to further the process of integration. Consequently, in social capital terms, one benefit accruing from the ESOL network that makes up the social capital available for its members, is knowledge related to provision of services, access to education and employment.

8.3.1.1 The impact of increased English language fluency on ESOL friendships

Previously it was identified that the ESOL/FE college environment enabled refugee ESOL students to build social relationships with other students from their class and to a lesser extent with students from other courses. Further, it was highlighted that the form of these relationships, as well as the motivation of refugee ESOL students to seek - or not seek - friendships from the ESOL network varied (see section 7.3). In addition, the relationships identified varied in strength and ranged from being acquaintances to strong friendships existing outside the ESOL setting. Over the course of the academic year, refugee ESOL students' increased fluency in English also impacted on their friendships.

Specifically, while there were no major changes in the number of friendships over time (see table 7.3), Koffi, who did not have a close friend previously, developed a close friendship with one fellow student towards the end of the academic year. Similarly, Safia, who started her studies in the middle of the academic year also built a friendship with an Angolan woman from her class. Ayanna, who previously had not sought friends, reported at the end of the academic year to regard all fellow students as friends. Further, other interviewees reported that their existing friendships became stronger, such as that between Daria and Layla, or that between Leonora and her Lithuanian female friend from class. However, there were also friendships that weakened over time. For example, Razaq said that his close friendship with Blerta broke down, as she built a new friendship with a female student from the class.

Moreover, some students built a second close friendship, such as Leonora, Tushkata, Carine, Marc and Jamila, with other "students of the same gender from the class. However, these students were not able to expand these friendships between the old and the new friend. The only exception to this was the relationship between Ashia and Nimo, which included a third student, Mimi, who was a sculptor from Guadeloupe. Towards the end of term the three formed a very strong friendship. Interestingly, Mimi came from a different cultural, ethnic, religious and linguistic background and led a different lifestyle to that of Ashia and Nimo. However, when they were together all three would attempt to adapt to the other's culture.

Sometimes I try to translate [from Arabic]. Mimi is always with us, so most of the time we speak in English. Close friends is me, Nimo and Mimi, because we are so close together we call each other, sometimes we meet with each other. It's important to me to see them, they are second to me, second after my family.
[Interview, Ashia, 25/05/05]

While Ashia previously believed that the incompatibility between her religious lifestyle and a western lifestyle would not allow the building of a friendship between her and a person from a different ethnic and cultural background (see section 7.2.2), with time and increased ability to communicate in English, she was able to address these cultural differences. As a result, she built a friendship with a woman who did not share her beliefs, but showed respect toward the different culture.

Ashia and Nimo also reported telephoning each other and meeting Mimi outside the ESOL environment, for instance going to the cinema or shopping. Other participants reporting to communicate over the phone included Daria, Razaq, Reza and Tushkata. Meeting with their close friends outside the ESOL/FE college environment were Fadumo, Carine, Jamila, Leonora and Marc. In addition, Carine and Fadumo were inviting their close friends to their houses and cooked together, while Jamila and Marc met their close friend to work together on homework.

As indicated previously, the majority of social relationships built in the ESOL/FE college environment were not strong friendships and contained within ESOL. However, with the passing of time and increased fluency in English, existing relationships grew in strength and were transferred outside their environment. Nevertheless, increased fluency in English did not impact on relationship building between refugee ESOL

students and students studying on different courses. Towards the end of the academic year ESOL students were still isolated within the wider FE college environment.

In summary, this section has explored the impact of increased English language fluency over the period of an academic year on refugee ESOL students' lives, including their social relationships within in the ESOL/FE college environment. It was identified that through English language attainment, additional learning of knowledge related to accessing services and British culture impacted positively on refugee ESOL students' lives, as it gave them increased independence and control. On the other hand, refugees worried that problems associated with ESOL provision may delay their future plans, as these slowed down the learning progress. In addition, it appears that although fluency in English did not affect to a large extent the building of new friendships, it enabled the strengthening of existing friendships and their portability outside the ESOL/FE college environment. However, increased fluency does not facilitate relationship building between refugee ESOL students and students from different courses. Thus, from a social capital perspective, it can be argued that the ESOL network is an inclusive network towards refugee ESOL students where its members strengthen their ties over time. However, as a node within the wider FE college network, the ESOL network is isolated, because its members do not interact with people from different courses.

8.3.2 Information exchange and support

The ESOL teacher's authoritative but trustworthy role in the ESOL network was regarded by refugee ESOL students as a credible source of information and support. Most participants reported to trust their teacher as a person of authority, and would seek advice on issues related to their immigration status or as recipients of welfare benefits. For instance, three months before her ESOL exam, Ashia was worried about her upcoming interview at a Job Centre where it would be determined if her English was good enough for employment. Participation in ESOL though, was the opportunity for her teacher to provide her with a letter certifying her studies in ESOL at entry level 3. Accordingly, the Job Centre's decision was that Ashia's English was inadequate for employment and she could continue her studies. Other examples included that of Tushkata, who asked her teacher for a character reference in support of the extension of

her ELR status; or Fadumo who asked for a character reference needed for social housing. In fact, more students reported to have asked their teachers for a letter addressed to the Home Office or Job Centre than a reference for another course or employment.

This was also confirmed by many teachers themselves. MoHE from Shakespeare College emphasised that in many instances, students approaching him for such cases seem to be distressed and their attendance was affected. Reza from Shakespeare College, who admitted to having asked his teacher repeatedly for confirmatory letters, stated that *'I've called my teacher so many times, I trust her a lot, she knows all my story, she is my friend'* [Interview, Reza, 22/10/04].

Hence, the ESOL teacher's role in the ESOL/FE college network is one that is authoritative, as well as that of a bridge between the students and external agencies; due to the authoritative position, refugee students use their teacher's credibility with welfare agencies. Although the ESOL teacher's motivation may be related to student achievement and retention, for refugee students the information provided by him/her on their behalf is a resource that enables them to improve their lives. Similarly, Hodge *et al.* (2005) found that the ESOL teacher often adopted the role of the advocate and supporter (see section 2.4.2). Thus, from a social capital perspective, the support and information provided by the ESOL teacher makes up the social capital deriving from the ESOL network.

Intra-student knowledge sharing was also important, if less regarded by students than teacher knowledge. Information about immigration and welfare issues, and to a greater extent about courses or employment, was regularly exchanged between students. For example, Leke informed his class about the Home Office amnesty for Kosovan families (see section 6.4.4), and Razaaq advised some ESOL students from other groups in the canteen to apply for the course *ESOL Office Skills*, because of its Information Technology element. In addition, participants also reported to support each others' learning, for example, when doing course work or by translating to the mother tongue if a fellow student could not understand the teacher's instructions. Interestingly, there seemed to be a need among refugee ESOL students to cross-reference information regarding legalisation about their stay in Britain, as a few enquired about ways to obtain

ILR status (Tushkata), the existence of any organisations providing legal support to asylum-seekers (Marc), or simply talked about their case openly in class (Koffi).

Consequently, information in the ESOL setting is exchanged; the information deriving from the ESOL teacher is regarded as credible and authoritative, many asking for letters authenticating their studies with outside agencies. At the same time, information exchanged between students is not regarded as authoritative, but nevertheless regarded by some students as a credible line of inquiry that may be further explored through other formal or informal networks, such as the ethnic community or refugee community organisations. In this way, information exchange in the ESOL network becomes a resource and potential benefit that may be used by refugee ESOL students to further their integration. In other words, information exchanged between the students constitutes social capital deriving from the ESOL network.

8.3.3 *The ESOL Certificate*

The ESOL certificate was regarded as a benefit deriving from ESOL membership rather than as a competitive qualification for the labour market, because for refugee students it symbolised their progress in English.

I was invited to Fadumo's home for the interview. Before the interview we talked about jobs and Fadumo said that despite her certificates and experience in looking after children, she was told to be unemployable without an NVQ in childcare, at which point I asked her what certificates she had. She politely asked me to wait, left the room and re-emerged with a box in which she kept her certificates. I could see that she had the ESOL Entry 1, 2 and 3 certificates, as well as a numeracy certificate. She responded '*I am very proud [shows certificates] I can see my improvement and success year by year.* [Observation notes, 30/05/05]

As Fadumo's case indicates, the ESOL certificate's value in the labour market is limited, as refugee ESOL students increasingly need vocational qualifications compensating for their lack of work experience. Nevertheless, it was regarded as valuable by some students, because it became a stepping stone to another further or higher education course:

If I pass my exam, I'd like to continue next year, teaching assistant and EFL. I need the certificate to get into the course. I'm not sure [about my English] but I am going to try. I am looking for voluntary job now at primary school. [Interview, Leonora, 9/06/05]

The ESOL certificate was also regarded as a confirmatory document of one's ability, as it demonstrates that its holder can succeed as a learner, or as a resource that will contribute to a change of living conditions.

It's important for me, because I want to stay in this country, work. I need to show something, that I can work or study. [Interview, Koffi, 21/06/05]

Certificate very important for me. I think it's very good, proof that I can speak English, to go to another course, I want to change my life, the certificate is going to help me. [Kaalim 23/06/05]

After the achievement of entry level 3, refugee ESOL students had the choice to study on either ESOL or another FE programme. Consequently, they were in a position to make informed educational or occupational choices for the first time since their arrival to Britain. A few students aspired to regain their lost professional status. For instance, Reza who studied civil engineering in Iran, applied for a course in the use of design software (AutoCad) and hoped to eventually study architecture. Likewise, Leonora, who was a teacher in Kosovo, aspired to become a teaching assistant; Zeri, who was a veterinary scientist in Ethiopia, aspired to study medicine; Ashia, who was studying electrical engineering in Yemen, applied to study the subject at an inner London university; and Marc, who was studying economics at DR Congo, aspired to study business administration. In contrast, some others' future career choices were different from their prior occupations. For instance, Carine, who was an administrator in the Ivory Coast, aspired to work in care, or Jamila, who was a geology student in Somalia, aspired to become a social worker.

These career choices were to a large extent informed by refugee ESOL students' abilities and personal circumstances, as well as the needs of the British labour market. Most recognised the importance of choosing an occupation that would lead to employment. For instance, Nimo, who was also studying information technology, wanted undertake work experience.

I want to keep my option open for work as receptionist, also to work in travel and tourism. [Interview, Nimo, 15/06/05]

Similarly, Zeri planned to combine work and study, and was also studying Information Technology and taking driving lessons in order to be competitive in the labour market.

I also study IT and for my driving licence. If I pass IELTS I plan to study at medical school and work part-time as a drug representative for pharmaceutical companies, so you need a driving licence for that. [Interview, Zeri, 7/06/05]

In contrast, Safia, Ayanna, Daria and Jamila believed that they needed to further improve their English and wanted to continue studying ESOL, while Tushkata believed that GCSE English would broaden her choices.

I want to go to GCSE English, that's why I need this qualification [ESOL E3]. My teacher told me '*If you complete this exam, you can go to higher class*'. [Interview, Tushkata, 8/06/05]

As Tushkata's account shows, studying ESOL may not always be regarded as valuable for progressing to other courses. For instance, Sarfras dropped his ESOL course earlier in the year for employment. However, after three months he was made redundant and was seeking to return to ESOL.

I got a job, but now I am unemployed; I do get unemployment benefit but I'd rather find a job, just be myself. (...) I don't see any value in ESOL [as a course] although I would consider studying again ESOL in order to get a certificate. [Interview, Sarfras 6/06/05]

While Sarfras was convinced that studying ESOL would not help him to a large extent to further his education or employment, he was also aware of the ESOL certificate's significance for progression and therefore, he considered returning to ESOL.

According to Coleman (1988a, 1988b, see section 3.3), a qualification generally comprises recognition of the human capital of an individual. Participants in this study, however, did not regard the ESOL certificate as a qualification that has value in the labour market, and were aware that they needed further study in order to increase their employability. Rather, participants regarded the ESOL certificate as a document symbolising their abilities and progression, and as the initiator for the improvement of

their living conditions. Consequently, it can be argued that the ESOL certificate as a qualification leading to employment was not highly regarded by refugee ESOL students and therefore is not regarded as impacting on their human capital. However, it was highly respected as a pathway to further or higher education, or training and subsequent employment. Furthermore, it was also seen as a document that endorsed their commitment to rebuild their life in Britain. Thus, even though as a certificate it was perceived of limited significance, as a resource deriving from participation in the ESOL network it was accredited a symbolic value, signifying progression in English and giving rise to further educational and career aspirations. Therefore, it is a resource that contributes to the process of refugees' integration and constitutes social capital deriving from the ESOL network.

This section has explored the benefits that the ESOL network provides to its members, that may be utilised to further the process of integration. It was identified that, i) knowledge acquired through increased fluency in English, ii) information exchange and support, and iii) the ESOL certificate were regarded as benefits by refugee ESOL students, because as resources their utilisation impacted positively on their lives and thus contributed to the process of integration. In addition, it was highlighted that although increased fluency did not impact on the building of new relationships, it allowed the existing ones to strengthen. The importance of ESOL as a social network for refugee ESOL students is that it enables them to improve English language fluency and acquire knowledge about British culture. This allows them to make more informed choices about their future educational and career aspirations, and in this way, take a more active role in promoting their integration into British society.

8.4 Summary

This chapter demonstrated that the ESOL network is an inclusive network that promotes cultural diversity and bonding between its members. However, within the wider FE college environment the ESOL network is characterised by closure. Time had a positive impact over existing friendships, as it allowed their strengthening and portability outside the FE environment. However, the passing of time did not lead to the development of new friendships. Furthermore, the chapter illustrated the ESOL sectors

capacity for social capital development. As a social network, the ESOL environment mediated benefits that positively impacted on refugee students' lives and thus, contribute to the process of integration. These benefits were identified as knowledge acquired through increased fluency in English, information exchange and support between students and their teachers and the ESOL certificate. In terms of social capital building, it can be argued that with the passing of time, social capital deriving from ESOL will be strengthened, as relationships between students grow stronger. However, the fact that refugee ESOL students did not have opportunities to build friendships with students from other courses may mean that social capital deriving from the ESOL/FE college environment primarily enables refugees to further their socio-economic, but not their cultural integration into British society. Finally, this study articulates with previous studies investigating the capacity of ESOL to act as a site for socialisation (e.g. Bellis 2000, Glenton 2004, Carey 2004, Hodge *et al.* 2005). Specifically, the findings indicate that the information exchange from ESOL teacher to refugee student, beyond contributing to social capital development, can also act as a bridge for the ESOL students into the wider FE College and outer community network.

