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Difference and encounter:

Psychosocial support and secondary education for young migrants and refugees in the UK

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Social Work

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis has not been and will not be submitted in whole or in part to another University for the award of any other degree.

Emma Soye

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Thesis summary

‘RefugeesWellSchool’ (RWS) is an EU-funded project which aims to improve migrant and refugee wellbeing through school-based psychosocial support in six European countries. It includes interventions in two UK secondary schools, in East London and Brighton & Hove. The RWS project operates within an ‘integrationist’ framework which assumes that ethnonational differences are of primary importance in the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees. This thesis critically examines this assumption through comparative ethnographic research on the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees in the two UK schools. It considers the differences that ‘make a difference’ (Berg et al., 2019) to young people and explores the influence of secondary education and psychosocial support on how they relate to each other. The thesis uses Martin Buber’s (1937) ‘I-It’ and ‘I-Thou’ concepts to frame the interplay of social bonding (the making of ‘difference’) and bridging (moments of ‘encounter’) within and across multiple social differences at both schools. In doing so it contributes new insights to the ‘integration’ and ‘conviviality’ literature, challenging reductive ethnonational understandings of the rich complexity of young people’s peer relationships. The research took the form of 38 interviews with young people, school staff, parents, and local community workers; 16 focus groups with students, intervention facilitators, and school staff; and participant observation in both schools over a 14-month period.

The findings show that peer relationships at ‘Bradbrook School’ in East London were characterised by relative ease with ethnic, religious, and language diversity. Experiences of precarity, however, fostered resentment among long-established ethnic minorities towards newcomers, and also contributed to neighbourhood violence in the form of ‘postcode wars’. Ethnicity, religion, and language were more divisive in peer relationships at ‘Seaview School’ in Brighton & Hove, where economic deprivation also influenced how young people related to each other. The thesis argues that Bradbrook and Seaview students used different forms of humour and drew on societal, familial, and personal memories to reproduce social boundaries in their peer relationships, as well as to subvert and transgress cultural categories in spontaneous moments of non-normative ‘encounter’. It also considers how support from the schools and the RWS project influenced young people’s capacity for

encounter, illustrating how the type and amount of English language support significantly shaped newcomers' peer interactions. Efforts by the schools and the RWS project to celebrate young people's cultural backgrounds and to encourage recognition of their migration experiences sometimes had unintended reifying effects. Pastoral support was found to be critical in the context of precarity. The thesis draws on Buber's (1947) work on education to explore how the two schools and the RWS project promoted 'dialogue' with young people. The findings highlight the importance of vulnerability or 'presence' in dialogical practice and expose the adverse effects of national and school-level education policies on the capacity of teachers to be 'present' and to stimulate critical discussion in the classroom. They indicate that psychosocial support projects should carefully engage with social and political nuances in order to secure young people's trust and to enhance, rather than institutionalise, the complex and sophisticated ways in which they negotiate their multiple differences on an everyday basis.

Commonly used acronyms

BAME	Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
EAL	English as an Additional Language
EMAG	Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant
ESOL	English for Speakers of Other Languages
FG	Focus Group
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
LA	Local Authority
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHS	National Health Service
NRPF	No Recourse to Public Funds
Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PIER	Peer Integration and Enhancement Resource
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
PSHE Education	Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education
RSHE	Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education
RWS	RefugeesWellSchool
SEN	Special Educational Needs
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Child/Children

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You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets. – James
Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*

‘I’m not a migrant!’ – Kingsley, Bradbrook School

1. Introduction

1.1. Introduction

‘RefugeesWellSchool’ (RWS) is an EU-funded project which aims to improve migrant and refugee wellbeing through school-based psychosocial support in six European countries. It includes interventions in two UK secondary schools, one in East London and the other in Brighton & Hove. The RWS project operates within an ‘integrationist’ framework which assumes that ethnonational differences are of primary importance in the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees. This thesis critically examines this assumption through comparative ethnographic research on the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees in the two UK schools. Building on Martin Buber’s (1937) ‘I-It’ and ‘I-Thou’ framework, it considers the differences that matter in young people’s peer relationships and how they bond and bridge within and across multiple social identities. It also explores the influence of secondary education and psychosocial support on how young people relate to each other. This short introductory chapter provides background information on the context of the RWS project and presents the rationale for the research. It outlines the research framework and also gives a brief overview of the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Background and rationale

Migration to Europe and the UK has increased in recent years, including movement from one country to another, as well as to several successive destinations (Van Mol and de Valk, 2016). The concomitant increase in the number of adolescent migrants and refugees has led to academic interest in their psychosocial wellbeing and the protective role of education and psychosocial support. It has been suggested that traumatic experiences in the home country or during experiences of flight may disrupt psychosocial functioning in adolescents (Bean et al., 2007; Derluyn et al., 2009). Studies also increasingly recognise the impact on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of post-migration stressors, including poverty, isolation, racism, and uncertain migration status (Watters, 2001; Rutter, 2006; Miller and Rasmussen, 2010; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Silove, 2013; Jakobsen et al., 2017).

Schools are understood to be important sites for adaptation during the resettlement process, and have been shown to promote the mental and psychosocial wellbeing of

migrant and refugee youth (Kia-Keating and Ellis, 2007; Schachner et al., 2018; Borsch et al., 2019). In countries such as the UK, where newcomers attend mainstream schools, secondary schools are the main point of contact between migrant and refugee adolescents and the host society (Rousseau et al., 2007). Schools also provide a non-stigmatising space for the implementation of mental health and psychosocial support programmes for migrant and refugee youth (Kataoka et al., 2003; Rousseau and Guzder, 2008; Fazel et al., 2009, 2016; Ellis et al., 2010, 2011; Häggström et al., 2020; Durbeej et al., 2021). There is, however, still very little evidence on the effectiveness of school-based interventions in supporting the mental health and psychosocial wellbeing of migrant and refugee adolescents (Tyrer and Fazel, 2014; Fazel and Betancourt, 2018).

The RWS project aims to contribute to the evidence base on the role of school-based interventions in promoting the mental wellbeing and ‘integration’ of migrant and refugee adolescents. The six participating countries are Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and the UK. The RWS project involved the implementation and evaluation of a total of five school-based interventions: the ‘Welcome to School’ initiative; the ‘Classroom Drama’ workshop; In-Service Teacher Training (INSETT); In-Service Teacher Training with Teaching Recovery Techniques (INSETT + TRT); and the ‘Peer Integration and Enhancement Resource’ (PIER).¹ The target demographic varied for each intervention. The Welcome to School initiative is specifically for adolescents with experiences of migration and displacement, while the Classroom Drama workshop and PIER intervention involve young people from mixed migration backgrounds. INSETT is targeted at teachers of migrant and refugee students who attend introductory or support classes. INSETT and TRT are also combined to provide layered support to both adolescents and teachers.

Each intervention was implemented in at least two of the six countries participating in the RWS project. In the UK, the Classroom Drama workshop was implemented in Bradbrook School in East London, and the PIER intervention was conducted in Seaview School in Brighton & Hove (pseudonyms are used for both schools throughout the thesis). Both the

¹ The ‘PIER’ intervention was designed by Professor Charles Watters and I, who make up the UK team on the project.

Classroom Drama workshop and the PIER intervention were conducted with adolescents from mixed migration backgrounds, including newcomers, ethnic minorities, and White British students. The interventions were evaluated using questionnaires and focus groups. These were conducted with adolescents and teachers prior to and following the interventions. The 'baseline' questionnaires and focus groups were used to assess young people's wellbeing and to evaluate the influence of contextual factors such as school and family. The 'endline' questionnaires and focus groups evaluated the effectiveness of the interventions in promoting young people's wellbeing, including the impact on resilience, social support, and mental health problems, including post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

At Bradbrook School, drama therapists led weekly Classroom Drama sessions with four groups of Year 8 and Year 9 students in mid-2019. The nine-week Classroom Drama programme aims to enhance positive interethnic relationships by engaging young people in theatrical expression relating to themes of migration, exclusion, pluriform identities, and cultural adaptation in host societies. The intervention is based on the principles of Playback Theatre (Fox, 2003) and Forum Theatre (Boal, 1996). Playback Theatre is a form of improvisational theatre in which group members tell stories from their lives and watch them being enacted, while Forum Theatre aims to create a social space for the voices of 'the oppressed' (Freire, 1970) by including the audience as active participants in the theatrical process. Studies have found that the Classroom Drama workshop decreases psychosocial impairment in first-generation migrant and refugee adolescents (Rousseau et al., 2007, 2014).

In early 2020, I facilitated the PIER intervention at Seaview School with four groups of Year 8 students. The eight-week PIER intervention aims to enhance peer interactions between 'host' society adolescents and migrant and refugee adolescents. The goal is to develop empathy and understanding for migrants and refugees by exploring themes such as migrant and refugee journeys, reasons for displacement, the asylum-seeking process, and social challenges and opportunities in the host country. The programme also encourages young people from both migrant and host backgrounds to reflect on their diverse and multiple identities and to consider their relationships with each other. Most sessions use or adapt material produced by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including Amnesty

International, Teaching Tolerance, PositiveNegatives, and the British Red Cross. Activities include reading stories, watching and discussing videos and animations, role plays, and collaborative group work.

The focus of the RWS project on migrant and refugee 'integration' reflects a wider academic and policy discourse which 'tends to see ethnic and religious diversity as a challenge and portrays the enhancement of positive relationships between people of different backgrounds as one of the solutions' (Wessendorf, 2014c:18). This thesis aims to critically examine this assumption through empirical research on the 'differences that make a difference' (Berg et al., 2019:2723) to young people at Bradbrook and Seaview schools. Qualitative research can reveal how young people negotiate multiple social categories in their peer relationships: working in terms of categories helps to avoid static and essentialised thinking about identity or culture as something we 'have' rather than something that is continuously made and re-made (Brubaker, 2002; Carter and Fenton, 2010). Ethnographic study can provide insight into how young people bond and bridge within and across these categories in their everyday peer relationships.

Ethnographic research can also demonstrate the complex ways in which young people's peer relationships are impacted by contextual factors at the structural, interpersonal, and institutional levels, including the policies and practices of education and psychosocial support. There is a significant need for increased understanding of the impact of education and psychosocial support in light of suggestions that policies and programmes for migrant and refugee children often impose narratives that are far removed from their own experiences and priorities (Watters, 2008). In particular, very little ethnographic research has previously been conducted on how young migrants as well as their 'host' peers respond to and interact with psychosocial support projects in western contexts. The thesis therefore aims to explore, from an ethnographic perspective, how the policies and practices of the two schools and of the RWS project shaped young people's peer relationships at Bradbrook and Seaview. The research is purely qualitative and does not make use of the quantitative data that was collected for the RWS project.

1.3. Conceptual framework

Martin Buber was a Jewish philosopher who settled in Jerusalem after fleeing Nazi Germany in 1938. The thesis uses Buber's 'I-It' and 'I-Thou' concepts to frame the interplay of social bonding (the making of 'difference') and bridging (moments of 'encounter') within, and across, multiple social differences at both schools. In his best-known work, *I and Thou*, Buber (1937:4) asserts an inherently relational view of human life: 'There is no I taken in itself, but only the I of the primary word I-Thou and the I of the primary word I-It'.²

According to Buber, the 'I-It' is a subject-object relation that involves categorising, observing, and 'experiencing' the other for the purposes of self-definition. In contrast, the 'I-Thou' relation is a subject-subject encounter with no aim apart from that of 'being with' the other for their own sake. Buber emphasises that the I-It and I-Thou relation are equally necessary. The I-It relation is ontologically important because it creates identities and roles, which provide purpose and meaning (DeLue, 2006; Appiah, 2018). However, the intersubjective nature of the I-Thou encounter develops real 'personhood' and has a destabilising effect on cultural categories by momentarily fulfilling our longing for direct and unmediated relation with the other.

As a direct and unmediated relation, the I-Thou encounter cannot be engineered. However, by supporting young people in different ways, schools and school-based interventions can provide them with the *tools* for encounter. Studies have cautioned that language, cultural, and mental health support for young migrants and refugees must not preclude opportunities for encounter with their peers by reifying their complex identities (Watters, 2001; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017). Moreover, Buber (1947) suggests that it is the primary role of the teacher to model encounter for their students by engaging them in 'dialogue'. He emphasises that educators must treat the student as an equal subject and be wholly 'present' in dialogue. Buber's concept of dialogue has strong parallels with the critical pedagogy of Freire (1970) and hooks (1994), and also resonates with more recent work on the role of 'wonder' in education (Schinkel, 2020). Freire and hooks centralise the transgressive and transformative aspects of dialogical education, while Schinkel suggests

² *I and Thou* was originally published in German in 1923; the 1937 English version is cited here and throughout the thesis.

that ‘wonder’ defamiliarizes the world and helps young people to see it anew. Others have pointed to the role of psychosocial support interventions in encouraging Freirean dialogue on complex social issues (Wessells, 2008).

1.4. Research questions and methodology

The research questions are as follows:

1. What differences matter in the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees, and how do young people bond along, and bridge across, these differences?
2. How do secondary education and psychosocial support influence young people’s peer relationships by providing support for their encounter and promoting dialogue?

The thesis explores these questions through ethnographic research at Bradbrook and Seaview schools, taking account of how the dynamics of diversity play out differently in different contexts. Participation observation was conducted over a 14-month period, between January 2019 and March 2020. A total of 38 interviews were conducted with young people, school staff, parents, and local community workers. The thesis also draws on the 16 focus groups with students, intervention facilitators, and school staff that were conducted as part of the RWS project in the UK.

1.5. Thesis structure

The thesis has eight chapters. A short chapter on context follows this introductory chapter, providing a brief history of UK immigration and secondary education policies, and detailing salient demographic information on the local settings of Bradbrook and Seaview schools. The third chapter reviews the literature on the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees in the global North, using Buber’s I-It and I-Thou model to frame scholarship in this area. The methodology chapter sets out the research approach and reflects on epistemological, practical, and ethical issues encountered during the research process. The fifth and sixth chapters contain the research findings: Chapter 5 gives an account of young people’s peer relationships at Bradbrook and Seaview schools, while Chapter 6 explores the influence of education and psychosocial support on their peer relationships. The research

findings are then discussed in Chapter 7. The eighth, concluding chapter considers the implications of the findings for theory, research, and practice.

1.6. Conclusion

The primary aim of this doctoral research is to challenge ethnonational understandings of 'integration' by examining the social differences which matter to young migrants and refugees and how they negotiate these differences in their everyday peer relationships. The research also explores the contextual factors influencing these relational processes, with a particular focus on the policies and practices of secondary education and psychosocial support. The next chapter will examine the research context.

2. Context

2.1. Introduction

Migration policies and politics shape how immigration is approached in the literature (Nowicka et al., 2019); how and why research is conducted (Schinkel, 2019); and, significantly, how young people relate to each other in the context of migration (Watters, 2008). This chapter aims to establish a contextually sensitive and politically informed basis for the subsequent literature review, methodology, and findings chapters. The chapter firstly examines national policies in relation to immigration to the UK from outside and inside the European Union (EU). It then gives an overview of British secondary education, detailing provision for newcomers, the curriculum, and wellbeing policies and practices. Lastly it describes the demographic makeup of the student population at both intervention schools in the context of their local landscapes. The chapter draws on a range of data, including academic literature, policy documents, newspaper articles, census data, and my interviews with staff from the two schools and local community organisations. Although the most up-to-date data is cited where possible, the shifting nature of the UK's migration debate confounds final or even temporary conclusions (Back and Sinha, 2018). The chapter is selective in its attention to specific policies and historical and contemporary realities, and only the information most relevant to the research at hand is included. With the exception of two focus groups at Seaview, the research was conducted before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020; the effects of the pandemic are therefore not covered.

2.2. UK immigration

This section gives a brief account of UK immigration policies from the 1950s onwards, which 'are best understood within the regional and national contexts in which they are formed' (Dempster and Hargrave, 2017:9). The section firstly examines immigration to the UK from outside the EU before considering immigration from within the EU.

2.2.1. Non-EU immigration

Between the 1950s and 1980s, migration to the UK was mostly characterised by the movement of large numbers of people from the British Commonwealth (Wessendorf, 2020). Commonwealth citizens were encouraged to come to the UK by the British government to

contribute to post-war economic recovery; the British Nationality Act of 1948 gave all Commonwealth citizens free entry into Britain. From 1948-1953, around two thousand West Indians migrated to Britain on the SS Ormonde, Almanzora, and Empire Windrush (Paul, 1997). The arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948 was recorded by Pathé and journalists, and marked the symbolic beginning of large-scale post-war immigration to the UK (Olusoga, 2019). However, neither Prime Minister Clement Attlee nor the administration welcomed the arrival of Black immigrants – Attlee reportedly sought some pretext to prevent the Windrush from leaving Jamaica (Paul, 1997; Olusoga, 2018). In 1968, the Commonwealth Immigrants Act was hurriedly introduced by Harold Wilson's Labour government amid concerns that up to 200,000 Kenyan Asians fleeing Kenya's 'Africanization' policy would take up their right to reside in the UK. In April of that year, Enoch Powell gave his infamous 'Rivers of blood' speech to the Birmingham Conservative Association, which pitted the White working class – 'the decent, ordinary Englishman' – against the racialised immigrant. Although delivered locally, Powell's speech captured broader opposition to 'coloured' immigration from many working-class people in Britain at the time (Paul, 1997; Olusoga, 2018). Within the British labour market, West Indians, Indians, and Pakistanis were 'almost invariably rejected as potential employees for all but the most menial work. To the majority of employers, a black or brown skin signified a less capable, poorly educated individual' (Paul, 1997:120). This prompted anti-racist groups in the 1960s to campaign for legislation to counter discrimination in employment and housing, culminating in the 1965 Race Relations Act and subsequent Acts in 1968, 1976, and 2000. The 1971 Immigration Act aimed to tighten controls, clarify the rules of the 1968 Act, and unify the law for foreign and Commonwealth nationals. Since the 1971 Act, successive governments have passed more than a dozen Immigration and Nationality laws. These laws have been progressively more exclusionary, reflecting growing public and political unease around the impact of migration from the British Empire (Paul, 1997; Tames, 1997; Mayblin et al., 2019).

After a surge in asylum applications in the 1980s there was a 'sharp policy backlash' which involved tightening access to UK territory, toughening refugee status procedures, and making the living conditions for asylum seekers less palatable (Hatton, 2009:183). The backlash included specific 'policies of deterrence' (Silove et al., 2000) which remain in effect today. The 'dispersal' policy, introduced in 1999, sought to move asylum seekers away from

London and southeast England by providing them with accommodation in poorer parts of the UK, including Glasgow, Northern England, and Wales. Asylum seekers were (and remain) excluded from the labour market, and free English language lessons for adult asylum seekers were curtailed in 2007. Morrice (2012:256) observes that the net result of the dispersal scheme, labour market exclusion, and exclusion from English language classes and other publicly funded education programmes has been 'to promote the perception of those seeking asylum as a burden on the community rather than as an asset or potential resource'. The perception of asylum seekers as a burden on the community is compounded by the right-wing media, which often uses dehumanising language and portrays asylum seekers and refugees as potential threats to culture, welfare, security, and the health system (Hatton, 2009; Dempster and Hargrave, 2017; Rutter and Carter, 2018). Following the terrorist attacks in New York, Madrid, and London in the early 2000s, the UK government and media framed international immigration as a security risk and there was a concomitant increase in Islamophobic public attitudes (Field, 2007; Fekete, 2009; Warsi, 2017; Qurashi, 2018). In 2012 the 'hostile environment' policy was introduced and was subsequently enshrined in law through the 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts. Hostile environment measures restrict access to basic services for non-EU citizens and require landlords, charities, community interest companies, banks, and the National Health Service (NHS) to carry out ID checks. Achiume (2019:19) suggests that the overall effect of the hostile environment policy has been to create racialised exclusion towards people of colour in the UK because 'public and private actors continue to deploy race and ethnicity as proxies for regular immigration status'.