Chapter 9: Discussion and conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This chapter recapitulates the research questions of the study and discusses the findings and their implications for relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE college environment. Throughout the investigation the thesis has argued that social capital, formed in the ESOL/FE college environment, can be utilised by refugee ESOL students to further the process of their social integration into British society. The first part of this concluding chapter provides a synopsis of the findings. The second part discusses the implication of the present study for ESOL provision and refugee integration and identifies areas of need for further research.

9.2 The purpose of the study

This thesis has explored the social mechanisms that direct the building of social relationships between refugee ESOL students and others within the ESOL and wider FE college environment. It has been argued that the ESOL/FE college environment acts as a social network that facilitates the building of inter-ethnic relationships that provide its members with resources that enable refugee ESOL students to improve their socio-economic adjustment and further the process of their integration into British society.

The purpose of the study was to increase our understanding about the building of inter-ethnic relationships between refugees and others that develop through attending classes for English language attainment and wider participation in college life, and their impact on the process of refugee integration.

Relationship building was investigated by firstly examining the effects of the refugee experience for refugee ESOL students, secondly, exploring the impact of existing social networks, and thirdly investigating the ESOL network's capacity for social capital

development. The theoretical framework of this study has been informed by social capital theory, where it deployed perspectives of social capital for the exploration of social relationships built in the ESOL/FE college setting.

Finally, social capital has been conceptualised as a resource emerging from social integration between refugee and migrant ESOL students and impacting positively on the process of refugee integration. This conceptualisation has enabled the present study to explore firstly the interconnectedness of English language acquisition and refugee integration and secondly the sometimes hesitant act of individual refugees' membership in more than one social network. Without the theoretical directions of social capital to which the focus of this study was led, it would not have been possible to explore the interconnectedness of these issues.

9.3 Argument of the thesis

This thesis has argued that social relationships, developed between refugee and migrant students in the ESOL/FE college environment, can provide individual refugees with resources that can positively impact on refugees' integration into British society. Firstly, the study has demonstrated that the ESOL sector as a social network indeed facilitates the development of social relationships between refugee and migrant students. These relationships are influenced by gender, ethnicity and age. However, their strength and portability outside the ESOL network may be affected by the presence of refugees' family and friends in Britain, and by their association with their ethnic communities. In addition, the refugee experience, as a shared experience, may pull refugees to their ethnic communities and affect their willingness to seek friendships with people from different ethnic backgrounds. Secondly, the ESOL environment is capable of social capital development, in the form of resources deriving from the 'ESOL' friendships – namely, knowledge, information exchange and the ESOL certificate – whose utilisation positively impacted on their lives and thus contributed to the process of integration into British society.

The sections below provide a detailed discussion of this argument.

9.4 Discussion of findings and contribution

The following sections provide tentative answers to the research questions stated in section 4.5 and discuss the findings' implications for relationship building.

9.4.1 *The refugee experience*

The set of questions addressed in this section aims to expand current knowledge on the refugee experience by describing the differences between migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics and highlighting their experiences during the stages of uprooting, migration and settlement in Britain. The importance of these issues to the main argument of the thesis lies in the building of a profile of the refugee experience as essential to our understanding of refugees' willingness and capacity to build or not to build relationships with other students from different linguistic and ethnic backgrounds in the ESOL/FE College setting, which in turn will allow for social capital development.

1a) **What are the differences between migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics?**

The exploration of the refugee experience in chapter 6 has highlighted that there were indeed differences in the background characteristics between migrant and refugee ESOL students and that refugees relied to a large extent on the assistance of social networks during the stages of flight, migration and settlement in Britain.

Specifically, the comparison of migrant and refugee ESOL students' background characteristics in section 6.3 and subsections revealed that, on the one hand, there were no difference in trends of students' demographic characteristics of *gender* (see section 6.3.1.1) and *age* (see section 6.3.1.3), as well as their *occupations in Britain* and *future educational aspirations* (see sections 6.3.1.7 and 6.3.1.8 respectively). Furthermore, differences between refugees and migrants studying ESOL are related to life in the home country and life in Britain. With regard to life in the home country: firstly, it was shown in section 6.3.1.2 that the majority of refugee participants were indeed coming

from refugee producing countries, although some obtained residence permits, rather than claiming asylum on entry into Britain. Secondly, it was demonstrated in section 6.3.1.6 that refugee participants were more likely than migrants not to have undergone formal schooling. This may be an effect of the destruction of formal social structures and institutions in refugee producing countries due to the onset of war, such as in Somalia, or the suppression of women's rights to education, such as in Afghanistan under the Taliban regime. Thirdly, it was illustrated in section 6.3.1.6 that refugees were more likely than migrants to be employed in their own, or family-owned businesses in the home country. This indicates that refugee participants may have lost property during flight and experienced a decline in their socio-economic status. Hence, it can be argued that the refugee experience is a series of negative events associated with loss of property and rights, and experienced by groups of people rather than individuals, with a mass outward migratory movement as its highlight.

With regard to life in Britain it was identified in sections 6.3.1.4 and 6.3.1.5 that firstly, refugee participants were more likely than migrants to start studying ESOL soon after arrival and to want to acquire British citizenship. These may be possible indicators of refugees' acceptance of their stay in Britain as permanent and their willingness to initiate their socio-economic adjustment in Britain through accessing language classes. Refugee ESOL students were more likely than migrants to be unemployed or, if in employment, to occupy routine and manual jobs (see section 6.3.1.7). This may be due to a number of factors, such as the language barrier prohibiting employment, the lack of experience in the British labour market and lack of recognised qualifications. Consequently, a further element of the refugee experience is refugee ESOL students' acceptance of settlement in the host country by attempting to recover their previous lives. These efforts, however, do not necessarily lead to the recovery of previous occupations or professions.

The quantitative findings above highlight aspects of the refugee experience that could possibly impact on refugees' socio-economic adjustment. Existing research has indicated that many refugee children tend not to have undertaken formal schooling or had an interrupted education, and therefore have additional learning needs in their education in Britain (Rutter 2001). The present study shows a similar pattern in adult refugees' educational experiences. Interestingly, though, it also shows that refugee

participants started studying ESOL soon after arrival in Britain. The fact that many adult refugees who are illiterate in their 'first language are prepared to learn how to read, write and talk in the language of the country of asylum can be perceived as refugees' recognition of the importance of language acquisition and more general education to the process of social integration into British society and their acceptance of their stay as long-term, as part of their struggle to recover their previous lives.

What is more, access to employment, for which English language fluency is a prerequisite, can be a difficult and slow process, as many refugees may need years to acquire the English language. Therefore, although initially refugees' psychological state may affect their willingness to accept their loss, the fact that they decided to flee their home country, as well as the fact that almost immediately after arrival they attempt to rebuild their lives by seeking asylum and enter language classes in order to find employment, are indicators of refugee ESOL students' intentions to rebuild their lives in the host country.

1b) What are refugee ESOL students' experiences of flight, migration and settlement in Britain?

Moving now to the exploration of refugee ESOL students' experiences through the stages of flight, migration and settlement in the host country, section 6.4 and subsequent sections have highlighted the long-term effects of war or persecution on individuals' lives and the difficulties faced in their attempts to further their socio-economic adjustment in British society. One factor that emerges from these accounts is the importance of social networks during these three stages. In sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2 it was identified that during flight, refugees may experience loss of family and friends, property or social status, which has an impact on their psychological state (as discussed in section 1.4). Also, during this stage refugees tend to receive assistance in their flight from people in their immediate social network, often members of the extended family or relatives and friends who may hold a position of authority. The relationship between the refugee and those helping during flight is marked to a large extent by trust. If trust has broken down or does not exist, it may be replaced by a monetary relationship, for instance paying trafficking networks a fee for the journey to a safe country (see sections 6.4.1 and 6.4.2).

During the stage of migration refugees are often forced to trust traffickers promising passage to a safe country (see section 6.4.3).” In some instances, nuclear families remain intact and travel together. If the nuclear family is intact, refugees feel lucky although they may have lost property and may be detached from their extended family and friends. Consequently, the shock of uprooting is not as intense as for those who lost family members. When some members of a family travelled together, the journey was accompanied by concern for the family left behind, as well as placing greater trust in the formal social institutions to reunite them once safety has been granted by the host country. However, in the case where refugees travelled on their own, they felt the insecurity that accompanies a lonely journey, they were more aware of dangers they might encounter and hoped to be reunited with their loved ones one day.

Further, during the stage of settlement refugees are faced with the task of legalising their stay and of regaining what they can from their previous lives, such as reunification with family members, occupational status, culture and identity (see sections 6.4.4. and 6.4.5). During this stage the feeling of reciprocity plays an important role, particularly for those who received help and kindness in the early stages of settlement. As it emerges, during this stage the ethnic social network may play a very important role for individual refugees, as it can assist them with providing a temporary home or with information about the process of application for asylum. However, it may be only the presence of a network that is important for the refugee as a kind of fallback: in Karzan’s case, it was more important to live in a country where there was a dominant community of co-ethnics.

The presence of the family may also be influential in refugees’ sentiment towards their stay in the host country. If there are children present, some evidence suggests that they may see their stay as long-term or permanent, while if they are on their own, they might regard their stay as temporary. However, the family can also be a restrictive factor on refugees’ attitudes towards their host country. As the case of Birten indicated in section 6.4.4, the fact that families stay together may ease refugees’ acceptance of stay in the host country but also obstruct individuals’ acculturation. This may lead to frictions within the family, as well as the wider ethnic community in the host country. In turn, the ethnic community may act as a substitute for loss, such as occupational and social status and may provide financial opportunities, as in the case of Reza (see section

6.4.5). Finally, within this network refugees may seek confirmation of their previous social position in the home country, while outside it they are placed at the bottom of the social structure.

This section highlighted the refugee experience as encountered by refugee ESOL students participating in this study. Specifically, it was argued that the refugee experience is an experience shared by groups of people from specific geographical regions, which is characterised by negative events and associated with loss. In addition, it consists of the stages of flight, migration and settlement in a host country. As a shared experience, one of its essential elements is refugees' strong association with their ethnic social network. As has been identified in chapter 7, in the host country, refugees tend to a large extent to interact with members from their ethnic community rather than with the native population. In addition, the ethnic community in the host country is capable of enabling refugees to reproduce cultural practices, allows them to redefine their ethnic identity and enables them to promote in the host society their struggle for change in the home country. Hence, as a group experience, rather than a set of similar individual experiences, it is this shared experience that may act as a pull factor for refugees' willingness to actively participate in the ethnic community, and not the presence of the community itself. Moreover, the shared memory of the events which unfolded in the host country allows them to form a collective history, as well as position themselves and maintain their lost social status within the community's boundaries (as discussed in section 1.4). The language barrier, cultural shock and legalisation of their stay are additional obstructions to communication with the native population of the host country.

However, the implications of this preference can affect the process of integration negatively. Specifically, during the stage of settlement, refugees' cultural and socio-economic adjustment may depend to a large extent on the nature of social networks in which they participate, as well as the importance attached to these networks by refugees. This attachment, however, may not allow the refugee to concentrate on how to initiate their socio-economic integration. Consequently, in this case integration can be a lengthy and possibly incomplete process. Therefore, it can be argued that although the initiation of the process of integration starts almost immediately at arrival, the

association with the ethnic community may become an element that delays the completion of this process.

Regarding refugee ESOL students' preparedness to build friendships in the ESOL/FE college setting, the exploration of the refugee experience has highlighted the emergence of five issues. Firstly, refugee students without formal schooling have to learn to read and write in English, at least during the first year in ESOL. Thus, as more demanding learners than their fellow ESOL students, they may need more time to progress, while their peers change groups in the following academic year when progressing to the next ESOL level. Consequently, any relationships built in the classroom may not be durable beyond the academic year, as different timetables can interfere with students' daily meetings. Secondly, the study indicates that refugee ESOL students tend to start their studies during the first three months of arrival. This means that when refugees enter the ESOL/FE college environment they may not have acquaintances or friends outside the immediate family or ethnic social network and therefore may seek to build friendships. Thirdly, the differences identified in refugee students' employment patterns in the home country and Britain indicate that they may experience a decline in their quality of life due to a rapid decrease in their income. While in their home country refugees tended to be self-employed or work in family-owned businesses, in Britain they encounter problems in entering the labour market. Thus, many decide to continue their studies in further or higher education. This in turn may increase refugee students' willingness to meet others with similar experiences, as they may be a source of information and advice. Thus, the lost professional and socio-economic status and the emergent educational and occupational aspirations might positively impact on refugees' willingness to meet people in the ESOL classroom and wider college setting. Consequently, their loss might be a motivational factor for participation in social networks in the host country. Fourthly, the exploration of the stage of flight highlighted that due to loss of family members or physical trauma, refugees may suffer from mental health problems that may affect their willingness to interact with others in the classroom. Finally, the experience of flight and migration influenced refugees' ability to trust others. Therefore, although refugees may be willing to build friendships, because of the absence of trust, these friendships may be limited in number and not transformed into strong friendships.

Consequently, the willingness and capacity of refugee ESOL students to build social relationships with other students from the ESOL/FE college environment may be affected by the refugee experience, firstly, because of refugees' individual circumstances and secondly, because of the impact of their experiences on their ability to trust others.

9.4.2 The social networks of refugees in Britain

The set of questions addressed in this section aims to discuss refugees' membership in the networks of family, the ethnic community and their neighbourhoods and to analyse the factors that motivate them to build social relationships with others in the ESOL/FE College environment. The importance of these issues to the argument of the thesis lies in the fact that participation in social networks is essential for social capital development; therefore the exploration of refugees' membership in various networks, as well as their tendencies to build friendships in the ESOL/FE College environment, can increase our understanding of i) what they gain through their membership in their existing social networks in the host country and ii) if and how this affects their willingness to build new friendships in the ESOL/FE college environment building upon and reinforcing the social capital processes.

2a) What are the refugee ESOL students' existing networks and why are they important to refugees?