2.2.2. EU immigration

In contrast to increasingly restrictive policies on immigration from outside the EU, controls on immigration from within the EU were gradually loosened from the 1970s onwards. The UK entered the European Economic Community (EEC) in January 1973; membership of the EEC (now the EU) allowed freedom of movement for workers within member states. In 2004, the New Labour government granted unfettered access from the ten newly acceded EU states, otherwise known as the A8 decision. This move was part of the government's wider 'managed migration' regime, which was based on economic utilitarian arguments (Consterdine, 2020:2). Immigration to the UK from Eastern Europe increased dramatically

following the A8 decision: in the three years between 2004 and 2007, 683,000 new workers arrived in the UK, 70% of whom came from Poland. Immigration restrictions were later placed on Romanian and Bulgarian citizens when Bulgaria and Romania acceded to the EU in 2007. In 2016, a majority (52% to 48%) of Britons voted to leave the EU, and the UK left the EU in January 2021 after an extended transition period. Research into the reasons for voting to leave the EU has highlighted scepticism of the EU project and of globalisation more generally (Curtice, 2017; Olivas-Osuna et al., 2019). The 'Brexit' vote reflects the concerns of more 'authoritarian' and socially conservative voters about the social consequences of EU membership, most notably in relation to immigration (Curtice, 2017; Carl et al., 2019; Consterdine, 2020). Olivas-Osuna et al. (2019) emphasise that the 'Leave' vote has been more associated with rapid pace of demographic change than with high levels of immigration per se. This echoes Kauffman's (2017) finding that rapid ethnic change, rather than high levels of immigration, increases opposition to immigration and support for the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) among White Britons. Since the referendum there has been a gradual increase in non-EU net immigration to the UK while EU net immigration has decreased (ONS, 2020). A new points-based immigration system was implemented in January 2021. EU and non-EU citizens are treated equally under the new system, which puts emphasis on 'skilled' workers. In March 2021 the government introduced a two-tier system in its 'New plan for Immigration', which places strong focus on combatting 'irregular migration'.

2.3. British secondary education

The chapter has so far examined UK policies in relation to immigration from outside and inside the EU. It now considers the context of secondary education in the UK, with specific focus on England, where the thesis research was conducted. In England, students normally attend secondary school for five years (from Year 7 to Year 11). This section looks at specific provision in secondary education for newcomers from the 1990s to the present day. It then explores changes to the national curriculum against the backdrop of post-immigration policies. It also describes contemporary debates around the role of race and ethnicity in shaping educational outcomes. Finally, the section examines 'wellbeing' policies in

secondary education and considers how, in practice, the current focus on attainment and outcomes can detract from teacher and student wellbeing alike.

2.3.1. Newcomer provision

Education policy has historically been one of the most devolved areas within UK government. Responsibility for young people's education, including newcomer education, traditionally falls on local authorities (LAs) (Arnot and Pinson, 2005; Watters, 2008; Rutter, 2015). In 1990, LAs in the UK began to set up teams of teachers to support refugee children in schools, and in some cases to develop school and local government policies (Rutter, 2015). LA practices and approaches varied widely, particularly in relation to data monitoring, policy development, and modes and types of support (Arnot and Pinson, 2005; Watters, 2008; Pinson et al., 2010; Rutter, 2015). Like LAs, individual schools had highly divergent approaches to supporting asylum-seeker and refugee children (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). Guidance from central government on how to support asylum-seeking and refugee children was only introduced in 2004 (DfES, 2004a). Today, newcomer education remains largely decentralised: Ofsted's School Inspection Handbook makes no mention of refugees or asylum seekers (McIntyre and Hall, 2018), and there are no specific markers for asylum seekers and refugees in the school census (Brooks, 2017 in *ibid.*:6). Nor does any government department publish statistics on where newly arrived children are living and going to school, quality of provision, or outcomes (McIntyre and Hall, 2018:6). In 1999, the 'Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant' (EMAG) replaced the Home Office 'Section 11' funding (introduced in 1966) for English language teaching. The new grant was devolved to schools in LA areas and was intended 'to narrow achievement gaps for pupils from those minority ethnic groups who are at risk of underachieving and to meet particular needs of bilingual pupils' (DfES, 2004b:2).

The proportion of students from minority ethnic origins and with English as an Additional Language (EAL) has risen steadily in recent years. 31.3% of students in state-funded secondary schools in England are of minority ethnic origin and 16.9% have EAL (DfE, 2019b). In spite of the increase in EAL students, English language support for EAL students in the UK has decreased over time (NALDIC, 2015b; Rutter, 2015). In 2011, in the face of significant opposition, the EMAG was mainstreamed into the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) and was

no longer ring-fenced (NALDIC, 2015a; Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018). Decisions to include EAL provision in local funding formulae are now made by LAs (NALDIC, 2015b). The Ethnic Minority Achievement Service is an LA service that currently supports minority ethnic and EAL students in schools. However, EAL students have no entitlement to statutory EAL teaching and learning, nor is there a defined EAL curriculum. Lack of English language support 'remains a significant cause of educational under-achievement, as many young migrants do not develop sufficient academic literacy to pass public examinations' (Rutter, 2015:135). Refugee families are often dispersed to areas with little or no history of assisting refugees, and where the financial impact on LAs and schools has not been carefully considered (Arnot and Pinson, 2005). Delays in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) are a specific barrier to access to education for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC) (Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018).³

2.3.2. The curriculum

An increasingly 'multiculturalist' agenda began to replace assimilationist strategies in post-immigration policy from the 1960s onwards (Rutter, 2015). Councils in areas like Bradford and Birmingham set up race equality action plans and racial monitoring, and there was a shift in focus from combatting discrimination towards celebrating culture and identity (Mirza, 2010). Cultural categories received official sanction when financial resources and political power were channelled through ethnically-based organisations (Modood, 2013; Malik, 2015). Multicultural education explicitly recognised cultural diversity and sought to improve children's English skills, alongside maintenance of their home language and culture. Multicultural education advisers were appointed by LAs, and multi-faith religious education was also introduced (Rutter, 2015). From the 1970s-80s, advocacy groups, schools, and LAs developed policies which aimed to combat racism and promote equality of opportunity (ibid.). However, it was argued that these 'anti-racist' practices sometimes invoked essentialist notions of 'race' and racism with the effect of increasing rather than easing interethnic tensions (Macdonald et al., 1989 and Hewitt, 1996, both in ibid.:132). The focus on clothing, cuisine, and music in multicultural curricula was derided as '3S multiculturalism'

³ The NTS was introduced in 2016 and mandates that UASC who arrive in a LA with high numbers of UASC should be relocated to another LA (DfE, 2018a).

or 'saris, samosas and steel drums' (Muchowiecka, 2013). Broader multicultural policies were also criticised by British politicians and public intellectuals for overemphasising cultural 'difference' at the cost of promoting social cohesion (Hall, 1991; Sen, 2006; Berg and Sigona, 2013; Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2009). Today, multiculturalism is 'seen by many as having fostered communal segregation and mutual incomprehension, as well as having contributed to the undermining of the rights of individuals' (Council of Europe, 2008:19).

The political and academic 'backlash' to multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2009) led to a new emphasis in British post-immigration policy on promoting shared values and social cohesion. In 2002, the government published a White Paper titled 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain'. It aimed to manage migration and to replace multicultural policy with a communitarian agenda that privileged social cohesion and 'integration'. Integration was defined by the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE) as dynamic, two-way, long term, and multi-dimensional (ECRE, 2002:4). However, in practice the concept has often been used to encourage migrant 'assimilation' into 'mainstream' British culture (Cheong et al., 2007; Watters, 2008; Grzymala-Kazlowska, 2018). This has led to confusion and misunderstanding among the British public about what 'integration' actually means, with many people equating the concept with assimilation (ETHNOS, 2006). The revision of multiculturalist policies at national level also included emphasis on the articulation of and allegiance of migrant populations to 'British values' (Watters, 2011:320). In 2014, schools were told that they must have a clear strategy for embedding these values and show how their work with pupils has been effective in doing so: 'Schools should promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs' (DfE, 2014a:5). The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) assesses 'British values' through the curriculum, spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) provision, and citizenship education (DfE, 2014b). Notably, 'British values' were first set out in the government's 2011 'Prevent' strategy, which forms part of an overall counterterrorism approach ('CONTEST'). Tomlinson (2014:10) suggests that requiring schools to 'actively promote' fundamental British values in effect places them 'in the front line of the ideological and religious wars of the 21st century'. Banulescu-Bogdan and Benton

(2017:13) also note criticisms that rather than encouraging ‘all pupils to develop values’, the Prevent programme has ‘become a vehicle for stigmatising Muslim minorities’.

Although integration remains the dominant policy concept in Europe today (Morawska, 2017), the merits of an ‘intercultural’ approach have also been suggested (Council of Europe, 2008; Meer and Modood, 2012). Rather than treat ‘cultures’ as separate and monolithic, interculturalist policies emphasise their interdependence and dialogue (Rattansi, 2011). There has been a shift in European education towards advocacy for teaching intercultural competences and skills (Parekh, 2000; Banks and Banks, 2009; Barrett, 2013). Stokke and Lybæk (2018:73) highlight that ‘developing intercultural competence has become a priority area in education, linked to education for democratic citizenship and human rights awareness’. There has also been a move towards a more multidimensional, individualist view of integration in British post-immigration policy. In 2018, the Greater London Authority (GLA) published a social integration strategy that stated:

Our approach needs to go much further than simply integration between different nationalities, ethnic groups or faiths. It must also take account of other important aspects such as age, social class, employment status, sexuality, gender and disability. It is about social integration in a wider context – our bonds as citizens, and how we interact with one another. (GLA, 2018:4)

Similarly, the 2019 Home Office ‘Indicators of Integration’ framework foregrounds the multi-directional and intersectional nature of integration, recognising that ‘integration is a process of “mixing” through interaction between people who are diverse in multiple ways, not only on the basis of ethnicity or countries of origin’ (Ndofor-Tah et al., 2019:20). The framework assumes

that society is made up of people who diverge in multiple ways and that different people who may feel marginalised in some contexts will be powerful in others – possibly, but not only, reflecting the characteristics they hold across factors such as age, social class, employment status, education, sexuality, gender and disability. (ibid.)

In the English education system, individual schools are responsible for developing their own policies on the social inclusion of young newcomers. Gladwell and Chetwynd (2018) find that barriers to remaining and thriving in education include mental health difficulties

associated with past experiences and present asylum claim anxieties; poverty, particularly linked to the ability to participate in school life; and living in unstable accommodation. Beyond cultural differences, these factors indicate the significant impact of socioeconomic inequalities on integration at school.

In recent years there has been heated discussion in British education circles around the role of ethnicity and race in shaping educational outcomes. A recent report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (2021) foregrounds the influence of socioeconomic and geographic inequality on educational outcomes. Accordingly, the Commission recommends improving outcomes for all rather than focusing on specific ethnic groups. It also criticises the term ‘BAME’ for disguising ‘huge differences in outcomes between ethnic groups’ (ibid.:32).⁴ Other reports have highlighted differentiation in educational outcomes amongst ethnic groups in the UK. The Race Disparity Audit for the Cabinet Office (2017) found that pupils from Chinese and Indian backgrounds generally had high attainment and progress throughout their school careers and high rates of entry to university. Pupils from Gypsy and Roma, or Irish Traveller background (who are not included in the White British category) had the lowest overall attainment and progress and were least likely to stay in education after the age of 16. Meanwhile White British pupils and those from a Mixed background also made less progress than average. Pupils in the Black ethnic group were found to make more progress overall than the national average, but attainment for Black Caribbean pupils was very low. These disparities highlight complexity and the need for an intersectional understanding of the ways in which ethnicity intersects with other factors – location, socioeconomic status, race – to produce significant variability in educational attainment (Gillborn, 1997).

2.3.3. Wellbeing policies and practices

The British government’s (2003) Green Paper ‘Every Child Matters’ encouraged a multi-agency, holistic approach to child development and wellbeing. Under section 78 of the Education Act 2002 and the Academies Act 2010, schools must promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of students at the school and of society. They

⁴ The term ‘BAME’ refers to people from ‘Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic’ backgrounds.

must prepare their students for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life. Maintained schools also have a statutory duty to promote the wellbeing of their students and to promote community cohesion. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education aims to develop and promote young people's social and emotional skills (Public Health England, 2021). Schools are expected to develop their own PSHE curriculums (sometimes in partnership with their LA) as there is no standardised framework or programme of study. Yeo and Graham (2015) find that in practice, the implementation of PSHE curriculum often prioritises the delivery of factual information over the practical development of social and emotional skills. They also highlight the challenges of measuring the impact of social and emotional learning, particularly where it is embedded in normal lessons. It is now a statutory requirement for schools in England to teach Relationships, Sex Education and Health Education (RSHE); RSHE content is generally delivered through the PSHE curriculum and is considered vital to the social and emotional development of young people.

The 'Pupil Premium' is a government grant which provides schools with additional funding for disadvantaged students. The amount each school receives is based on the number of students in school who receive free school meals,⁵ are 'looked after' by the LA,⁶ or have (or have had) a parent in the armed forces (Foster and Long, 2020). It is estimated that approximately 10% of students eligible for free school meals do not register for them; as a result, schools are not attracting all the Pupil Premium funding they are entitled to (ibid.). A 2019 survey by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) found that 27% of secondary school leaders in England had used the Pupil Premium funding to 'plug gaps elsewhere in the budget' (NFER, 2019:3). The government's post-2010 austerity programme drastically cut public investment (Van Reenen, 2015). These cuts led to a reduction in total school spending per pupil by 8% between 2009-10 and 2019-20 (Britton et al., 2019). There has also been a marked reduction in LA funding for open-access youth provision, with non-governmental and non-profit organisations now filling the gap in LA provision (Yeo and Graham, 2015). Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), also known as Child

⁵ Eligibility for free school meals is treated as a proxy for disadvantage. Students are only considered eligible for free school meals if their household income is less than £7,400 a year after tax (DfE, 2019b).

⁶ A 'looked after' child refers to a child who has been in the care of their LA for more than 24 hours.

and Family Consultation Services (CFCS), are run by the NHS. CAMHS offer assessment and support to children and young people with significant emotional, behavioural, and mental health difficulties.

In western education, the last decade has seen a move away from the ethos of 'Every Child Matters' towards narratives of educational reform which foreground autonomy, markets, and choice as key drivers of social mobility (McIntyre and Hall, 2018). Education systems in the US, Australia, and England now follow an 'economically influenced model of schooling' (ibid.:3) characterised by a narrow curriculum, standardised education outcomes, and high levels of monitoring. As van Manen (2016:110) asserts, 'It is difficult nowadays to think of teaching and learning without immediately being concerned with effectiveness, efficiencies, outcomes and the instrumentalities, methods, and technologies of the curriculum'. Ofsted and attainment targets are reported as the two key operational priorities for UK secondary schools (Yeo and Graham, 2015). Secondary schools in England are ranked in league tables for General Certificate of Education (GCSE) exams in Year 11. Schools are also ranked according to their 'Progress 8 scores', which are based on cumulative pupil progress across eight subjects from primary to secondary school. Performance-related pay for teachers was introduced in 2013. Perhaps not unrelatedly, teachers increasingly experience high levels of stress and 'burn-out', with nearly 40,000 teachers leaving the profession in England in 2016 (Tapper, 2018; Teacher Workload Advisory Group, 2018). An increase in anxiety disorders among British students has also been linked to school pressures, including the stress of assessment (Marsh and Boateng, 2018).

This section has explored changes in reception structures for newcomers in British secondary education from the 1990s onwards, highlighting the impact of decentralised EAL provision on newcomers' educational attainment. It also showed how domestic policies on multiculturalism, counterterrorism, and integration have influenced the national curriculum. Socioeconomic inequalities intersect with other factors to shape newcomers' social inclusion at school as well as disparities in educational attainment between and across ethnic groups. The section highlighted the role of schools in supporting their students' wellbeing, which they are expected to promote through social and emotional learning and Pupil Premium spending. However, cuts in public spending since 2010 have strongly

restricted the support that schools and other service providers are able to provide to young people. Meanwhile, an increasingly market-based model of education is influencing teacher and student wellbeing alike.

2.4. East London and Brighton & Hove

Against the backdrop of immigration and education policies in the UK, the two intervention schools can now be considered in their local contexts. The policies and demographics of both schools, as well as their local settings, are likely to directly influence the relationships of young migrants and their peers. The first research location was ‘Bradbrook School’ in Inner East London.⁷ The second location was ‘Seaview School’ on the outskirts of the coastal city of Brighton & Hove. Bradbrook and Seaview schools are both maintained by their LAs and place strong policy emphasis on the inclusion of students from all backgrounds.

2.4.1. Bradbrook School

Bradbrook School is a boys’ secondary school located on a bustling main street in Inner East London. It is one of eight maintained schools in the borough and has around 750 students. In 2019 the East London borough had a population size of 353,134 (ONS, 2019). Between 2001 and 2011, the borough saw the greatest population growth in non-UK born residents of all London boroughs, with 72,285 arrivals from outside the UK (ONS, 2011). In 2015, 56% of borough residents had arrived in the area in the last ten years, and 63% had arrived in the last five years. Most students at Bradbrook are second- or first-generation immigrants; some were born in the UK to non-British parents, others arrived a long time ago, and some more recently. In the course of the research I met students who were born in (or whose parents are from) Romania, Lithuania, Russia, Poland, Moldova, Georgia, Eritrea, Somalia, Angola, Ghana, Uganda, Nigeria, Algeria, Malawi, The Gambia, Senegal, Kenya, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Goa, India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Mongolia, Pakistan, Colombia, Ecuador, Bolivia, Curacao, Jamaica, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Spain, Italy, and Portugal. In 2019, only 60% of Year 11 students at Bradbrook had been at the school since Year 7.

⁷ In order to help preserve anonymity, the Inner East London borough is not named and references which directly refer to the name of the borough in their titles are not included in this chapter.

Bradbrook's local borough is characterised by 'superdiversity', a concept which refers to the diversity of post-colonial migration to the UK in relation to origins, religious backgrounds, socioeconomic statuses, education profiles, legal statuses, and other categories (Vertovec, 2007). At 16.7%, the borough has the lowest percentage of White British residents of all London boroughs (ONS, 2011). 71% of the population are from BAME groups, indicating an increase in diversity since the 2001 census. The 2016 Annual School Census found that 66.3% of secondary school pupils in state-funded schools in the borough did not have English as their first language. Over 80% of the student population at Bradbrook have EAL and students speak more than 58 languages. Since the 2011 census, there has been a significant increase in migration to the borough from Eastern Europe as well as from Africa, Latin America, Italy, and Spain. There are high levels of 'secondary migration', with newcomers from Italy and Spain often having originated in Latin America, Africa, and Bangladesh. In the 2011 census, 39.9% of the borough's population identified as Christian and 31.9% as Muslim. A significant proportion were Hindu (8.7%) and Sikh (2.0%). Because Bradbrook School is an all-boys school, it is attractive to Muslim families; at the time of the research in 2019, the largest religious groups at the school were Muslim (57%) and Christian (30%).