The exploration of refugee ESOL students' connectivity to existing networks of family and friends revealed that refugees were indeed attached to their family and ethnic community, but had significantly less contact with their immediate neighbourhoods.

Firstly, it was highlighted in section 7.2.1 that the majority of refugee ESOL students were living with their nuclear families in Britain, although a few left family members behind when fleeing the home country. With respect to relationship building, living with the family may be an indicator of refugees' openness to start a friendship, as the presence of the family affects their psychological state positively and can be a factor

that helps them to regard their presence in Britain as permanent. In contrast, a broken family, as the result of rapid flight of one family member, can lead to the development of feelings of guilt, such as in the case of Zeri. Thus, all effort is put into legalising the stay in the host country and the process of family reunion, instead of seeking acquaintances or friendships.

Secondly, it was identified in section 7.2.2 that most of the refugee ESOL students sought, or had established contact with, their ethnic community. The reasons for doing so were related to refugees' need to return the help received in Britain through assisting newly arrived co-ethnics with the asylum process, the exercise of cultural and religious practices through the ethnic community, the redefinition of their ethnic identity and their desire to pass on their ethnic, cultural and religious identity to their children with the prospect of the latter's return to the home country. The implications of these findings regarding refugee ESOL students' openness to build friendships are twofold: firstly, because the ethnic community enables refugees to redefine their identity in the host country, as a social network with its culturally defined norms, it may restrict individual members' willingness to enter other social networks that contrast the lifestyle and cultural beliefs the ethnic social network holds; secondly, because the ethnic community can assist a newly arrived refugee with the asylum process and also provide financial opportunities, the individual refugee may not seek assistance outside the ethnic social network. In both cases, the individual can potentially become isolated and marginalised from his/her wider community.

Further, refugee ESOL students who did not want to associate with the ethnic community did so either because of frictions reflecting issues taking place in the home country, or because the community did not take an active role in supporting particular sides in the home country. Also, it was felt by some that too much association with the community could potentially delay the acculturation process (see section 7.2.2). This finding indicates that in some instances, those who have fled because of political reasons may feel a strong need to raise awareness about the problems taking place in the home country. Although they may seek to socialise with people outside their ethnic social network, their preoccupation with issues taking place in the home country may negatively affect their efforts to develop inter-ethnic relationships in the host country, as their main motivation will be to strengthen the causes of the ethnic community. On the

other hand, those who feel that association with the ethnic community may delay the acculturation process, are likely to be more active in seeking friendships with people from other ethnic backgrounds.

Lastly, as identified in section 7.2.3 most refugees had limited contact with their neighbourhoods because of linguistic and cultural barriers. Those who established contact did so by recognising the importance of communication and support to good community relations and by showing tolerance towards cultural differences. This finding indicates that many refugees may not seek to build friendships outside their ethnic local community, especially during the first stages of settlement in the host society, as they go through the process of social and psychological adjustment to the new environment and may still struggle to accept their loss. Once they have achieved this, they may be more open to cultural difference and start seeking to establish good relationships within their local community. However, as indicated by the cases of Razaq, Mahmood and Hodan, the local community itself can potentially marginalise refugees by not accepting them as their members.

2b) What factors influence relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE College environment?

The exploration of refugee ESOL students' social relationships in the ESOL/FE College environments illustrated their tendency to build friendships with students from the ESOL class and to a lesser extent with students from other ESOL groups. As identified in section 7.3.1, the main motivator for building friendships in the ESOL environment was refugee ESOL students' need to communicate in English. Furthermore, the main reasons for not building friendships were related firstly, to the refugee experience, for example mental ill health occurring through traumatic experiences and the loss of the ability to trust and secondly, to plans related to the advancement of socio-economic adjustment (see section 7.3.2). In addition, issues considered as essential for maintaining social relationships built in the ESOL/FE college environment were trust between those involved in the relationship, the demonstration of respect and engagement in reciprocal activities and support, and adaptation to others' culture.

The factors that influenced relationship building were identified to be ethnicity, gender and to a lesser extent age (see section 7.4 and subsections). Specifically, in classrooms with a dominant ethnic group relationships tended to evolve around shared ethnicity, especially in entry level groups. If students from other ethnic groups made attempts to respect and partly adapt to the culture of the dominant ethnic group, then inter-ethnic relationships were built. If not, the dominant ethnic group would interact with those from other ethnicities in the classroom, but not in the wider FE college environment. Hence, the presence of members from the ethnic social network affected relationship building in the ESOL/FE College environment. In particular, the attachment to the ethnic social network in the host country enabled refugees to reproduce cultural and religious practices and allowed them to redefine their ethnic identity (as was identified in section 7.2.2). In turn, when refugees entered the ESOL/FE college environment, their ability to communicate in English was limited. Consequently, if there was a dominant ethnic group in an ESOL classroom, refugees were more likely to build friendships with co-ethnics because they could communicate in their first language, as highlighted in section 7.4.1. In addition, in many instances, refugees were persecuted because of their ethnicity. Thus, in the host country as well as the ESOL/FE college environment the ethnic social network enables refugees to express and promote their ethnicity and culture. In this event, refugees might seek to build social relationships with co-ethnics. However, the attachment to co-ethnics in the ESOL classroom and use of the first language delayed English language attainment and acculturation. Likewise, it may alienate students from different ethnic backgrounds and thus hinder the building of inter-ethnic relationships. On the other hand, if there is no dominant ethnicity in an ESOL classroom, refugees will be more likely to build friendships with students from other ethnic backgrounds. These friendships may be weakened however, if outside the classroom, refugee students prefer to socialise with co-ethnics from other ESOL courses, rather than with friends from the classroom.

Regarding gender, it appears that women were more open to build relationships with other women in the class but not with men, possibly due to cultural or religious constraints or the fact that they were married. As discussed previously, in the cases where friendships in ESOL are formed, the presence of the family unit can be a motivating, but also a restrictive factor in maintaining these relationships. Specifically, it was shown in section 7.4.2 that women tended to be more open about friendships with

other women, but their socialisation with ESOL friends was often restricted within the ESOL/FE college environment because of childcare and family responsibilities, such as in the case of Carine. Thus, although the presence of the family in the host country may contribute to refugees' willingness to build friendships in the ESOL/FE college environment, the nature of the family as a close network (Lamba 2003) may restrict the portability of ESOL friendships outside the ESOL/FE College environment, except where a friendship is extended to families.

It emerges that students aged 25 or younger were more likely than older students to have built friendships with students from other ESOL courses and also to be involved in college events; however, age did not affect the building of relationships in the classroom. This may be an effect of having fewer responsibilities for younger refugee ESOL students, compared to their older peers, whose socialisation with other students in the ESOL/FE College environment is restricted because of family or childcare responsibilities or employment.

Finally, refugees' limited contact with their neighbours may be a contributing factor to their openness towards building friendships in the ESOL/FE college setting. Specifically, low command of English was a significant barrier for the development of relationships with the local community (as was identified in section 7.2.3). In the ESOL/FE college environment all students in a classroom have the same English ability, and therefore low command of English is not regarded as a barrier any longer. Consequently, the need to practise English in the classroom is encouraging the building of friendships in the classroom. Likewise, there is limited evidence that where contact with neighbours exists, refugees may be more prepared to adapt to the culture of students from different ethnic backgrounds and show respect towards their difference. Thus, this would enhance the development of inter-ethnic relationships between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE college environment.

9.4.3 *The ESOL network*

The set of questions addressed in this section aims to analyse the gains that derive from the social relationships built in the ESOL/FE College environment for individual

refugee ESOL students and how these gains can become resources that may enable refugees to further the process of their social integration into British society. The importance of these issues to the argument of the thesis lies in that it increases our understanding of the ESOL sector's capacity for social capital development and its relationship to refugee integration.

3a) What do refugee ESOL students gain from participation in the ESOL network?

The investigation of the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a social network has highlighted that ESOL is an inclusive network that promotes socialisation and bonding between its members, because the placement on levels based on English language ability supports inter-ethnic interaction (see section 8.2). However, as a sub-network within the wider FE college environment it is characterised by closure and provides limited opportunities to facilitate interaction between its members and others within the FE college network. Furthermore, while ESOL appears to achieve its primary aim, namely to enable its members to acquire the English language, it also emerges that it can provide its members with additional social capitalisation benefits that potentially become resources for the promotion of refugee integration.

The first benefit identified was additional knowledge related to accessing welfare services and British culture, which as a potential resource for the promotion of the process of integration constitutes social capital deriving from the ESOL network (see section 8.3.1). Particularly, with improved fluency in English, refugees applied this knowledge when using services and this act began to increase their independence and control over their lives. In addition, it was identified that increased fluency in English positively impacted on the strengthening of existing relationships formed in ESOL but to a lesser extent to the building of new relationships.

A second benefit that is a potential resource and therefore constitutes social capital was identified to be information exchange and support (see section 8.3.2). Specifically, information was exchanged between students, as well as between students and their teachers. Interestingly, the teacher's authoritative role was seen as a credible and

trustworthy source of information when dealing with external agencies, while information deriving from students was less regarded. Information acquired in this way was viewed as a credible line of inquiry, which refugee ESOL students may further explore through other formal or informal networks.

A third benefit accruing from participation in the ESOL network was the ESOL certificate (see section 8.3.3). Although this was less valued by refugee ESOL students as a qualification that could lead to employment, it was regarded as important because it signified their progress in English. Consequently, the ESOL certificate was regarded as a resource that enabled progression to further or higher education and vocational training and, most importantly, it enabled refugees to make realistic choices about their future lives in Britain.

Thus, with regard to the ESOL network's capacity for social capital development it can be argued that indeed it provides individual refugee ESOL students with gains that can become potential resources – namely knowledge, information exchange and support and the ESOL certificate – that may enable refugees to ease their socio-economic adjustment in the host country. These resources constitute social capital deriving from the ESOL network, because outside it, they would not be available in this form.

3b) How do the gains deriving from the ESOL network impact on the process of integration?

With regard to refugee integration, it can be argued that the benefits deriving from the ESOL network contributed to aspects related to the process of integration. Specifically, as in the case of Reza, increased independence and control as a result of increased language fluency enables the refugee to take an active role in his/her personal matters when accessing public services. Likewise, the information deriving from the ESOL network can be used to improve other aspects of their lives, such as reducing the reliance on interpreters (see section 8.3.1). Consequently, increased independence and control over refugees' lives, together with the strengthening of their existing social relationships from and outside ESOL, all may contribute to the beginnings of feelings and attitudes that may allow refugees to view the host country as 'home'. Thus, over

time, those refugees who adjust most quickly could potentially begin to develop a history based around the new host country, whilst the history of their home country becomes less pronounced. This process is one of the early characteristics of integration. In addition, the granting of an ESOL certificate symbolises refugee ESOL students' group effort to improve their living conditions and positively impacts on the development of aspirations about future educational and occupational career choices. In this respect, refugees feel empowered to promote their socio-economic adjustment.

Nevertheless, this is only one element in the government's refugee integration strategy. As discussed in section 2.3.1, the wider aim of the strategy is to promote cross-cultural communication and contribute to community cohesion. The indicators of these achievements are related to refugees' employment, accessing services and naturalisation, and English language attainment is the initiator of these. This thesis has identified that the ESOL environment as a social network does indeed provide the capacity to facilitate communication across ethnic communities and teaches individuals to show respect for cultural diversity. However, the ESOL sector lacks the capacity to facilitate communication between refugees and the wider FE context. As highlighted previously, ESOL students were mainly marginalised within the wider FE college environment. If integration is a two-way process as advocated in the refugee integration strategy, then the ESOL/FE college environment needs to be extended to promote inter-ethnic and inter-cultural communication across local and ethnic minority communities.

Finally, refugee ESOL students participating in this study tended to regard their stay in Britain as permanent and wished to acquire British citizenship. The ESOL network is aiding refugees by providing cultural knowledge in addition to English. However, the majority faces problems in entering the labour market and there was little evidence that ESOL is addressing refugees' employability. While the ESOL certificate may be valuable for progression to further or higher education, it is less valuable in helping refugees to find employment. Hence, refugee ESOL students experience significant delays in realising their future plans, which slow the process of their integration into British society.

9.4.4 *Contribution of thesis*

This study intended to unite two under-investigated aspects of crucial importance to refugee integration: firstly, refugees' participation in social networks in Britain, and secondly, the processes and mechanisms of refugee integration and language education in the ESOL context.

In particular, the thesis extends current knowledge on, and contributes to our understanding of, theory related to refugee studies and sociology of education, by demonstrating that: i) in the process of refugee integration the building of inter-ethnic social relationships provides refugees with resources – namely information exchange and support, knowledge and the ESOL certificate – that enable individual refugees to further their integration into British society; and ii) by highlighting the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a social network fostering inter-ethnic relationship building and social capital development. The study has shown that relationships strengthened with time, but were not necessarily portable outside ESOL, or extendable to the wider FE college environment. More so, the building of these relationships may be affected by gender, age and ethnicity, as well as refugees' prior attachment to family, friends and the ethnic community. Also, refugee ESOL students' willingness to build relationships with others in the ESOL/FE college environment may be affected by elements of the refugee experience, such as mistrust occurring through uprooting and loss, as well as their perceptions towards their stay in Britain and their desire to acquire British citizenship and rebuild their lives.

Moreover, the study contributes to refugee integration, in that it has improved our understanding of how refugees further their integration into British society by using social capital that they acquired through their social relationships formed in the ESOL/FE college environment. Specifically, the refugee integration policy has placed an emphasis on ESOL provision for English language attainment and promoting citizenship in refugee communities. What the refugee integration policy has not envisioned is that the ESOL environment is a social space that encourages social networking, and as such, it is capable of social capital development.

Finally, from a practice perspective, the study has possibly identified the lack of a cross-college infrastructure working with other related agencies towards common integration

outcomes as specified by the refugee integration strategy. This is evident in that the ESOL teachers were often required to adopt the role of the advocate and act as a bridge between refugee ESOL students and external agencies. In essence, the study has uncovered the hidden informal relationships that compensate for the absence of a fully functioning and supportive college-based infrastructure promoting refugee integration.

9.5 Implications for ESOL provision and refugee integration

The acquisition of English and cultural knowledge have been identified by policy makers as essential elements for refugee integration. In this context, the FE sector and particularly ESOL, found itself in the position to ensure that refugees are enabled to learn English to a level necessary for their progression to further education, training and employment, and to access welfare services. The present study has demonstrated that in addition to language provision, the ESOL setting as a social network also facilitates social capital development that enables refugees to further the process of their socio-economic integration into British society.