The borough's superdiversity is in constant flux. In 2019, the borough's 'population churn' rate was 21.5%, meaning that 21.5% of the population were estimated to have either left or arrived in the borough in 2018 (ONS, 2019). This is one of the highest population churn rates in London, with large numbers of people moving into the area for very short periods every year. Many newcomers to Bradbrook arrive in the middle of a school year as 'mid-phase admissions', while other students leave in the middle of the school year. There is some circular migration, such as Roma students going back and forth to Romania throughout the school year, or other EU students temporarily leaving the UK with their parents to seek employment elsewhere. This circular migration contrasts with the 'settled' immigration status of many post-war Caribbean and Asian migrants who are long-term residents in the borough. In the 2016 EU referendum, 52.8% of voters in the borough voted 'Remain', while 47.2% voted 'Leave' – a slim majority compared to other London boroughs. Anecdotally, the 'Vote Leave' campaign was popular among first- and second-generation immigrants in the

borough, including Bangladeshis, Indians, and Ghanaians. Many long-established ethnic minorities reported concerns about the impact of EU immigration on housing, public services, and employment. Some felt that Eastern European newcomers made no effort to 'mix' or integrate into society, while others were unhappy about restrictions in EU migration policy on non-EU immigration.

There has been substantial urban remodelling in the borough in recent years. Many of the high-rise flats built after the Second World War have been knocked down and replaced. The borough's proximity to the City of London has made it attractive to workers in the finance sector, and there has been an increase in new-build flats and homes, making accommodation increasingly expensive. The borough has the highest rate of temporary accommodation in London at 49 per 1,000 households compared to 17 per 1,000 in London overall. The rate of eviction is higher here than in any other London borough. It is one of London's designated 'growth boroughs', where people 'earn less, have fewer qualifications, are more likely to be unemployed, live in poor and overcrowded housing, be a victim of crime and die younger than an average Londoner' (Growth Boroughs Partnership, 2021). A 2010 report recorded unemployment in the borough at approximately 14% of the working age population – around double the unemployment rate for Greater London. The report identified numerous barriers to work in the borough, including low qualifications and levels of English, caring responsibilities, the 'benefits trap', and specific gaps in service provision, particularly in relation to employability-related English language support. Single parent households account for 10% of households in the borough, slightly higher than the average of 8% in London (ONS, 2011).

There are high levels of deprivation in the borough. 50% of children in the borough are estimated to live in poverty, compared to 37% in London overall. During the school year 2019-2020, Bradbrook School was allocated Pupil Premium funding for 46% of the student population. As of 2016, 5.8% of 16-18 year olds in the borough were not in education, employment or training (NEET) (DfE, 2018b).⁸ In 2011, one in four households in the

⁸ Being NEET between the ages of 16 and 18 is a major predictor of later unemployment, low income, depression, and poor physical and mental health (Allen, 2014).

borough had at least one person with a limiting long-term illness (ibid.); a number of Bradbrook students are young carers. A Youth Survey conducted in 2012 found that job availability, crime, and social cohesion were the top three issues facing the borough's young population. In 2017, close to two fifths of all borough residents (37%) reported being worried about being a victim of crime in their local area. The borough has several youth clubs and centres, one with a particular focus on supporting migrant and refugee newcomers. There are several mentoring and alternative educational provision initiatives, including Polish, Tamil, and Albanian supplementary schools established and run by local communities. Some NGOs support specific migrant groups in the borough, including Roma and Albanian residents. In spite of these initiatives, the 2012 Youth Survey highlighted a general lack of local facilities for community engagement in the borough.

2.4.2. Seaview School

Seaview School is a mixed high school in the suburbs of Brighton & Hove, a small coastal city in the county of East Sussex with a population of 273,369 (ONS, 2011). Seaview is one of the city's seven maintained schools and has around 1,100 students. In sharp contrast to Bradbrook's 'superdiversity', 70-80% of Seaview students are White British. Some of these students were born in Brighton & Hove or in the county of East Sussex, while others were born in, or have parents from Scotland, Ireland, or Wales. 80.5% of Brighton & Hove residents identified as White British in the 2011 census. However, there has also been an increase in newcomers to Seaview School in recent years, reflecting growth in migration to Brighton & Hove more generally. Between 2001 and 2011, the number of international migrants in the city increased from 25,200 to 42,900. Latest estimates suggest that there are more international migrants than at the time of the 2011 census (Condon et al., 2018). As of 2016, 18% of city residents were born outside the UK. Of these, 48% were born in European countries, 26% in Asia, and 28% in other countries (ibid.). In 2011, proportionately more people from non-UK born groups were employed in accommodation and food services, such as hotels and restaurants (ONS, 2011). Many migrant parents at Seaview work in Brighton & Hove's service industry or are professionals from the EU.

Seaview is undersubscribed and accordingly has the largest number of migrant students in Brighton & Hove.⁹ The school's progressive policies towards diversity and language support also make it attractive to recent and longer-term immigrants. Most students arrive at the start and end of the school year, with some mid-phase admissions. Approximately 26% of Seaview students have EAL. During the fieldwork I met students who were born in or have parents from Moldova, Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Bulgaria, Venezuela, Peru, Mexico, Brazil, Cuba, Panama, Jamaica, the Gambia, Sudan, Senegal, Algeria, the DRC, Bangladesh, India, Singapore, Turkey, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Australia, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Iran. Some of these students had previously migrated to, and lived in, the EU before coming to the UK. Brighton & Hove's large Sudanese population, for example, includes families who have been granted refugee status in Germany or Greece and acquired EU citizenship there (Condon et al., 2018). Some refugees in the city came to the UK through government resettlement schemes. It has been estimated that there may be roughly 200 asylum seekers living in Brighton & Hove at any one time (ibid.).

Brighton & Hove's young population is particularly ethnically diverse: 22% of 0–19-year-olds are from BAME backgrounds. Of the BAME category, residents identifying as Other White (7.1%), Asian (4.1%) and mixed race (3.8%) make up the highest numbers. 42% of Brighton & Hove residents have no religion and 43% are Christian. Muslims are the largest non-Christian group at 2% (ONS, 2011). Attitudes towards immigration in Brighton & Hove are varied. Mazzilli (2020) argues that although Brighton & Hove has a liberal approach to gender identity and sexuality (the city has been described as the 'gay capital' of Europe and the UK), local government has a selective understanding of 'diversity' and often ignores issues of racism. In the EU referendum, 68.6% of the local population voted 'Remain' and 31.4% voted 'Leave'. The area where Seaview School is located has shown strong support for Brexit and UKIP in recent years.

Although Seaview School is located in a suburban, middle-class area, its wide catchment area attracts students from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, including single-parent

⁹ Jones and Rutter (1998) note that newcomers are more likely to attend undersubscribed schools, which usually have more places.

families and ‘looked after’ young people. During the 2020-2021 school year, 29% of the student population were disadvantaged and eligible for the Pupil Premium. Deprivation is higher in Brighton & Hove than it is on average across England. A 2015 report for Brighton & Hove City Council exposed inequalities across the city in relation to housing, employment, income, welfare, and health (Scanlon, 2015). The report also highlighted child poverty. According to the 2011 Child Poverty Index, 19.6% of Brighton & Hove’s dependent children are living in poverty. As of 2016, 4.0% of 16–18-year-olds in Brighton were NEET (DfE, 2018b). One in six of Brighton & Hove residents is disabled or has a long-term health problem.

Brighton & Hove has many small non-governmental organisations which have helped to fill the gap in funding provision from central government. There is a large youth centre that provides young people with a range of activities including music, sports, and dance. Homelessness support is provided by local charities and by a network of local churches. Condon et al. (2018:55) note that ‘the larger national asylum and refugee charities have not generally had a local presence in the city’. Two smaller charities support refugees and asylum seekers in Brighton & Hove. Psychosocial support projects and English language initiatives are also run by local volunteers. There are a significant number of small migrant and refugee-led groups, including the Sudanese Coptic Association, Oromo Community Association, Kurdish Community group, and many others.

2.5. Conclusion

This chapter explored the context of UK immigration from both outside and inside the EU, demonstrating how immigration policies intersect with public attitudes to shape structures of reception. It examined secondary education, showing how decentralised education policy and a lack of EAL support influence newcomers. It then considered changes to the national curriculum in light of post-immigration policies including multiculturalism, counterterrorism approaches, and the ‘integration’ agenda. It explored the factors influencing the educational inclusion of newcomers and also drew attention to debates on the link between ethnicity and educational outcomes, emphasising the need for an intersectional perspective on the complex factors influencing academic attainment. The chapter discussed approaches in

national education policy towards 'wellbeing', showing how these are at odds with the impact of the current education model on teacher and student wellbeing. Lastly, the chapter described Bradbrook and Seaview schools and their contrasting locales. The following chapter will provide an overview of how the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees have been approached in the academic literature, using Buber's I-It and I-Thou concepts to frame the discussion.

3. Literature review

3.1. Introduction

The previous chapter explored historical and contemporary policies relating to immigration and education in the UK. The current chapter reviews the literature on the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees in the global North, using Buber's (1937) model of 'I-It' and 'I-Thou' relations to frame scholarship in this area. The chapter considers how education, including school-based interventions, can support young migrants and their peers in relation to various needs as a means to encounter in the school space. It also examines the literature on intercultural education and social contact interventions in light of Buber's insistence on the importance of 'dialogue' in education.

3.2. Constructing It

The I-It relation is 'the typical subject-object relationship in which one knows and uses other persons or things without allowing them to exist for oneself in their uniqueness' (Friedman, 1947:xii).¹⁰ Buber (1937:40) describes the I-It relation as a categorising process in which one 'will have to compare it with objects, establish it in its order among classes of objects, describe and analyse it objectively'. The aim of the I-It relation is self-definition through 'cessation, suspension, a breaking off and cutting clear and hardening' (ibid.:13), as the subject 'differentiates itself from the other, and seeks through experiencing and using to appropriate as much of it as it can' (ibid.:64). Buber's formulation of the I-It relation corresponds with modern theorisations of identity which see 'otherness' as central to the construction of social categories (de Beauvoir, 1949; Allport, 1954; Bauman, 1993; Said, 1995). In these understandings, social identities are set up as dichotomies; Said (ibid.:332) notes that 'the development and maintenance of every culture require the existence of another different and competing alter ego'. Ignatieff (1998:52) draws on Freudian ideas on 'narcissism' to describe this process of antagonistic self-definition, suggesting that the 'particular property of the narcissist gaze is that it glances up at the Other only to confirm its difference. Then it looks down again and turns its gaze upon itself. It does not *engage* with the Other in any real sense'. Buber (1937:29) captures the passive nature of the I-It relation

¹⁰ Maurice Friedman was Buber's biographer, and they often wrote together. The 1947 references to Friedman in this thesis refer to his 'Introduction' to *Between Man and Man* (Buber, 1947).

in the idea of 'observation': 'the man who says I-It, stands before things, but not over against them in the flow of mutual action... with the magnifying glass of peering observation he bends over particulars and objectifies them'. Buber (1947:101) suggests that children gradually begin to distinguish and separate themselves from 'others' as they get older: 'What the child desires is its own share in this becoming of things: it wants to be the subject of this event of production'.

Buber (1937:40) emphasises the ontological necessity of the I-It relation: 'that is how knowledge comes about, a work is achieved, and image and symbol made, in the midst of living things'. Social identities, as forms of 'knowledge', are necessary in order to understand others and make ourselves 'understood' to them (ibid.:32). Buber (ibid.:77) underscores the need to recognise representations for what they are, rather than confusing them with reality: 'There is no illusory world, there is only the world – which appears to us as twofold in accordance with our twofold attitude. Only the barrier of separation has to be destroyed'. De Beauvoir (1949:143) suggests, however, that 'representation of the world' is often confused 'with absolute truth'. Research shows that younger children are particularly likely to form stereotypes based on concrete aspects such as appearance, due to a lack of cognitive complexity (Piaget, 1970). By contrast, Bigler (1999:696) points out that 'adults have the cognitive skills to understand the complexities of the geographical, historical, and cultural factors that shape similarities and differences among people'. At the same time, adults may deliberately use reductive and simplistic categories in order to govern and divide populations, such as in colonial regimes or 'Orientalism' (Said, 1978). On this basis Said (ibid.:325) posits that there is a critical need to challenge essentialist ideas by revealing how they 'acquire authority, "normality," and even the status of "natural" truth'. Foucault's (1966, 1980, 1982) work advances understanding of these processes by showing how power acts through knowledge to objectify, categorise, and classify others.

Watters and Ingleby (2004:550) note that a number of migration studies 'may be described as Foucauldian in their orientation'. As Watters and Ingleby (ibid.) suggest, these studies examine the different ways in which state controls and processes act to categorise migrant and refugee populations (Ong, 2003; Bakewell, 2008; James, 2016; Gutiérrez Rodríguez, 2018; Anderson, 2019; Mayblin, 2019). For example, Mayblin (2019:1) discusses how 'policy

programmes are produced by particular ways of imagining asylum seeking in an effort to reduce the complexity of the phenomenon and thus devise policy responses to it'. Gutiérrez Rodríguez (2018) contends that refugees are categorised into different statuses attached to asylum processes in a hierarchical order that is reminiscent of European colonialism. Other literature examines the biopolitical implications of migration status and how this status is recognised by different parties, including the United Nations, the host state, and NGOs (Zetter, 1991; Fassin, 2005; Vertovec, 2007; Sanyal, 2012; Crawley and Skleparis, 2018; Erdal and Oeppen, 2018; Sigona, 2018). Fassin (2005) analyses the 'moral economy' of immigration policies in France, or the values and norms through which immigration and asylum are thought about and acted upon to govern human lives. Zetter (1991:59) shows how the 'refugee' label influences 'conditionality and differentiation, inclusion and exclusion, stereotyping and control', highlighting that in consequence, 'Careful observation of how the refugee label is constructed is essential' (ibid.:60). Erdal and Oeppen (2018) also emphasise the discursive power of labels relating to voluntary and forced migration and underline the need to investigate how, when, and for whom these labels matter. At the level of domestic policy, Sen (2006) draws attention to policies of multiculturalism as 'plural monoculturalism', arguing that in defining individuals and groups primarily according to their ethnicity, these policies can entrench and solidify ethnic difference.

Brubaker (2002:170) suggests that in addition to studying the politics of categories 'from above', we should also study the 'micropolitics' of categories or 'the ways in which the categorized appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade or transform the categories that are imposed on them'. Increasing recognition has been given to the agency of migrants and refugees in 'doing things' (ibid.:169) with categories. With reference to Ong's (2003) research with Cambodian refugees in the US, Watters (2008:127) argues that 'the employment of specific discourses in relation to the social welfare of refugees is not a "one-way street" in which practices are simply imposed on populations'. Ong (2003) describes how the regulatory regimes of various programmes and practices, including the refugee 'industry', the medical services, the welfare office, and the courts comprise technologies of power which shape Cambodian refugees into American citizen-subjects. However, Ong also shows how refugees respond to these technologies by internalising, rejecting, or criticising norms and standards for becoming autonomous, knowing subjects. Meanwhile Kwon (2015)

suggests that Korean American and Mexican American youth in Los Angeles strategically employ their status as ‘outsiders-within’ to both reproduce and challenge the category of ‘American’ in order to acquire social citizenship. Matute-Bianchi (1986) investigates the experiences of young Japanese Americans and Mexican-descent students in negotiating ethnicity in a Californian high school, noting that students use different reactive and anticipatory strategies to cope with the demands of education in this context.

Scholarship on ‘methodological nationalism’ problematises the replication of nationalist modes of thought in studies of transnational migration (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002, 2003; Favell, 2003, 2019; Schiller, 2005, 2009; Schinkel, 2018, 2019). This scholarship argues that in assuming nationality as a natural unit of analysis, transnational studies implicitly represent migration as a logical disruption to the orderly working of state and society (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002). Schiller (2009:4) suggests that in doing so, transnational studies fail to recognise the embeddedness of both migrants and hosts in the ‘social, economic, and political processes, networks, movement and institutions that exist both within and across state borders’. Others have questioned ‘methodological ethnicism’ in migration studies (Berg and Sigona, 2013; Berg et al., 2019). In consequence, recent studies of ‘diversity’ focus their analyses at the local level in order to unsettle assumptions of the internal homogeneity and boundedness of national and ethnic communities (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002; Berg and Sigona, 2013). Schiller and Çağlar (2016:18) note that the emergence of these studies marks a ‘spatial turn’ in the migration literature towards the analysis of social relations and their diversities in urban spaces. By exploring the intersectional politics of urban spaces, diversity studies ‘hold the potential to do what “intersectionality” has done within feminist scholarship’ (Berg and Sigona, 2013:348).¹¹ Bastia (2014:241) observes that following the expansion of intersectionality in the European context, ‘there has been a proliferation of studies on migration using intersectionality as their main analytical framework’. Empirical studies have used the concept to explore how migration status intersects with class, race and gender in the social experience of migrants

¹¹ The concept of ‘intersectionality’ was introduced by Crenshaw (1989, 1991) and progressed by American feminist studies to show how socially constructed categories of gender, race, and class intersect to create systems of inequality.

and refugees (Bastia, 2014; Vervliet et al., 2014; Ribas, 2016; Fathi, 2017; Wilson, 2020; Viruell-Fuentes et al., 2012).

A growing number of diversity studies focus on intersectionality in the lives of migrant youth. Kwon (2015) employs an intersectional approach to examine how bilingual Mexican American and Korean American youth negotiate multiple inequalities pertaining to age, race, and class when they translate for their immigrant parents. Martinez (2018) and Compton-Lilly et al. (2017) also draw on intersectional frameworks to explore how migrant youth in North America strategically negotiate multiple identities. A key message in these studies is that young people actively construct a number of different identities in different relational spaces and at different points in time (Martinez, 2018; Nunes, 2019). Moffitt et al. (2020) note that, in contrast to North American scholarship, there are still relatively few continental European studies on youth intersectionality. Studies in the UK have particularly focused on urban areas in exploring how migrant youth negotiate intersectionality in everyday settings. Alexander (2000) highlights the significance of ethnicity, gender, and religion in the lived experiences of Asian young men in inner city London. Reynolds (2006) shows how young Caribbean migrants in UK cities negotiate ethnic identity across local and regional subcultures. Meanwhile James (2015) explores how young migrants in outer East London are classed, racialised, and gendered through different mechanisms of the state. James does not deny the agency of these youths but also indicates how they navigate, resist, and subvert intersectional marginalisation. Back and Sinha (2018) suggest that young migrants in East London make routine judgements, based on language and race, about who belongs and should be included legitimately in the spaces of everyday life.

The concept of 'superdiversity' expands the traditional focus of intersectional frameworks on race, gender, and class to consider the specific intersection of migration-related categories (Vertovec, 2007, 2017; Boccagni, 2015; Crul, 2016). In recognition of the increasing complexity of post-colonial migration to the UK, Vertovec (2006:1) introduced the concept to describe 'differentiation in immigration statuses and their concomitant entitlements and restrictions of rights, labour market experiences, gender and age profiles, spatial factors, and local area responses by service providers and residents'. Wessendorf (2016) notes that other differences such as educational level or sexual orientation may also

be significant. Academic interest in superdiversity signals a marked shift in the migration literature from an ethnonational lens towards recognition that ‘different kinds of differences’ matter (Berg and Sigona, 2013:348). However, criticisms of ‘superdiversity’ have included arguments that the concept can minimise the significance of socio-political and historical categories, and obscure the impact of structural factors in its focus on ‘culture’ (Viruell-Fuentes et al., 2012; Berg and Sigona, 2013; Aptekar, 2019; Foner et al., 2019). Migration studies increasingly highlight young people’s agency as ‘place-makers’ in superdiverse settings (Çağlar and Schiller, 2018; Meissner, 2020). For example, Vincent et al. (2017) show that children in ethnically diverse primary schools in London engage multiple dimensions of difference in their friendship choices. Meissner (2020:15) argues that a lack of ‘serious’ thought remains in relation to young people’s active role in shaping the dynamics of superdiversity.