While the refugee integration strategy recognises communication across ethnic communities as an indicator of integration, it has not developed targets promoting inter-ethnic communication within the ESOL/FE college environment. The experience of problems related to refugee ESOL students' efforts to rebuild their lives in an alien environment has become the driving force behind social capital development, emerging from these inter-ethnic relationships. More so, the dedication of ESOL teachers to assist refugee students with activities that lie beyond their responsibilities as educators indicates the absence of any practical incentives in ESOL to assist refugees, as well as the need of such incentives. In addition, the lack of relationships between refugee ESOL students and students from other courses reconfirms the absence of mechanisms promoting inter-ethnic relationships, especially with the English student population. Hence, the provision of cultural knowledge is curriculum and teacher-led and may prepare students for the citizenship test, but any activities that would address community cohesion were not actively promoted by the two FE colleges in which this study took place. Possible activities to address refugees' social marginalisation could include mentoring schemes between refugee ESOL students and students from

mainstream FE courses, college-led involvement in the community through volunteering, or simply college wide events where cultural exchange is taking place. Thus, it can be argued that the FE sector has to a large extent missed an opportunity to address the social marginalisation of refugee ESOL students within and outside its boundaries.

A further missed opportunity by the FE sector and other agencies involved in refugee integration is their cooperation and mutual support. While the FE sector is providing ESOL to refugees, the two colleges in focus did not cater for any employment-orientated opportunities, despite the provision of vocational courses with embedded ESOL. In contrast, ESOL provision was limited to a maximum of 16 hours per week, avoiding interference with students' eligibility for unemployment benefits, whilst refugees would certainly welcome intensive ESOL provision shortening the number of years needed for English language fluency. What is more, the Job Centre Plus contributes to ESOL's drop-outs as it often requests recipients of unemployment benefits to attend its skills and training courses. If refugee ESOL students do not comply, their right to unemployment benefits is withdrawn.

There was limited evidence to suggest that FE colleges provided refugee ESOL students with targeted career progression advice. There was no indication, for example, of partnership work between the National Refugee Integration Forum and Shakespeare and Marlowe College. Although both colleges had integrated career services, these tended to narrow their expertise to further education and training, and provided limited assistance for those with existing qualifications. Consequently, despite enabling refugees' progression within the FE sector, it can be argued that FE colleges show weaknesses in guiding refugee ESOL students through the process of recognition of existing qualifications and professional training, as there is no evidence of partnership work with professional bodies, trade associations or universities addressing accreditation issues. Thus, it seems that refugees are expected to undertake any employment role once fluency in English is achieved, unless individual refugees are prepared to take on the financial costs of this process. Therefore, it can be argued that although the refugee integration strategy has a clear vision of what actions are expected from refugees, there is a weak inter-reaction between the agencies involved to facilitate refugee integration with respect to progression to employment.

The recent shift of emphasis on skills building announced in the *Skills for Growth* Whiter Paper (BIS 2009) signals that ESOL is not regarded as a priority in current policy developments. The introduction of fees for ESOL in 2007 in addition to the transfer of 16-19 FE funding from the Learning and Skills Council to local education authorities and 19+ funding to the Skills Funding Agency may have the effect of a significant reduction in ESOL provision, which could result the drop out of refugees and an increasing number of migrants who can afford to pay fees may seek to study ESOL. Consequently, with a decreased supply of ESOL, refugees may seek alternative FE courses related to skills building. Although this study has demonstrated that ESOL indeed facilitates social capital development, the existence of this is not recognised by policy provision and, therefore, no investment is made to support ESOL in FE colleges. Rather, the refugee ESOL students may increasingly be forced to follow inappropriate employment opportunities simply because they cannot respond to the financial demands related to studying ESOL. In addition, the *Skills for Growth* strategy may be an obstacle to the process of refugee integration, as it does not acknowledge the contribution of ESOL to the employability of refugees. Therefore, it can be argued that although the FE sector has attempted to assist the process of refugee integration, the weight placed on this process may be weakened by the shift of emphasis on skills building, as ESOL will be affected by funding cuts and, consequently, reduction of provision. Within this new context social capital development facilitated by the ESOL/FE environment will become an increasingly important resource for individual refugees in their attempts to further the process of their social integration.

9.6 Reflections and limitations

This study explored the process of relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE college environment. It has deployed theoretical perspectives of social capital theory in order to provide a conceptual framework for the investigation and explanatory structure for the thesis. The investigation aimed to capture the processes in which social relationships are formed and maintained within the ESOL/FE college network. As a theoretical approach exploring the complexities of group formation, social capital theory has been most useful in the following ways. Firstly, in providing a conceptual framework for examining the dynamics that influence

refugees' choices to associate with the ethnic community in the host country; secondly, in highlighting the difficulties and possible "restrictions individual refugees face through membership in more than one network, and thirdly in demonstrating the restrictions imposed by the family network in the portability of ESOL relationships outside the ESOL/FE college environment. Additionally, as an analytical tool, social capital was most useful in enabling the control of the focus on interrelated issues explored in this study, namely refugee integration, friendship building in the ESOL/FE college environment and the impact of these friendships to the process of integration.

The theoretical directions of the social capital perspective have enabled the present study to examine the ESOL/FE college environment as a social network that supports its members acquiring the English language, as well as building social relationships with others within its boundaries as factors that contribute to the process of refugees' integration into British society. At the same time, this theoretical approach allowed the in-depth exploration of relationship building between refugees and others, as well as their participation in other social networks. Consequently, the use of social capital as an analytical tool has allowed the examination of interrelated issues to refugee integration without shifting the focus of attention from the topic of interest. As discussed in chapter 3, social capital has been mainly conceptualised in existing literature as a resource leading to financial opportunities or as an indicator of civic participation. The present study has added to the conceptual development of social capital by demonstrating that it can also exist in the form of a resource that contributes to the process of social integration.

As a theoretical approach exploring the process of integration at the micro level, the insights deriving from social capital theory have highlighted that ESOL is a closed network within the FE college setting. Moreover, at the macro level it helps to understand clearly that the government's policy aim of achieving community cohesion through ESOL is not realised within colleges, as there were no initiatives by the two FE Colleges to actively promote refugee ESOL students' interaction with students from different courses.

The study adopted the case study approach as the most capable of exploring relationship building. The case in focus was refugee ESOL students' relationships built in the ESOL/FE College environment in London and refugees' use of potential resources

deriving from these relationships for the advancement of their social integration. The study was of an exploratory nature, aiming to investigate, as part of the refugee experience, refugee ESOL students' willingness to engage in inter-ethnic relationships in the ESOL/FE college network as an indicator of the initiation or advancement of the process of integration. Hence, relationship building between refugees and others was explored in two inner-London further education colleges.

As a research approach the multi-method case study approach was advantageous firstly, because it provided rich and detailed data and secondly because the triangulation of data obtained from different methods strengthened the construct validity of the study. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of the study allowed a high level of internal validity within the study's focus and context, although follow up work is needed to confidently secure causal analyses. In addition, the research design enabled for the discovery of issues associated with the research focus, for instance the absence of any socialisation between refugees and students on different course in the wider FE College setting, which would have gone unnoticed otherwise.

On reflection the research methods chosen were appropriate as they enabled the triangulation and complementarity of the data during analysis and strengthened the findings. Also, the contents of the questionnaire and interview schedule allowed for discretion, the carrying out of the survey in the classroom with the teacher present and the conduct of interviews in a relaxed and familiar environment (the cafeteria) made participants feel comfortable. In addition, the choice to not answer specific questions during the survey or interview gave participants the feeling of control. What is more, participant observation in classrooms helped me to interact with the students so that a certain level of trust and rapport could be established before they were approached for interviews.

However, the difficulties associated with data collection were twofold. Firstly, although the management of both colleges gave me permission to carry out the study, they only provided me with contact details of ESOL teachers. Thus, before data collection could start it was necessary to build up a good working relationship with ESOL teachers. In addition, the colleges refused to disclose the names and contact details of students who took part in the survey because of legislation related to data protection, a fact that made the follow up of students absent on the days the survey was carried out impossible.

Thus, this study could have been enhanced if access was allowed to the student database. A second difficulty related to data collection concerned participants' low command of English. For instance, during interviews sometimes the questions needed to be rephrased or specific words explained. Similarly, participants sometimes needed to describe meanings by using gestures because of their limited vocabulary. At such instances my understanding would be repeated to interviewees seeking their approval. Hence, interviews were time-consuming and some participants' time was constrained due to work or family responsibilities. Generally, participants felt empowered by their ability to hold a one-hour discussion in English, but unfortunately entry level 1 students' level of English did not allow them to take part in the interviews. This study could have been strengthened if the questionnaires had been translated into the mother tongues of entry level 1 students, and if interpreters were used for interviews with this group of students. However, the former was not possible due to the lack of information as to students' first languages and the latter was difficult to arrange because of cost.

The chief limitations of this study, however, are related to its generalisation of findings. As outlined in section 5.3, this study is a case focussing on refugee ESOL students' tendencies to build social relationships in the ESOL/FE college environment in present day, metropolitan London, and the use of social capital deriving from these relationships for the advancement of the process of refugee integration. As such, the study sought to explore refugees' willingness to engage in multi-ethnic relationships, and the findings provide a rich and detailed picture of the experiences of those who participated in this study. Specifically, the survey findings only reflect the experiences of refugee students studying ESOL in the two colleges and may not mirror the experiences of refugees in other colleges or studying on different courses. In addition, due to the limited ability in English, entry level 1 students were not approached for interviews and also, due to missing data (see sections 5.4.3 and 5.6.1) their responses were also excluded from some statistical analyses (as indicated in the tables). Therefore, the findings of the study do not reflect the experiences of this sub-sample, unless indicated otherwise. Even so, within the context of the case, the findings of this study reflect the experiences of refugee ESOL students' social relationship building at Entry Level 2 and above. What is more, the case study as a research approach enabled the identification of refugee ESOL students and the in-depth exploration of their

interaction with other students and their teachers. A different research approach would not capture this process in rich detail.

Lastly, this study increased our understanding of the early settlement and integration of refugees in the host society within the context of ESOL classes in FE colleges as part of the process of refugee integration. Overall, the key findings established that several interlocking factors influence refugee ESOL students' ability and readiness to integrate. Specifically, the refugee experience affects to a large extent the motivation of individuals to settle in the host country, as experiences of trauma, breakdown of the family unit, loss of loved ones, status and property are all factors that affect individuals' strength to rebuild their lives. In addition, the study has found that although the ESOL environment can provide benefits for the individual and the community, the process of integrating into the host country is a slow and incremental process that is influenced by a series of factors as identified by the refugee integration strategy. Aspects of integration are indeed initiated in the ESOL environment, but they are less powerful owing to the lengthy process of new language acquisition and the FE college's weak inter-reaction with the local refugee integration support structures – namely the communication and collaboration with other local and national agencies assisting in the process of refugee integration. As the emphasis on achieving the targets of the integration strategy is increasingly placed on ESOL by the government, ESOL finds itself in a leading position to devise innovative methods to initiate the process of integration, without additional inter-agency and financial support. Thus, similarly to refugees, the ESOL sector has to identify strategies to achieving this objective, to a large extent in isolation from other support structures.

9.7 Implications for further research

The exploratory nature of the present study has improved our understanding of the process of relationship building between refugees and others in the ESOL/FE college setting, and has demonstrated that the ESOL network does provide individual refugees with resources that can promote the process of their social integration. As highlighted in sections 3.2 and 3.5, past studies have identified that during settlement in the host country, refugees socialise to a large extent with members of their ethnic community

and the social capital deriving from the ethnic community, mostly in form of financial opportunities, can ease their socio-economic adjustment. The present study contributes to the existing literature the knowledge that the ESOL/FE College environment as a social network is capable of social capital development that promotes the process of refugee integration. Furthermore, the exploratory nature of the study allowed the examination of refugees' participation in multiple social networks, which in turn enabled a thorough understanding of their tendencies to engage or not in friendships with other students in the ESOL/FE College environment. In addition, its exploratory nature has highlighted issues for follow up that can further enrich our understanding.

Firstly, the comparison between refugee and migrant ESOL students' background characteristics has highlighted similarities and differences demonstrating that, indeed, refugee ESOL students may have different needs and aspirations from migrants. A further, explanatory study about these differences can potentially enable FE Colleges to develop support structures that not only distinguish, but also provide increased targeted support to ESOL students.

Secondly, the study highlighted that age was a factor influencing relationship building, where it was identified that those aged 25 or younger were more likely to develop friendships with students from different ESOL groups. What was beyond the scope of this study, but would enrich our understanding of age as a factor of relationship building, is to follow up patterns of relationship building in 16-18 year old refugees – a high, but underinvestigated student population in ESOL environments with potentially different experiences than those of adult refugees.

Thirdly, as stated in the previous section, one limitation of this study is that its findings do not necessarily reflect the experiences of entry level 1 students, because of their limited English language ability. Consequently, their experiences of relationship building in ESOL and the reasons that make them seek friends might be different than those identified in this study. A further investigation with this specific group of students would increase our understanding of the importance of existing social networks, especially the ethnic community, to their socio-economic adjustment in Britain and the effects of this to their willingness to engage in relationships with people from different ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Fourthly, another area in need for investigation is the detailed longitudinal evaluation of contexts of ESOL provision as one of the facilitators of integration, and its position and relationships with other agencies promoting refugee integration. The UK Border Agency has expressed its commitment in *Moving on Together* to continue previous policies and support inter-agency cooperation in addressing refugee integration. However, the present study highlighted that ESOL is to a large extent isolated from other agencies. Thus, its role in this inter-agency cooperation needs to be assessed.

Fifthly, an issue in need of further investigation is the role of the ESOL teacher as a source of information and support. As was highlighted in chapter 8, ESOL teachers were facilitating the learning experience of students, sometimes by putting special measures in place, taking into account the individual circumstances of students. In addition, their authoritative position was regarded by students as a credible source of information and support. However, the extent to which ESOL teachers take on additional responsibilities than those prescribed to their role in facilitating learning for refugee ESOL students is not known. For instance, it was identified that school teachers would respond to refugee children's needs out of compassion (Arnot *et al.* 2009, Pinson *et al.* 2010). Therefore, a study investigating the role of the ESOL teacher in the integration process would increase our understanding of the function of ESOL's contribution to refugee integration.