3.3. Encountering Thou

Buber (1937:17) suggests that while the objectifying I-It relation is a fundamental and necessary part of social life, it ‘snatches only at a fringe of real life’. In contrast, the I-Thou is a subject-to-subject encounter involving ‘openness, directness, mutuality, and presence’ (Friedman, 1947:xii). Buber (1937:11) writes that the ‘relation to the Thou is direct. No system of ideas, no foreknowledge, and no fancy intervene between I and Thou’. The I-Thou is an intrinsically ethical relation in which ‘I confirm and further my Thou in the right of his existence and the goal of his becoming, in all his otherness’ (Buber and Friedman, 1964:28). Buber (1937) presents the I-Thou relationship as a fragment of man’s relationship with the divine ‘Thou’. According to Buber (ibid.:28), real ‘personhood’ develops only through the I-Thou relation: ‘Through the Thou a man becomes I’. Buber (1947:115) describes the I-Thou relation as a relation of ‘inclusion’, involving mutual engagement with the other from ‘over there’ through ‘the extension of one’s own concreteness, the fulfilment of the actual situation of life, the complete presence of the reality in which one participates’. In this sense the I-Thou involves ‘being with’ the other without losing any sense of oneself. In contrast to the stability and normativity of the I-It relation, Buber (1937:34) suggests that ‘the moments of the Thou appear as strange lyric and dramatic episodes, seductive and magical, but tearing us away to dangerous extremes, loosening the well-tried context, leaving more

questions than satisfaction behind them, shattering security'. The I-Thou thus involves vulnerability and uncertainty – acceptance of what cannot be 'known' – but also holds the promise of transformation. Schinkel (2020:487) notes 'considerable similarities' between the presence and alterity of the I-Thou relation and the concept of contemplative 'wonder' at the 'otherness' of the other – wonder 'hints at a fundamental, irresolvable not-knowing' (ibid.:481).

Levinas (1985), who was one of Buber's contemporaries, captures the immediacy and separation of the I-Thou relation in the concept of the 'face-to-face' encounter (Jay, 1973; Skrefsrud, 2019; Lumsden, 2000). Levinas (1985:60) suggests that the sociality characterised by the 'face-to-face' encounter 'cannot have the same structure as knowledge'; the face escapes our gaze and is irreducible to appearance or image. The face-to-face encounter therefore requires vulnerability and 'ceding a certain egological perspective for one that is structured fundamentally by a mode of address: You call upon me, and I answer' (Butler, 2012:142). Although the notion of vulnerability is key to Buber's conceptualisation of the I-Thou relation, the idea of reciprocity was the subject of debate between Buber and Levinas (Rome and Rome, 1964; Schilpp and Friedman, 1967). Buber (1937:15) sees the I-Thou relationship as entirely mutual and reciprocal: 'Relation is mutual. My Thou affects me, as I affect it'. He adds, 'The Thou confronts me. But I step into direct relation with it' (ibid.:75). However, Levinas (1985) argues that the face of the other always takes priority in its assertion of an ethical claim on the subject: I owe the other everything, they owe me nothing. As such, Levinas (1998:150) posits that the face of the other necessarily subjugates me by making me 'responsible' to them, making reciprocity impossible: 'There would be an inequality, a dissymmetry, in the Relation, contrary to the "reciprocity" upon which Buber insists, no doubt in error'. Yet for Buber, the possibility of engagement in the I-Thou relation is entirely contingent on the mutual ability to respond to the other as an equal subject. Buber (1937:63) claims that the I-Thou relation has no purpose other than that of relation itself: 'The aim of relation is relation's own being, that is, contact with the Thou'. There is only presence and 'being with' as one accepts the other as they are rather than 'turning them to their own account' (ibid.:40). Lumsden (2000:228) confirms that 'primary in the I-Thou relation is the *reciprocal relation* between subjects, not their abstracted subjectivity'.

The I-Thou encounter has transformative effects on the I-It relation. Buber (1937:54) describes the I-Thou as a creative space where people can repeatedly build new 'dwellings' and 'shape the very community of men'. DeLue (2006:128) observes that the 'location of the I-Thou is in the interstices existing between my diffuse roles'; the I-Thou encounter empowers me 'to make my own judgments about the best course for myself in a role-diffuse world' (ibid.:129). Pryor (2019) draws parallels between the I-Thou relation and Turner's (1966:95) account of 'liminal entities' as being 'neither here nor there' and 'betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial'. Turner (ibid.:167) suggests that liminality 'can be seen as potentially a period of scrutinization of the central values and axioms of the culture in which it occurs'. In liminal moments of encounter, 'the very structure of society' is 'temporarily suspended' (Szokolczai, 2009:142). In post-colonial theory, Bhabha (1994:4) introduces the concept of the 'third space' to describe this liminality as an 'interstitial passage between fixed identifications' which 'entertains difference without an assumed or imposed hierarchy'. The 'disruptive temporality' of the third space 'challenges our sense of the historical identity of culture as a homogenizing, unifying force' (Bhabha, 1988:21). Applying these ideas to empirical research in the context of migration, Jensen (2011:74) suggests that in 'claiming normality' rather than 'aspiring to Danishness' in their relationships with others, young ethnic minority men in Denmark 'carve out a space in-between, a third space, which is not defined by firstness and otherness, but transcends the dichotomy: simply as a normal human being'. In reshaping understandings of culture, the ephemeral I-Thou relation reveals the dynamic nature of identity (as I-It) as consistently 'retold, rediscovered, reinvented' (Hall, 1991:58).

The humanising I-Thou relation aligns with the concept of cosmopolitanism, which is commonly understood as 'a radical detachment from grounded communities and loyalties and perpetual fluidity of human selves' (Morawska, 2014:360). Nussbaum (1994, 1997, 2001, 2019) conceptualises cosmopolitanism as a universal ethic of care that seeks to recognise humanity in others. Cosmopolitanism has been criticised, however, for failing to capture the importance of local identifications (Gunderson, 2005). A case in point is Wimmer and Schiller's (2002:236) argument that the cosmopolitan perspective 'does not acknowledge that nationalism is a powerful signifier that continues to make sense for different actors with different purposes and political implications'. Buber (1937:34) himself

recognises the tension between the cosmopolitan ethic and particularist impulses and seeks to resolve this tension by suggesting that the vital 'presence' of the I-Thou relation must be balanced or 'subdued' by the stability of the I-It: 'It is not possible to live in the bare present. Life would be quite consumed if precautions were not taken to subdue the present speedily and thoroughly'. Similarly, Homans (1979:23) notes that 'all liminality must eventually dissolve, for it is a state of great intensity that cannot exist very long without some sort of structure to stabilize it'. Easthope (2008:345) also suggests that to constantly inhabit the 'third space' would be 'only too like the state of psychosis'. Buber (1937:40) emphasises that the order and form of the I-It relation is a necessary counterpart to the chaos and spontaneity of the I-Thou: 'Every response binds up the Thou in the world of It. That is the melancholy of man, and his greatness. For that is how knowledge comes about, a work is achieved, and image and symbol made, in the midst of living things'. Yet without opportunities for the I-Thou encounter, static and reified cultural understandings necessarily persist: Buber (1937:54) asserts that 'if a culture ceases to be centred in the living and continually renewed relational event, then it hardens into the world of It'. As Said (1995:333) posits, although 'we all need some foundation on which to stand', the critical question is 'how extreme and unchangeable' we understand those foundations to be. Friedman (1947:xiii) summarises:

I-Thou and I-It stand in fruitful and necessary alternation with each other. Man cannot will to persevere in the I-Thou relationship. He can only desire again and again to bring the indirectness of the world of It into the directness of the meeting with the Thou and thereby give the world of It meaning. So long as this alternation continues, man's existence is authentic.

3.4. I-It and I-Thou alternation

Buber's (1937) model of the alternating I-It and I-Thou relation captures the need for the ontological security of the I-It but also presents engagement in the vulnerability of the I-Thou relation as crucial. In this model, the I-Thou relation does not replace the I-It relation but rather transforms it and gives it meaning. In the context of migration, the alternation between the I-It and I-Thou relation is contained in theories of 'integration' and 'conviviality'. The migration literature tends to discuss these concepts separately. However,

this section explores how both resolve the tension between the psychosocial need for identity and the ethical imperative of bridging differences.

3.4.1. Integration

Integration is one of four ‘acculturation’ strategies set out by Berry (1997). Berry (*ibid.*) introduces a bidirectional model to describe acculturation as the changes in everyday practices, attitudes, and beliefs that occur when two ethnonational ‘cultures’ come into contact. Acculturation is a transformative process involving a ‘complex pattern of continuity and change in how people go about their lives in the new society’ (*ibid.*:6). Berry suggests that strategies of acculturation mediate the psychological experience of cultural change or ‘acculturative stress’. Of the four acculturation strategies presented by Berry, ‘integration’ is found to have the most positive psychosocial outcomes. Integration involves ‘maintaining one’s original culture’ while ‘at the same time seeking to participate as an integral part of the larger social network’ (*ibid.*:9). The psychosocial outcomes of integration include increased self-esteem and self-worth, greater peer acceptance, lower stress, and reduced anxiety (Berry, 1997; Kovacev and Shute, 2004; Sawrikar and Hunt, 2005; Tadmor et al., 2009; Watters et al., 2009; Brown et al., 2013; Berry and Hou, 2016).