Lastly, a final issue emerging was refugee ESOL students' marginalisation in the wider FE college environment, as no one had contact with students from different FE courses. It was indicated that age might be a factor, as younger refugee ESOL students showed a greater interest in college events. Therefore, there is a need to examine the attitudes of FE college students towards refugees studying ESOL, as this would highlight some of the reasons behind refugee ESOL students' marginalisation in the wider FE environment.

9.8 Concluding thoughts

This study explored the process of relationship building between refugee ESOL students and others in the ESOL/FE college environment. Specifically it has sought to explore

the ESOL environment's capacity to act as a social network that enables social capital formation in the form of resources that enable individual refugees to further the process of their social integration. The study has indicated to me that refugees experience a range of psychological and social problems and issues that in most cases will only be resolved over a long period of slow and incremental integration. In a few cases a combination of determination and clear goals can lead to an accelerated integration. In the case of most refugees however, they have to navigate an often torturous journey through previous and sometimes conflicting cultures and the tension between individual circumstances and wider social norms.

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- <http://www.ecre.org>
- <http://www.esoluk.co.uk>
- <http://www.fenews.co.uk>
- www.forcedmigration.org
- www.icar.org.uk
- <http://www.unhcr.org.uk>

Appendices

Appendix 1A: Questionnaire used in pilot study

First name (only): _____

Are you male?
 female?

How old are you? 16-17 45-54
 18-24 55-64
 25-34 65+
 35-44

Section 1

What is your country of birth? _____

What is your ethnic group? _____

Did you come as an asylum-seeker to the UK? Yes
 No

What is your current immigration status? Asylum-seeker
 Exceptional Leave to Remain (ELR)
 Refugee status
 Visa for a specific period of time
 Resident
 British Citizen

Do you live in England with your Family (husband/ wife, children, parents, etc.)?
 Relative(s) (uncle/ aunt, cousin, etc.)
 Friend(s)
 Alone

Do you expect family members to come and join you in the UK? Yes
 No

When did you come to England? Month: _____
Year: _____

please turn over

Section 2

Have you attended primary school in your country of birth? Yes
 No

Have you completed primary school? Yes
 No

Have you attended secondary school in your country of birth or any other country?
 Yes
 No

If you have not attended secondary school what did you do?

Have you completed secondary school? Yes
 No

What did you do after secondary school?

- Continued studying
- Found a job
- Got married
- Was unemployed
- Other: _____

What was your occupation in your country? _____

Do you hold any professional qualifications? Yes
 No

If yes, what qualifications? _____

What was your specialisation? _____

please turn over

Appendix 1B: Questionnaire used in main study

Are you: Male? Female?

Who is your ESOL teacher? _____

At which ESOL level are you currently studying? Entry Level 1 Level 1
 Entry Level 2 Level 2
 Entry Level 3 other _____

A. Your personal details

1. How old are you? _____
2. From which country are you? _____
3. What is your ethnicity? _____
4. Which is your first language? _____
5. Which other languages do you speak? _____
6. What is your religion? _____
7. In which area of London do you live? _____
8. Are you single widowed
 married engaged
 divorced other _____
9. If you are engaged or married, from which country is your husband/ wife? _____
10. In which country did you meet your husband/ wife? _____
11. Have you got children? Yes No If yes, how many? _____
 - a. How old is your oldest child? _____
 - b. How old is your youngest child? _____
 - c. How many of your children live in the UK? _____
 - d. How many of your children live in your country? _____
12. Did you complete primary school? Yes No
13. Did you complete secondary school? Yes No
14. Have you got a professional qualification, like a diploma or degree? Yes No
If yes, in what subject? _____
15. Is this qualification equivalent to Professional Certificate or Diploma?
 Degree?
 Master ?
 other? _____
16. What was your job in your home country? _____

B. Migration

1. When did you leave your country? Year _____ Month _____
2. With whom did you leave?
- Family (e.g. husband/wife, children, parents, brother/sister)
 - Relatives (uncle/aunt, cousin etc)
 - Friends
 - Alone
3. Did you stay in any other country/ countries before coming to the UK? Yes No
- If yes, which country/ countries? _____
4. When did you arrive in the UK? Year _____ Month _____
5. With whom did you arrive in the UK?
- Family (e.g. husband/wife, children, parents, brother/sister)
 - Relatives (uncle/aunt, cousin etc)
 - Friends
 - Alone
6. Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Yes No
7. What is your current immigration status?
- Asylum-seeker When did you claim asylum? _____
 - ELR /DLR When did you get this status? _____
 - ILR/ Refugee status When did you get this status? _____
 - Visa
 - Resident/ EU Citizen
 - British Citizen When did you get the passport? _____
8. If you do not have a British passport, do you
- have already applied for it
 - want to apply for one
 - do not need one

C. Your life in the UK

1. Did you have family or friends already living in the UK? Yes No

a. If yes, who were they? _____

b. Did you know them from your home country? Yes No

c. In which city do they live? _____

d. Did you stay in their house? Yes No

e. If yes, for how long? _____

2. In the UK, did you receive any help or information from?

- Ethnic community (people from your country who live in Britain)
- Refugee Community Organisations (for example Refugee Council)
- Local community (for example, charity or church)
- Friends
- Family
- Others _____

3. Did you ever work in the UK? Yes No

If yes, was this job paid? unpaid? (volunteering)

4. Do you currently work? Yes No

If yes, as what? _____

5. Did your ethnic community help you to find a job? Yes No

If no, who helped you to find a job? _____

6. What do you plan to do in the future?

- to continue studying ESOL
- to study another subject at the college what? _____
- to study at university what? _____
- to find a job
- other _____

7. Would you like to return to your home country? Yes No

D. ESOL

1. Did you study English before you came to the UK? Yes No

2. Did you study English at any other school or college in the UK? Yes No

3. When did you start studying ESOL at this college? _____
4. How did you learn about ESOL classes? _____
5. Were you on a waiting list for an ESOL course at this college? Yes No
6. If yes, how long did you have to wait? _____
7. Did your English improve since you started studying ESOL? Yes No

E. ESOL class & College

1. Do you have friends in your class? Yes No How many? _____
2. Do you have friends in the college? Yes No How many? _____
3. Do you have family members in the college? Yes No How many? _____
4. Do you meet friends from your class/ college outside the college? Yes No Sometimes

F. In the class

1. Do you like working on a task with your friends? No Sometimes Yes
2. Do you explain something to your friends if they don't understand? No Sometimes Yes
3. Do you explain things using your first language? No Sometimes Yes
4. Do you translate words to your friends if they don't understand them? No Sometimes Yes

G. Your college

1. Do you need help from the college about your problems? Yes No
 If yes, do you ask for help from
 - your classmates
 - your teacher
 - the student advisor/ counsellor
2. Do you trust your teacher? Yes No
3. Do you trust the student advisor/counsellor? Yes No
4. What do you expect from the college?
 - to improve your English
 - to get a qualification
 - to find a job
 - to meet people
 - other _____

Appendix 1C: Interview Schedule (1st Interview)

Dear student

Below is a list of questions or topics I would like to discuss with you during the interview.

By taking part in the interview you will have the chance to practice your English as well as help other students like you in the future.

I can promise you that I will handle our discussion confidentially and under no circumstances will your name appear throughout my work.

Thank you very much for taking part in the interview!

Anastasia Dimitriadou (anastasia_dim@yahoo.co.uk)

You

1. From which country are you?
2. What is your first language?
3. How old are you?
4. How long do you live in London?

You & your family

1. Are you engaged or married?
2. Have you got children? How many? How old are they?
3. Did you get engaged or married here or in your country?
4. If here, how did you meet you spouse?
5. Do you live with your family in the UK?
6. Did family members join you in the UK?
7. Do you have family back home?
8. How important is it to live with your family?

In your country

1. Why did you leave your country?
2. Who helped you to leave your country?
3. With whom did you leave?
4. Did you leave family members behind? Whom?
5. Do you send presents or money to family members back home?
6. Do you want to go back? Why? When?
7. Would you like that your children return to your home country?

UK

1. When did you come to the UK?
2. Did you claim asylum? When?
3. How did you claim asylum?
4. What happened after? For example where did you live?
 - a) Did you have family or friends living in the UK?
 - b) Did they help you when you first came to the UK?
 - c) In what way?

- d) Did you live in a detention centre? How long?
- e) Did you receive help from your ethnic community?

f) Did you receive help from refugee community organisations, such as the Refugee Council?

5. Did you ever work in the UK?
6. What job was this?
7. What is similar to your job in your home country?
8. How did you find the job?
9. Do you want to get the British passport? Why?
10. If you already have the British passport, what did change for you in the UK?

ESOL

1. How did you hear about ESOL?
2. How many years are you studying ESOL?
3. Did you have to wait in order to get a place?
4. Did you study English/ESOL before coming to this college? Where?
5. Do you think that your English improved since studying ESOL? Why?
6. Do you speak English only in the college?
7. With whom do you speak English outside the college?
8. What do you plan to do when your English improves?
9. Did you speak good English before you started ESOL?

College

1. Do you like being a student in the UK?
2. What is your relationship with the teacher?
3. Does the teacher listen to your problems?
4. What does the college give to you?
5. Do you trust your teachers?
6. Does the college help you with your problems?
How will studying at college change your life in the UK?
7. What do you like most as a student at the college?
8. What do you like least as a student at the college?
9. What do you plan to do after ESOL?

Friends

1. Have you got friends in the UK? Do you see them often?
2. Did you know them from your home country?
3. Are your friends from your ethnic community? Are they British? Are they foreign?
4. Do you see your relatives as friends?
5. What is better: friends or relatives/family?
6. Have you got lots of friends in your class? Who are they?
7. Have you got lots of friends in the college? Who are they?
8. Have you got lots of friends in your neighbourhood? Who are they?
9. How important is it to have friends?
10. Do you trust your friends?
11. Do you trust some friends more than others?

12. Is it easy or difficult to make friends in the UK? Why?
13. Is it easy or difficult to make English friends? Why?
14. What do your friends offer you?

Your ethnic community

1. What does the ethnic community offer you?
2. Do you attend events of your ethnic community?
3. Do people from your ethnic community help you? How?
4. How important is it for you to have friends from your ethnic community? Why?
5. How important is it to speak your first language? Why?
6. How important is it to marry a person from your ethnic community?

Vocabulary

Section A: Your personal details

ethnicity: the ethnic origin of a person. For example, a person from Glasgow has a Scottish ethnicity but a British nationality. Other example: People from Somalia have clans instead of ethnicity.

professional qualification: a certificate that is given to a person by a school/college after examination, for example you will receive the ESOL certificate from Shakespeare College.

Equivalent : the same as

Section B: Migration

Asylum : a place or country gives asylum to a person who is in danger. Within this place or country the person is protected from those who want to harm him/her.

Immigration status: if a person is a resident, is in Britain with a visa, is a refugee or has the British passport.

Immigrant: a person that moved to another country because of a job, to get married, or generally for financial reasons. This person often goes to his country for holidays.

Asylum-seeker: a person that has left his/her country because of danger and has asked to live in another country

Refugee: same as asylum-seeker but the refugee is allowed to stay in one country. This person often cannot go back to his home country.

ELR /DLR: the asylum-seeker has not been recognised as a refugee but can stay in a country because of human rights

ILR/ Refugee status: the asylum-seeker has been recognised as a refugee by law

Resident: a person that lives in Britain and works for three years or more

EU Citizen: a person that comes from a country that is a member of the European Union

British Citizen: a person that has a British passport and can vote in elections.

Section 3: Your life in the UK

Ethnic community: the friends and people from your home country that are living in Britain

Refugee Community Organisation: a organisation that helps refugees, like the Refugee Council or the Lewisham Refugee Network

Local community: the people that live in the neighbourhood or the same area

Volunteering: to work without getting paid, for example helping in a school or hospital for one day a week

Section 5: In the class

task: activity or exercise

Section 7: Your college

trust: you trust someone when you feel that you can tell this person everything about you or when you need help you will ask it from people you trust. For example a child trusts his mother, best friends trust each other, people do not trust politicians.

Dear Students

My name is Anastasia and I am studying Sociology of Education at the University of London. In order to get my degree I have to carry out a research project and I have chosen to do my research with ESOL students at Morley College.

I would like to ask you to take part in a 5 minute interview. I will mostly ask you about yourself, e.g. about your age, from which countries you are, if you live in London with your families, if you have finished school in your country etc.

Nobody will hear or see the answers you are going to tell me and I will not ask for your name. I can promise that everything will be anonymous. At the end, I will be able to calculate statistics out of your answers. For example, I will be able to say that about 50% of students speak Bengali, 60% are married with children, about 25% came to the UK as refugees and about 85% have finished primary school in their countries.

With this study I am trying to find out if ESOL lessons help refugee people to learn how to have a successful life in Britain. I surely know that not all ESOL students are refugees and I interview people to find out the differences between refugee and migrant students.

I am a migrant myself and my country is Greece. I have been living in London for the last 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ years and I came to the UK for my studies. I still do not know if I want to go back to my country or if I want to stay in England.

In the second sheet I am explaining some differences between refugees and migrants. I hope you will find this information useful.

Thank you very much and I look forward to meeting you in the near future

Anastasia

The differences between refugees and migrants

A **migrant** is a person who leaves his country because he is pulled by another country. This person usually migrates in order to find a better job, to have a better income or because he wants a new experience. The migrant usually stays for some years in the host country and then returns to his or her country. Also the migrant goes for holidays to his country very often.

In Britain, migrants become **residents** if they have been working legally for 3 years.

The **refugee** is a person who leaves his country because there is a war or because he has problems with the Government. Refugees are usually being pushed out of their country. They usually leave in order to save their lives. When they arrive in another country, they ask for **asylum**. They cannot return to their country.

Every country in the world has different laws regarding asylum. In **Britain** a person's application for asylum is examined by the Home Office.

If the Home Office decides that this person cannot return to his country, it recognises him as a refugee according to international law. This means that the person will be granted with **indefinite leave to remain (ILR)**. Refugees with ILR have the same rights as residents.

If the Home Office thinks that this situation in a person's country has improved, but is still not safe, then it grants the person with **exceptional leave to remain (ELR)**. ELR means that a person can stay for a fixed period and after this period expires he has to return to his country. The return is called **repatriation**. Recently, the government changed ILR and ELR to **DLR (discretionary leave to remain)**

Both, residents and ILR holders can apply for British Citizenship after 5 years. In addition, those who want British Citizenship need to be fluent in English (Entry Level 3 in Speaking and Listening) and from September 2005 have to take a citizenship exam (still in planning).

The **United Nations** define that a person should be recognised as a refugee by a country if this person can prove that he has been persecuted because of his race, nationality, religion, membership in a group or political opinion. Sometimes this can be difficult, as the person has to prove that he was persecuted by a country and not by individuals who work for the country (like the army officer or the policeman).

Appendix 1F: Interview Schedule (2nd interview), example of Aziza

Interviewee: Aziza

Date: _____

College: MC **Class:** E3

Teacher: DePE

No of 1st int. 33

From previous interview about ESOL

A friend, who studied at Morley College, told Aziza about the ESOL courses. She thinks that Morley College is a good college but that she does not learn much. She feels that the lesson could be a bit more intensive, but it is better to speak to other people than sitting at home alone. She thinks that she has learned a lot from her fellow students, about their countries, about their culture and language. She did not have to wait for an ESOL placement; after the interview she was offered a place and could start immediately. She does not know if her English improved; maybe yes, because she feels that her confidence is increased by seeing or listening to other people's mistakes in English. She speaks English only in the college and with her doctor, her children's teachers, and so on. She thinks that English is a very tricky language

Progression in ESOL		
1.	When did you start studying ESOL at this college?	
2.	How did you decide to start studying ESOL?	
3.	When did you apply for the first time to this college?	
4.	When did the college get in touch with you?	
4a)	(if on waiting list) How long did you have to wait?	
4b)	(if on waiting list) What did you do during the waiting period?	
5.	Did you have to undergo an initial assessment?	
5a)	(if yes) How was it carried out?	
6.	Did you agree with the placement?	
7.	How many years are you studying now?	
8.	Did your English improve? A bit? A lot?	

9.	How do you feel about the upcoming exam?	
9a)	(If from last year) How did you do in the exam last year?	
9b)	What certificate are you going to take?	
9c)	How important is this certificate for you? (as document, as qualification, as proof of English etc)	
10.	Did you take this year another course as well?	
10a)	(if yes) What course?	
10b)	Why did you do this?	
10c)	If you can study on a mainstream course, then why are you still studying ESOL?	
10d)	Did the ESOL teacher help you to get in the course? In what way?	
10e)	(if no) Why not?	<i>English?</i>
12.	What are the requirements in English for studying on a mainstream course?	
1.	What are you going to study next year? Why?	
1a)	(if going to university) What are the requirements (in English) for studying at university?	
1b)	To which university did you apply?	
1c)	On what course?	
1d)	How did you find this university?	
1e)	Did the teacher help you to get in the course? In what way?	
1f)	Do you think that you would like to study ESOL together with the university course?	
1g)	(if looking for a job) What job are you looking for?	
1h)	Which skills did you learn at the college that	

	might help you find a job?	
1i)	How does the teacher help you with looking for a job?	
1j)	How does the college help you with looking for a job?	
2.	Did you ever ask your teacher for a reference?	
3.	What did change for you with learning English?	
4.	What is the most important thing you gained from ESOL other than English? (communication, friends, confidence, socialising)	

From previous interview about 'College'

Thinking about the best thing Morley College, Aziza believes that it is giving her the opportunity to study again. When she left Somalia she never thought that this would be possible. She also thinks that the worst thing was her first week. During this week she had a constant headache and she believes that this was due to her higher expectations, and her disappointment to find out that the course is not so intensive as she expected it to be. After that she got used to her other classmates, who usually worked slower than her. She doesn't blame the college for this, she says that she can understand that there are some students who have not been to school and that they need more time.

She thinks that the teachers at the college are nice, and she can share her problems but she would not go to them with personal problems, problems that concern her family

College rules & benefits

1.	What is the college rule on attendance?	
1a)	(ELC only) Did you attend the required 80% of lessons?	
1b)	(if not having 80% attendance) What are you going to do next year?	
2.	Do you think that the attendance rules are fair? Why?	
3.	What is the college rule on English?	
4.	Do you speak in the class English only?	
5.	When do you speak in your first language? When do you speak English?	
6.	What happens if you don't speak English in the lesson?	

7.	Do you think that the English rule is fair? Why?	
8.	(ELC only) What do you think about the lift pass?	
8a)	Do you use the lift without a lift pass? How often?	
8b)	What happens if you get caught?	
9.	Are there any other rules?	
10.	Is the college asking you to behave in a particular way?	
11.	Do you feel that you can express yourself in the college?	
12.	Did you ever need to make a complaint about a person? Why?	
12a)	What happened after the complaint?	
13.	Did you take part in the Student Union elections?	
13a)	For whom did you vote for (gender/nationality/course)? Why?	
14.	Do you think that the college provides enough for ethnic minorities? (reference to Halal food, prayer room, books/booklets in other languages etc)	
Help & information		
1.	Do you receive enough info about courses, studying etc?	
2.	Do you feel that you get good guidance? From whom?	
3.	Did you receive any grant/money from the college? For what purpose?	
4.	What was the requirement?	
5.	Do you think that you have learned more than ESOL?	
6.	Do you think that you have learned a lot about Britain and British people? Can you tell me an example?	
7.	Do you intend to apply for British citizenship?	
8.	What are the English requirements?	
9.	Did you ask your teacher for help? What did he/she say/do?	

From previous interview about 'Friends'

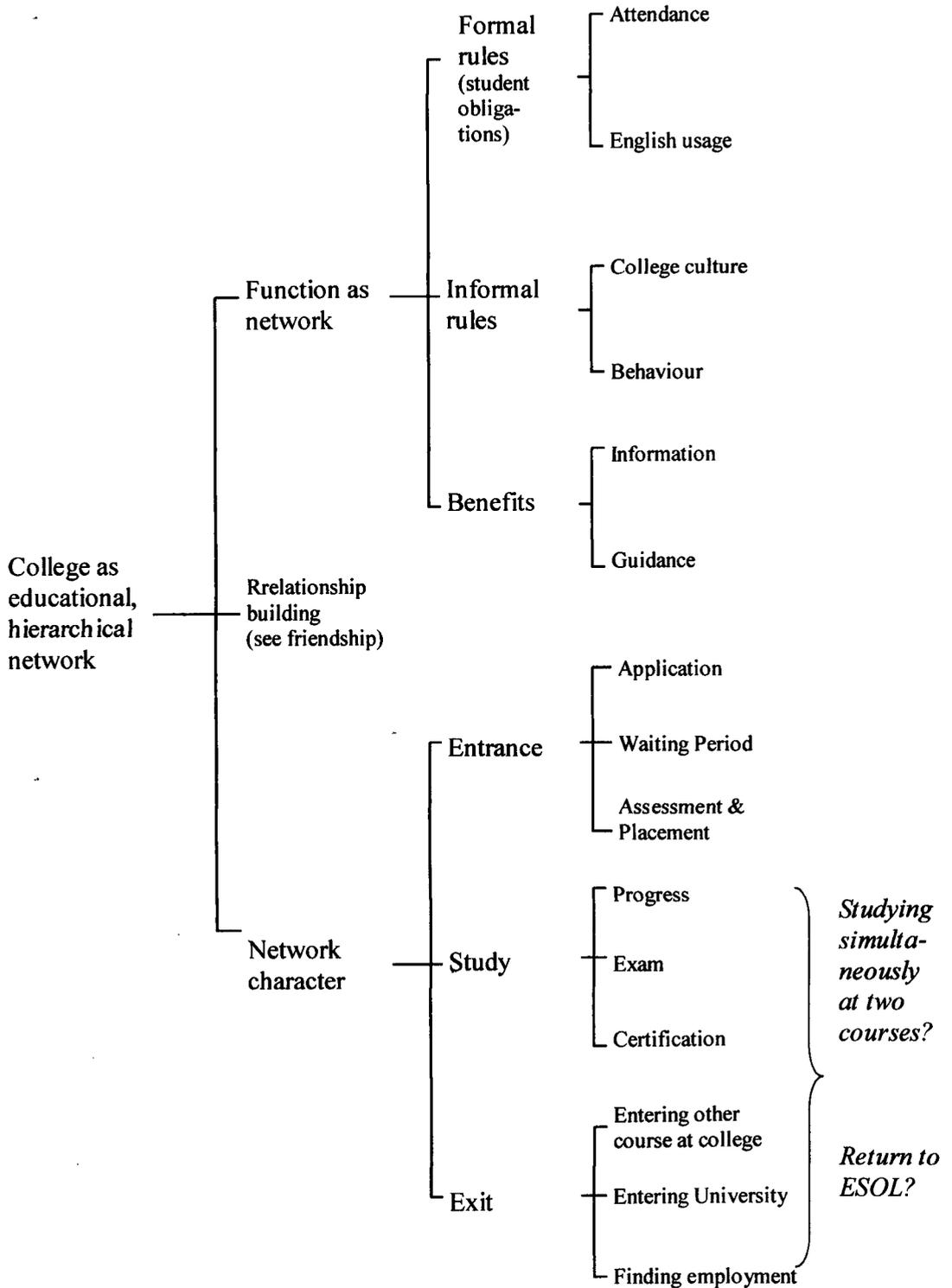
Aziza has no English friends in London. She thinks that it is difficult to make English friends in London because everybody is literally running, looking after their own business. In Sheffield people were different. She had very good English friends there, neighbours who talked to each other. She once forgot to take off a sheet from the washing line for two days and the neighbours thought that something happened to them, so they knocked on their door to see whether they were all right. These things do not happen in London. Most of her friends in London are Somalis. She has friends in her class and one close friend is the Latin American woman. She does not know many people at the college but she spends time with a classmates during a breaks. Outside the college she meets only with one other Somali woman from a class. They got together for shopping. She thinks that it is very difficult in London to find friends, that people are not like those in Sheffield

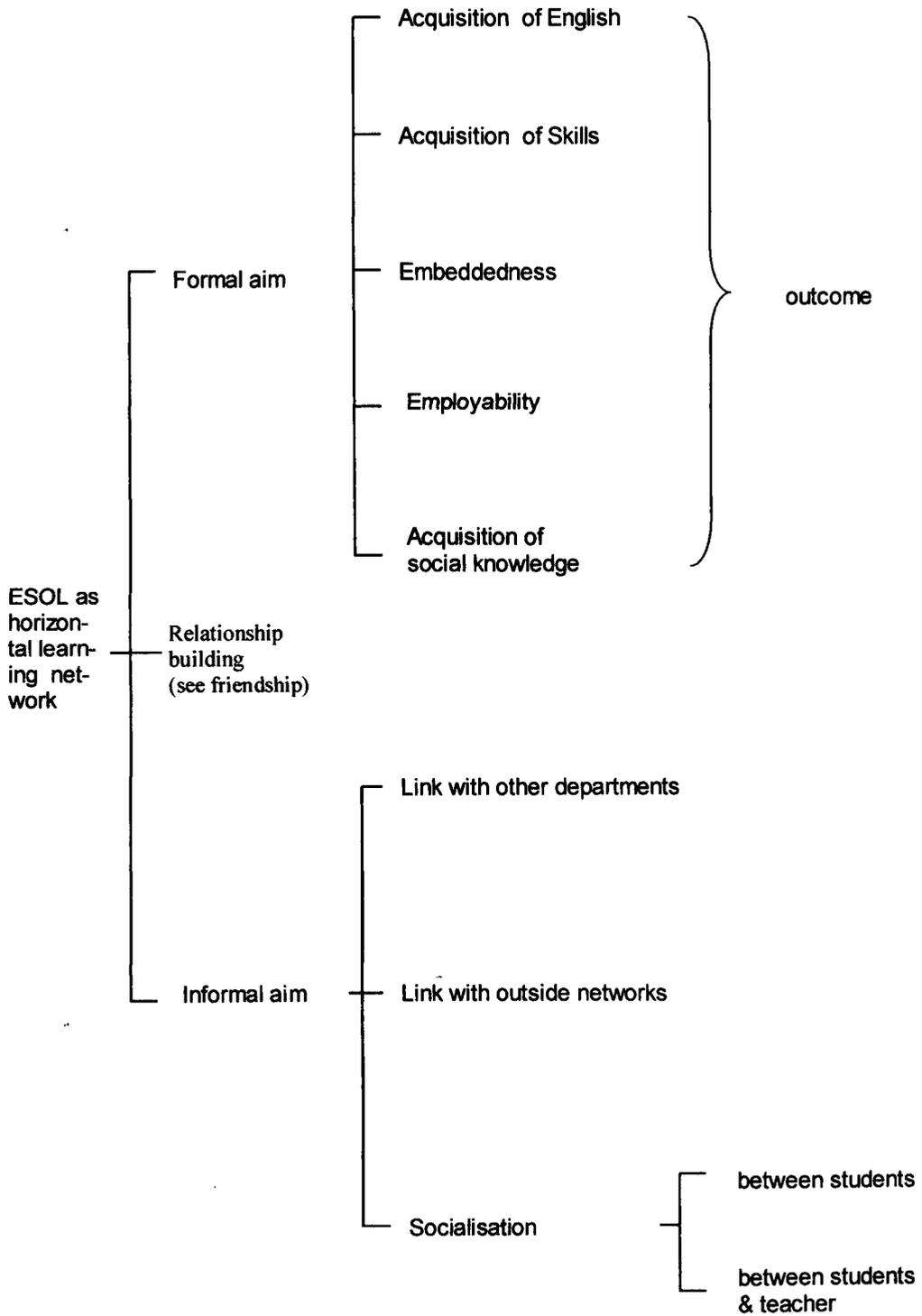
Friendships

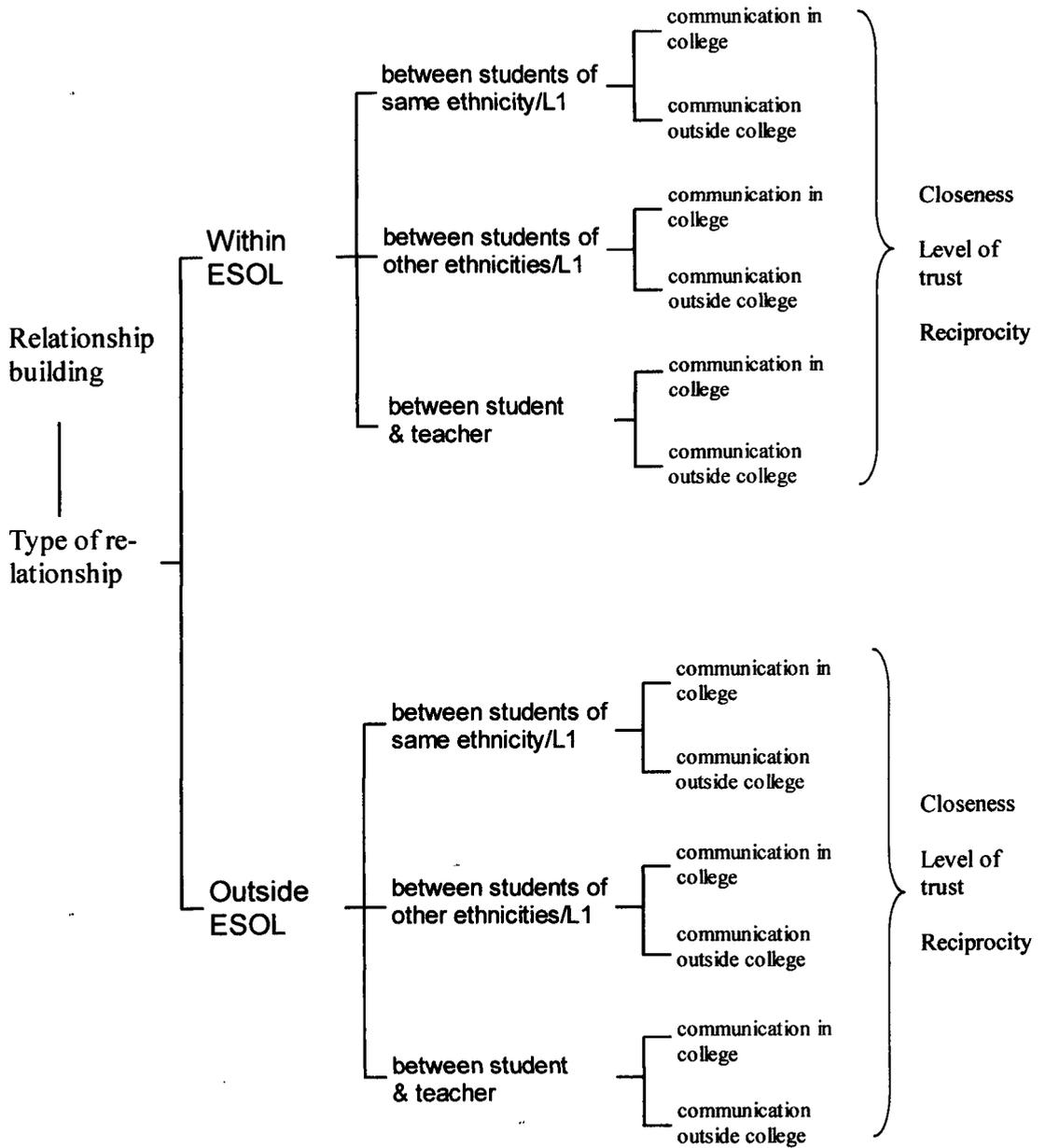
1.	Did you make friends from your ESOL class?	
2.	Are there some persons in your class that are close friends?	
3.	Did you make friends from the college (from other classes?) Any close friend?	
4.	From which country are your friends? Your close friend?	
5.	Do you speak the same language during lessons?	
6.	Do you spend your break with your classmates or college friends?	
7.	Do you communicate with your classmates/college friends outside the college?	
8.	Do you call/email each other? Do you meet? How often?	
9.	How much do you trust your classmates/close friend?	
10.	Can you tell me an example where you needed the help of a classmate? How did you return this help?	
11.	Do you communicate with your teacher outside the college?	
12.	How much do you trust your teacher?	

Coding Network COLLEGE

17 May. 05







Appendix 2A: SPSS cross tabulation for gender

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender of participants * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	681	100.0%	0	.0%	681	100.0%
If you do not have a British passport, do you? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	377	55.4%	304	44.6%	681	100.0%

Crosstab

		Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
		No	Yes	Total
Gender of Male participants	Count	141	92	233
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	34.5%	33.8%	34.2%
	Adjusted Residual	.2	-.2	
Female	Count	268	180	448
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	65.5%	66.2%	65.8%
	Adjusted Residual	-.2	.2	
Total	Count	409	272	681
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	.031 ^a	1	.861		
Continuity Correction	.009	1	.926		
Likelihood Ratio	.031	1	.861		
Fisher's Exact Test				.869	.464
Linear-by-Linear Association	.031	1	.861		
N of Valid Cases	681				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 93.06.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Appendix 2B: ESOL students' countries of origin

Migrants	Frequency	Percent
Bangladesh	231	56.5
France	14	3.4
Somalia	11	2.7
China	10	2.4
Poland	10	2.4
Sri Lanka	10	2.4
Turkey	10	2.4
Vietnam	9	2.2
Hong Kong	8	2.0
Lithuania	8	2.0
Portugal	7	1.7
India	6	1.5
Morocco	6	1.5
Spain	6	1.5
Algeria	5	1.2
Ethiopia	4	1.0
Ivory Coast	4	1.0
Brazil	3	.7
Germany	3	.7
Iran	3	.7
Malaysia	3	.7
Netherlands	3	.7
Cyprus	2	.5
Ghana	2	.5
Iraq	2	.5
Pakistan	2	.5
UK	2	.5
Ukraine	2	.5
Afghanistan	1	.2
Angola	1	.2
Belgium	1	.2
Bolivia	1	.2
Cameroon	1	.2
Colombia	1	.2
Czech Republic	1	.2
D.R. Congo	1	.2
Denmark	1	.2
Djibuti	1	.2
Eritrea	1	.2
Estonia	1	.2
Guadeloupe	1	.2
Japan	1	.2
Kenya	1	.2
Martinique	1	.2
Myanmar	1	.2
Nigeria	1	.2
Peru	1	.2
Rwanda	1	.2
Slovak Republic	1	.2
Slovenia	1	.2
Yemen	1	.2
Total	409	100.0

Refugees	Frequency	Percent
Somalia	90	33.1
Afghanistan	31	11.4
D.R. Congo	21	7.7
Sri Lanka	19	7.0
Iran	14	5.1
Vietnam	14	5.1
Iraq	12	4.4
Kosovo	12	4.4
Bangladesh	7	2.6
Ivory Coast	6	2.2
Eritrea	5	1.8
Ethiopia	5	1.8
China	4	1.5
Albania	3	1.1
Guinea	3	1.1
Republic of the Congo	3	1.1
Chad	2	.7
Colombia	2	.7
Croatia	2	.7
Lithuania	2	.7
Russia	2	.7
Sudan	2	.7
Angola	1	.4
Ecuador	1	.4
Mali	1	.4
Morocco	1	.4
Myanmar	1	.4
Peru	1	.4
Romania	1	.4
Saudi Arabia	1	.4
Turkey	1	.4
Ukraine	1	.4
Yemen	1	.4
Total	272	100.0

Appendix 2C: ESOL students' first languages

Migrants	Frequency	Percent
Bengali	230	56.2
French	18	4.4
Somali	17	4.2
Arabic	14	3.4
Portuguese	11	2.7
Tamil	11	2.7
Turkish	11	2.7
Polish	10	2.4
Cantonese	9	2.2
Spanish	9	2.2
Vietnamese	9	2.2
Chinese	7	1.7
Lithuanian	6	1.5
Mandarin	5	1.2
Amharic	3	.7
Farsi	3	.7
German	3	.7
Russian	3	.7
English	2	.5
Kurdish	2	.5
Sylheti	2	.5
Ukrainian	2	.5
Urdu	2	.5
Yoruba	2	.5
Zaza	2	.5
Berber	1	.2
Burmese	1	.2
Czech	1	.2
Dari	1	.2
Ewe	1	.2
Gujerati	1	.2
Hindi	1	.2
Japanese	1	.2
Kashmiri	1	.2
Kikuyu	1	.2
Kinyarwanda	1	.2
Lingala	1	.2
Malayalam	1	.2
Slovak	1	.2
Slovenian	1	.2
Tigrinya	1	.2
Total	409	100.0

Refugees	Frequency	Percent
Somali	88	32.4
Dari	22	8.1
French	22	8.1
Tamil	19	7.0
Albanian	15	5.5
Farsi	15	5.5
Vietnamese	14	5.1
Kurdish	12	4.4
Lingala	10	3.7
Arabic	7	2.6
Bengali	7	2.6
Pashtu	6	2.2
Tigrinya	5	1.8
Amharic	4	1.5
Spanish	4	1.5
Lithuanian	2	.7
Mandarin	2	.7
Russian	2	.7
Swahili	2	.7
Afar	1	.4
Brava	1	.4
Burmese	1	.4
Cantonese	1	.4
Chinese	1	.4
Hazaragi	1	.4
Portuguese	1	.4
Pulaar	1	.4
Romanian	1	.4
Serbian	1	.4
Serbo-Croatian	1	.4
Tagbalia	1	.4
Turkish	1	.4
Ukrainian	1	.4
Total	272	100.0

Appendix 2D: Somali respondents' country of citizenship

Statistics

From which country are you?

No	N	Valid	19
		Missing	0
Yes	N	Valid	88
		Missing	0

From which country are you?

Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?			Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
No	Valid	Somalia	11	57.9	57.9	57.9
		Netherlands	3	15.8	15.8	73.7
		Belgium	1	5.3	5.3	78.9
		Denmark	1	5.3	5.3	84.2
		Djibuti	1	5.3	5.3	89.5
		France	1	5.3	5.3	94.7
		Germany	1	5.3	5.3	100.0
		Total	19	100.0	100.0	
Yes	Valid	Somalia	87	98.9	98.9	98.9
		Yemen	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
		Total	88	100.0	100.0	

Appendix 2E: SPSS cross tabulation for age

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Age * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	670	98.4%	11	1.6%	681	100.0%

Age * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Crosstabulation

			Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
			No	Yes	Total
Age	25 or younger	Count	140	82	222
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	34.9%	30.5%	33.1%
		Adjusted Residual	1.2	-1.2	
26-35	Count	Count	150	91	241
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	37.4%	33.8%	36.0%
		Adjusted Residual	.9	-.9	
36-45	Count	Count	80	72	152
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	20.0%	26.8%	22.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.1	2.1	
46+	Count	Count	31	24	55
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	7.7%	8.9%	8.2%
		Adjusted Residual	-.6	.6	
Total	Count	Count	401	269	670
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.101 ^a	3	.165
Likelihood Ratio	5.060	3	.167
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.381	1	.066
N of Valid Cases	670		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 22.08.

Appendix 2F: SPSS cross tabulation for number of years living in the UK before starting ESOL "

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
YearsBefESOL * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	635	93.2%	46	6.8%	681	100.0%

YearsBefESOL * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Crosstabulation

			Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
			No	Yes	Total
YearsBefESOL	0-3	Count	203	156	359
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	51.5%	64.7%	56.5%
		Adjusted Residual	-3.3	3.3	
	4-6	Count	65	52	117
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	16.5%	21.6%	18.4%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.6	1.6	
	7-9	Count	34	16	50
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	8.6%	6.6%	7.9%
		Adjusted Residual	.9	-.9	
	10+	Count	92	17	109
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	23.4%	7.1%	17.2%
		Adjusted Residual	5.3	-5.3	
Total	Count	394	241	635	
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.595 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.747	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	26.026	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	635		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 18.98.

Appendix 2G: SPSS cross tabulation for British citizenship plans

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
If you do not have a British passport, do you? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	563	82.7%	118	17.3%	681	100.0%

If you do not have a British passport, do you? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Crosstabulation

			Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
			No	Yes	Total
If you do not have a British passport, do you?	Already have one	Count	149	37	186
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	40.8%	18.7%	33.0%
		Adjusted Residual	5.3	-5.3	
	Have already applied	Count	14	12	26
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	3.8%	6.1%	4.6%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.2	1.2	
	Want to apply for	Count	126	141	267
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	34.5%	71.2%	47.4%
		Adjusted Residual	-8.3	8.3	
	Do not need one	Count	76	8	84
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	20.8%	4.0%	14.9%
		Adjusted Residual	5.3	-5.3	
	Total	Count	365	198	563
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	81.083 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	86.578	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.782	1	.009
N of Valid Cases	563		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.14.

Appendix 2H: SPSS cross tabulation for educational background

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Schooling experience & stages * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	676	99.3%	5	.7%	681	100.0%

Schooling experience & stages * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?

Crosstabulation

			Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
			No	Yes	Total
Schooling experience & stages	No schooling	Count	25	56	81
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	6.2%	20.7%	12.0%
		Adjusted Residual	-5.7	5.7	
Completed primary school	Completed primary school	Count	87	60	147
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	21.5%	22.1%	21.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-.2	.2	
Completed secondary school	Completed secondary school	Count	183	83	266
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	45.2%	30.6%	39.3%
		Adjusted Residual	3.8	-3.8	
Holds professional qualification	Holds professional qualification	Count	110	72	182
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	27.2%	26.6%	26.9%
		Adjusted Residual	.2	-.2	
Total	Total	Count	405	271	676
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	37.253 ^a	3	.000
Likelihood Ratio	36.947	3	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	15.923	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	676		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 32.47.

Appendix 2I: SPSS cross tabulation for employment in home country

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
EmpStHome * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	572	84.0%	109	16.0%	681	100.0%

EmpStHome * asylnew Crosstabulation

			asylnew		
			Refugees	Migrants	Total
EmpStHome	Employed	Count	116	135	251
		% within asylnew	49.6%	39.9%	43.9%
	Economically inactive	Count	118	203	321
		% within asylnew	50.4%	60.1%	56.1%
Total		Count	234	338	572
		% within asylnew	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.209 ^a	1	.022		
Continuity Correction ^b	4.825	1	.028		
Likelihood Ratio	5.203	1	.023		
Fisher's Exact Test				.026	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.200	1	.023		
N of Valid Cases	572				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 102.68.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Risk Estimate

	Value	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for EmpStHome (Employed / Economically inactive)	1.478	1.056	2.069
For cohort asylnew = Refugees	1.257	1.033	1.529
For cohort asylnew = Migrants	.850	.738	.980
N of Valid Cases	572		

Appendix 2J: SPSS cross tabulation for occupational backgrounds

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
What was your occupation in your home country? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	251	36.9%	430	63.1%	681	100.0%

What was your occupation in your home country? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Crosstabulation

		Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
		No	Yes	Total
What was your occupation in your home country?	Managerial & Professional Occupation	Count 60 44.4%	Count 41 35.3%	Count 101 40.2%
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?
		Adjusted Residual 1.5	Adjusted Residual -1.5	
Intermediate Occupation	Count	31 23.0%	19 16.4%	50 19.9%
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?			
	Adjusted Residual	1.3	-1.3	
Routine & Manual Occupation	Count	36 26.7%	39 33.6%	75 29.9%
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?			
	Adjusted Residual	-1.2	1.2	
Self-employed or Family Business	Count	8 5.9%	17 14.7%	25 10.0%
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?			
	Adjusted Residual	-2.3	2.3	
Total	Count	135	116	251
	% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	8.424 ^a	3	.038
Likelihood Ratio	8.498	3	.037
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.400	1	.011
N of Valid Cases	251		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 11.55.

Appendix 2K: SPSS cross tabulation for past employment in Britain

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
If yes, was this job paid or unpaid? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	593	87.1%	88	12.9%	681	100.0%

If yes, was this job paid or unpaid? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Crosstabulation

			Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
			No	Yes	Total
If yes, was this job paid or unpaid?	Never worked	Count	195	169	364
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	53.0%	75.1%	61.4%
		Adjusted Residual	-5.4	5.4	
Has volunteered	Has volunteered	Count	17	11	28
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	4.6%	4.9%	4.7%
		Adjusted Residual	-.2	.2	
Has worked	Has worked	Count	156	45	201
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	42.4%	20.0%	33.9%
		Adjusted Residual	5.6	-5.6	
Total	Total	Count	368	225	593
		% within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	31.807 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	33.200	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	31.485	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	593		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 10.62.

Appendix 2L: SPSS cross tabulation for current employment

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Do you currently work? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	603	88.5%	78	11.5%	681	100.0%

Do you currently work? * asylnew Crosstabulation

			asylnew		
			Refugees	Migrants	Total
Do you currently work?	No	Count	189	278	467
		% within asylnew	83.6%	73.7%	77.4%
Yes	Count	37	99	136	
	% within asylnew	16.4%	26.3%	22.6%	
Total	Count	226	377	603	
	% within asylnew	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.910 ^a	1	.005	.005	.003
Continuity Correction ^b	7.354	1	.007		
Likelihood Ratio	8.183	1	.004		
Fisher's Exact Test					
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.896	1	.005		
N of Valid Cases	603				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 50.97.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Risk Estimate

	Value	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for Do you currently work? (No / Yes)	1.819	1.195	2.770
For cohort asylnew = Refugees	1.488	1.106	2.000
For cohort asylnew = Migrants	.818	.720	.929
N of Valid Cases	603		

Appendix 2M: SPSS cross tabulation for occupations of employed migrant and refugee students in Britain

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
What is your current occupation? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	122	17.9%	559	82.1%	681	100.0%

**What is your current occupation? * Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?
Crosstabulation**

			Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?		
			No	Yes	Total
What is your current occupation?	Managerial & Professional Occupation	Count % within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Adjusted Residual	14 15.9% 1.5	2 5.9% -1.5	16 13.1%
	Intermediate Occupation	Count % within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Adjusted Residual	12 13.6% .7	3 8.8% -.7	15 12.3%
	Routine & Manual Occupation	Count % within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Adjusted Residual	59 67.0% -2.0	29 85.3% 2.0	88 72.1%
	Self-employed or Family Business	Count % within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK? Adjusted Residual	3 3.4% 1.1	0 .0% -1.1	3 2.5%
	Total	Count % within Did you ask for asylum when you arrived in the UK?	88 100.0%	34 100.0%	122 100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.633 ^a	3	.201
Likelihood Ratio	5.750	3	.124
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.066	1	.151
N of Valid Cases	122		

a. 4 cells (50.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .84.

Appendix 2N: Time in years reaching Britain and temporary stay in countries prior arrival to Britain

Statistics		
Time in years for reaching UK		
N	Valid	207.0000
	Missing	65.0000
Mean		.8506
Median		.0000
Mode		.0000
Range		19.9151
Percentiles	25	.0000
	50	.0000
	75	.5010

		If yes, which country/ countries?			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Albania	1	.4	.4	.4
	Bangladesh	1	.4	.4	.7
	Belgium	1	.4	.4	1.1
	Cambodia	1	.4	.4	1.5
	Congo	1	.4	.4	1.8
	Dubai	1	.4	.4	2.2
	Ethiopia	15	5.5	5.5	7.7
	France, Togo, Benin, Cameroon, Congo Brazaville	1	.4	.4	8.1
	FYROM, Italy	1	.4	.4	8.5
	Gambia	1	.4	.4	8.8
	Germany, Switzerland	1	.4	.4	9.2
	Ghana	1	.4	.4	9.6
	Hong Kong	5	1.8	1.8	11.4
	Italy	3	1.1	1.1	12.5
	Jordan	1	.4	.4	12.9
	Kenya	12	4.4	4.4	17.3
	Kenya, Egypt	1	.4	.4	17.6
	Kenya, Ethiopia, Libya	1	.4	.4	18.0
	Malaysia	1	.4	.4	18.4
	Missing	15	5.5	5.5	23.9
	NA	123	45.2	45.2	69.1
	Not asked	50	18.4	18.4	87.5
	Pakistan	3	1.1	1.1	88.6
	Portugal	1	.4	.4	89.0
	Russia	2	.7	.7	89.7
	Saudi Arabia	3	1.1	1.1	90.8
	Sudan	2	.7	.7	91.5
	Syria	2	.7	.7	92.3
	Togo	1	.4	.4	92.6
	Travelling	16	5.9	5.9	98.5
	Turkey	1	.4	.4	98.9
	UAE, Dubai	1	.4	.4	99.3
	Uganda	1	.4	.4	99.6
	Ukraine, Russia	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	272	100.0	100.0	



Home Office

Beverley Hughes MP
MINISTER OF STATE
50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AF

29 October 2003

Dear Colleague

ONE-OFF EXERCISE TO ALLOW FAMILIES WHO HAVE BEEN HERE FOR AT LEAST THREE YEARS TO STAY

The Home Secretary announced last Friday that a number of families, expected to be up to 15,000, will be allowed to stay in the UK indefinitely. These are families who entered the United Kingdom before the present Government's first changes to the law on asylum and therefore to whom the previous Conservative Government's system still pertains. Removal under this old system is very difficult and as these families with children will already have been here some years, it is sensible to regularise their position before we continue with a further tranche of essential reforms in our new system. This also reflects the views of many Members of Parliament on all sides who have made representations to me in support of such families on compassionate grounds.

I am sure that many of you will have constituents who are affected by this decision, or believe they may be, and that as a result you may have been contacted about this exercise. I thought it would be helpful to give you more details about how this exercise will be carried out and who will qualify.

We will be writing to families who according to our records appear to qualify for the exercise. We have already identified a pool of cases which *could* qualify. There are, however, as announced on Friday, certain checks that will be made on these cases before they can move to the next stage of the process, which is for a questionnaire to sent out to the family. Once the questionnaire has been returned the case will be decided based on the evidence available. We expect to complete consideration of the bulk of the cases within six months.

We will write to all those families identified, who it appears could qualify. It is important that you advise your constituents that they should not apply - they should wait to be contacted. Any representations received will not be considered until the pool has been sifted, by which time the family should already have been identified and contacted. A substantial amount of correspondence could delay the exercise as well as delaying the consideration of individual cases. As a matter of fairness we will not be able to expedite the consideration of any particular case, other than in truly exceptional and compelling circumstances, of which we do not expect any more than a very small handful.

In general, families will qualify where:

- The applicant applied for asylum before 2 October 2000; and
- The applicant has at present at least one dependant in UK currently aged under 18: who has been living in UK since 2 October 2000.

There will be exclusions where principal applicants or any of their dependants:

- have a criminal conviction,
- have or have had an anti-social behaviour order or sex offender order,
- have made (or attempted to make) an application for asylum in the UK in more than one identity,
- should have their asylum claim considered by another country (i.e. they are the subject of a possible third country removal),
- present a risk to security; or
- if they fall into the scope of article 1F of the refugee convention (at annex A) or whose presence in the UK is otherwise not conducive to the public good.

Families who meet the inclusion criteria listed above, and are not within any of the exclusion criteria, will be eligible for the concession whether the applicant has yet to receive a decision on their asylum claim, is awaiting an appeal hearing or is a failed asylum seeker who has exhausted their appeal rights. The concession does not cover families who have been granted any form of leave, nor does it cover families who applied on or after 2 October 2000.

I hope this explains the terms of the exercise and helps you to advise claimants in your constituency.

Lowe,
Beverley
BEVERLEY HUGHES

1806h

Appendix 3A:

SPSS cross tabulation for refugees' marital status and gender

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Marital status * Gender of participants	272	100.0%	0	.0%	272	100.0%

Marital status * Gender of participants Crosstabulation

			Gender of participants		
			Male	Female	Total
Marital status	Single	Count	40	56	96
		% within Gender of participants	43.5%	31.1%	35.3%
		Adjusted Residual	2.0	-2.0	
	Married	Count	43	99	142
		% within Gender of participants	46.7%	55.0%	52.2%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.3	1.3	
	Divorced	Count	2	13	15
		% within Gender of participants	2.2%	7.2%	5.5%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.7	1.7	
	Widowed	Count	1	6	7
		% within Gender of participants	1.1%	3.3%	2.6%
		Adjusted Residual	-1.1	1.1	
	Engaged	Count	2	1	3
		% within Gender of participants	2.2%	.6%	1.1%
		Adjusted Residual	1.2	-1.2	
	Cohabiting	Count	1	1	2
		% within Gender of participants	1.1%	.6%	.7%
		Adjusted Residual	.5	-.5	
	Separated	Count	3	4	7
		% within Gender of participants	3.3%	2.2%	2.6%
		Adjusted Residual	.5	-.5	
Total		Count	92	180	272
		% within Gender of participants	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.376 ^a	6	.153
Likelihood Ratio	9.845	6	.131
Linear-by-Linear Association	.420	1	.517
N of Valid Cases	272		

a. 8 cells (57.1%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .68.

Appendix 3B: SPSS cross tabulation for refugees' friends in class and college

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Do you have friends in the college? * Do you have friends in your class?	197	96.6%	7	3.4%	204	100.0%

Do you have friends in the college? * Do you have friends in your class? Crosstabulation

		Do you have friends in your class?		
		No	Yes	Total
Do you have No friends in the college?	Count	16	22	38
	% within Do you have friends in your class?	64.0%	12.8%	19.3%
	Adjusted Residual	6.1	-6.1	
Yes	Count	9	150	159
	% within Do you have friends in your class?	36.0%	87.2%	80.7%
	Adjusted Residual	-6.1	6.1	
Total	Count	25	172	197
	% within Do you have friends in your class?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.766 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	33.551	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	29.002	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	36.580	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	197				

a. 1 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 4.82.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Risk Estimate

	Value	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for Do you have friends in the college? (No / Yes)	12.121	4.777	30.758
For cohort Do you have friends in your class? = No	7.439	3.563	15.528
For cohort Do you have friends in your class? = Yes	.614	.467	.807
N of Valid Cases	197		

Appendix 3C: SPSS frequency table, refugees finding out about ESOL courses

Statistics

How did you learn about ESOL classes?

N	Valid	146
	Missing	126

How did you learn about ESOL classes?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Friend	78	28.7	53.4	53.4
	Family	13	4.8	8.9	62.3
	Myself	10	3.7	6.8	69.2
	College	7	2.6	4.8	74.0
	Relative	7	2.6	4.8	78.8
	Advert	5	1.8	3.4	82.2
	Teacher	5	1.8	3.4	85.6
	Community Centre	4	1.5	2.7	88.4
	Partner	3	1.1	2.1	90.4
	Hostel	2	.7	1.4	91.8
	Internet	2	.7	1.4	93.2
	Guardian	1	.4	.7	93.8
	Job Centre	1	.4	.7	94.5
	Leaflet	1	.4	.7	95.2
	MP	1	.4	.7	95.9
	Neighbour	1	.4	.7	96.6
	Outreach Centre	1	.4	.7	97.3
	Prospect	1	.4	.7	97.9
	School	1	.4	.7	98.6
	Solicitor	1	.4	.7	99.3
	Student	1	.4	.7	100.0
	Total	146	53.7	100.0	
Missing	Missing	95	34.9		
	Not asked	31	11.4		
	Total	126	46.3		
Total		272	100.0		

Appendix 3D: SPSS cross tabulation for gender and friends in class

Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Gender of participants * Do you have friends in your class?	197	96.6%	7	3.4%	204	100.0%

Crosstab

			Do you have friends in your class?		
			No	Yes	Total
Gender	Male	Count	14	52	66
		% within Do you have friends in your class?	56.0%	30.2%	33.5%
		Adjusted Residual	2.6	-2.6	
Female	Count	Count	11	120	131
		% within Do you have friends in your class?	44.0%	69.8%	66.5%
		Adjusted Residual	-2.6	2.6	
Total	Count	Count	25	172	197
		% within Do you have friends in your class?	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.505 ^a	1	.011		
Continuity Correction ^b	5.400	1	.020		
Likelihood Ratio	6.139	1	.013		
Fisher's Exact Test				.021	.012
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.472	1	.011		
N of Valid Cases	197				

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 8.38.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Risk Estimate

	Value	95% Confidence Interval	
		Lower	Upper
Odds Ratio for Gender of participants (Male / Female)	2.937	1.250	6.900
For cohort Do you have friends in your class? = No	2.526	1.215	5.253
For cohort Do you have friends in your class? = Yes	.860	.751	.985
N of Valid Cases	197		