Ager and Strang (2008) draw on Putnam’s (1993) work on social capital to theorise integration as the complementary development of social ‘bonds’ and ‘bridges’. While social bonds are ‘exclusive’ and maintain social identities by reinforcing homogeneity within groups, ‘inclusive’ social bridges facilitate wider mixing in society and foster reciprocity between groups (Putnam, 2000). Strang and Ager (2010:598) suggest that this formulation avoids the emergence of ‘separate, very bonded but disconnected communities’, thus eschewing the pitfalls of multiculturalism. Indeed, as part of the academic ‘backlash’ to multiculturalism (Vertovec and Wessendorf, 2009), concepts of social capital have been widely adopted in framings of social connection and ‘integration’ in the context of transnational migration (Cheong et al., 2007; Strang and Ager, 2010; Harris, 2016). The conceptualisation of integration as involving social bonds and bridges is broadly analogous to Buber’s theory of the alternating I-It and I-Thou. Importantly, however, Buber’s concept of the I-Thou differs to that of social bridging in specific ways: social bridging is usually conceptualised as involving ‘thin’ trust (Putnam, 2000:466) while the I-Thou involves

complete vulnerability with the other; bridging is often seen as a ‘functional’ relation (Wessendorf and Phillimore, 2019:127) while the I-Thou has no purpose apart from ‘being with’ the other.

Castles et al. (2001:12) note that there is ‘no single, generally accepted definition, theory or model of immigrant and refugee integration’, adding that the concept ‘continues to be controversial and hotly debated’. Policy formulations of ‘integration’ have often departed from Berry’s (1997:11) definition of integration as a two-way process of ‘mutual accommodation’ involving ‘acceptance by both groups of the right of all groups to live as culturally different peoples’. Integration is frequently understood as a one-way process of assimilation on behalf of the migrant (Brubaker, 2001; Amin, 2002; Joppke and Morawska, 2003; Watters, 2008; Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore, 2018; Phillimore et al., 2018). Ager and Strang (2008:186) observe that assimilationist understandings have converged with the view that maintaining ethnic identity through social bonds must logically limit wider integration into society through social bridges. In a later paper, Strang and Ager (2010) point to empirical evidence that ‘co-ethnic’ bonds, as sources of emotional support, self-esteem, and confidence, may in fact support the development of bridging capital (Spicer, 2008 in *ibid.*:598). Ogden and Mazzucato (2021) suggest that transnational peer relationships provide migrant youth in the Global North with educational motivation and transnational frames of reference as they negotiate new peer relationships in local contexts. On the basis of interviews with new migrants to the UK, Phillimore et al. (2018:217) argue that a ‘continuing bond to “home” and those who reside there provides resources which help with adjustment to a new life, problem-solving or solace’. Watters et al. (2009) also challenge assimilationist understandings by positing that social bonds can be complementary rather than antagonistic to the development of bridging capital.

The concept of integration has been criticised for perpetuating methodological nationalism in migration studies (Favell, 2003; Valluvan, 2016; Schinkel, 2018, 2019). Schinkel (2018:4) suggests that the ‘social science of immigrant integration’ has the falsifying effect of producing bordered ‘societies’ with ‘the authority of “science” and the legitimacy of “objectivity” and “neutrality”’. Schinkel (*ibid.*) asserts that as such, ‘People may be well integrated, indeed they may be very well integrated, but that still means they are at the

other side of the defining divide'. Schinkel (ibid.:10) points to the contrast between homogenised representations of society and the reality of 'super-diverse chaos of movements, trajectories, backgrounds and origins'. Strang and Ager (2010:602) emphasise that integration is 'multi-dimensional in the sense that it involves the forming of relationships across people with multiple and overlapping identities'. Kennedy and MacNeela (2014:128) also suggest that overreliance on 'nomothetic, aggregating methodologies' in studies of acculturation has allowed insufficient investigation of social and interpersonal context. It has been pointed out that studies of acculturation imply that it is possible to 'measure' integration in the form of successfully 'integrated' identities (Bhatia and Ram, 2009; Schwartz and Unger, 2010). Bhatia and Ram (2009:148) contest these teleological understandings through empirical research with the Indian diaspora in the US, which highlights integration as a non-linear and constantly negotiated process whose outcomes are never certain: 'for most people living in contemporary diasporas, their negotiation with multiple cultural sites is fluid, dynamic, interminable and often unstable'.

Other studies emphasise that 'integration' involves structural as well as interpersonal elements. Drawing on empirical research conducted in Glasgow and London, Ager and Strang (2008) conceptualise integration as involving multiple domains. These include functional resources such as employment, housing, education, and health; social connections;¹² facilitators such as language, cultural knowledge, safety, and stability; and foundations in relation to rights and citizenship. Ager and Strang (ibid.:186) note that the multidimensionality of this framework helps to avoid 'the assumption implied by some policy statements that integration and social cohesion can be achieved through social connection alone'. Similarly, Berry (1997:16) argues that research must attend to key features of the host society such as demography, immigration policies, and attitudes towards immigrants. However, Phillimore (2021) observes that the role of host societies in providing context for and supporting integration has yet to be systematically interrogated. In response to this need, Phillimore (ibid.) introduces a multi-dimensional model to conceptualise the influence of host opportunity structures of locality, discourse, relations, structure, and initiatives and support on refugee integration.

¹² These refer to social bonds, bridges, and 'links', i.e. links with structures of the state.

As with the concept of integration, social capital approaches have been criticised for reducing the complexity and multidimensionality of bonding and bridging processes and for failing to attend to contextual nuances. Watters (2008:106) notes that ‘the arguments developed in relation to social capital and diversity are often implicitly based on a representation of individuals as having an identity defined primarily by their cultural or ethnic group’. Erel (2010) criticises the use of ‘rucksack’ approaches which treat migrants’ cultural capital as reified and ethnically bounded and rather emphasises that intra-migrant differentiations of gender, ethnicity and class are produced by the institutions and networks of both ethnic majorities and migrants. Similarly, Hossain et al. (2007:8) posit that ‘not all social networks within an ethnic community are necessarily about bonding, and there is no obvious reason why bonding could not happen across ethnic divides’. They point to the significance of other social identities including religion, race, gender and class (ibid.:9). These arguments resonate with criticisms of the concept of ‘integration’ as being essentialist and methodologically nationalist. Cheong et al. (2007:24) also suggest that social capital approaches often overlook the complexity of immigration processes and the context of the reception experience. Consequently, they propose that alternative conceptions of social capital should be rooted in ‘textured understanding’ of processes and contexts.

Empirical studies of social capital have paid increasing attention to complexity and context. Weller (2010:513) suggests that the myriad ways in which young people ‘understand, experience and invest in their identities and networks not only speaks volumes about the complexity of “diversity”, but also raises concerns about analyses that apply rigid categorizations to investigate, or even measure, “bonding” or “bridging” social capital’. Accordingly, Weller (ibid.) argues that a ‘more nuanced understanding of the contexts and multiplicity of identity is fundamental’. Ryan (2011:721) reappraises the ‘often simplistic dichotomy of bonding and bridging capital’ through research with Polish migrants in London, exploring their relationships, their relative social location, and their available and realisable resources. Meanwhile Bernhard (2021) employs a dynamic and contextualised understanding of the social capital of recent Syrian refugees in a German city, emphasising the value of looking at the positioning of incoming migrants and how they are embedded in the various institutions and discourses of the host country. Other studies highlight the

significant impact of poverty and inequality on social capital in ethnically diverse contexts (Bjørnskov, 2008; Gesthuizen et al., 2009; Fieldhouse and Cutts, 2010; Laurence, 2011).

Studies of integration and social capital help us to understand how different forms of social organisation co-exist in migration contexts. However, these concepts have also been criticised for reducing complexity by encouraging essentialist and methodologically nationalist understandings of migrant identities. It is argued that these concepts often fail to recognise the complex and multidimensional ways in which diverse identities are produced and negotiated through ongoing processes of connection in migration settings. Studies increasingly highlight the contingency of these relational processes on context, including socioeconomic inequalities and the discourses and institutions of host countries.

3.4.2. Conviviality

Theorisations of cultural hybridity, creolisation, and syncretism emerged alongside concepts of integration and social capital as part of the academic backlash to multiculturalism (Wessendorf, 2014b; Back, 2016). However, like those who problematise the idea of achieving 'integrated' ethnonational identities, Gilroy (1993:2) suggests that concepts of hybridity and creolisation are still 'rather unsatisfactory ways of naming the processes of cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse and avoid capture by its agents'. Gilroy (2006:40) argues that in these framings, 'culture' is frequently seen 'as ethnic property to be owned and held under copyright'. The 'vital alternative', proposes Gilroy (ibid.), is to comprehend 'unruly, convivial multiculture as a sort of "Open-Source" co-production'. Similarly, Back and Sinha (2018:10) argue that the academic preoccupation with 'hyphenated identities' and cultural hybridity 'has come to an end of its usefulness' and instead suggest that a focus on 'connection' and 'connectedness' can provide a much richer understanding of the social experiences of young migrants. Other studies of 'multiculture' emphasise the ongoing and dynamic nature of social connection in the context of migration and diversity (Gilroy, 2006; Noble, 2009; James, 2015; Rogaly, 2016; Back and Sinha, 2018; Jackson, 2020). Qualitative research has examined how 'everyday' and 'vernacular' cosmopolitanisms are practiced in non-elitist settings (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002; Werbner, 2006; Nowicka and Rovisco, 2008; Noble, 2009; Rogaly, 2020). Unlike universalist conceptualisations of 'cosmopolitanism', these studies recognise the significance of social

identities. However, their primary focus is on what happens *between* or *across* cultures during interpersonal processes of connection at the everyday level. Building on Wise's (2005) work on 'hopeful intercultural encounters', Noble (2009:59) points to the mutual, local, and transformative elements of intercultural encounters as 'exchanges that work towards mutuality, and the creation of relations of recognition and reciprocity which get over or around misunderstandings to produce co-existence in the local'.

The concept of multiculturalism has strong links to the notion of 'conviviality'. The term 'conviviality' was first used by Illich (1973:10) to describe a post-industrial, localised society of 'autonomous individuals and primary groups'. Wise and Noble (2016) trace the idea of conviviality back to older and broader concerns around how communities 'stick together', including Durkheimian notions of solidarity, cooperation, harmony, connection, and reciprocity, and Mauss' (1925) theorisation of the link between reciprocity and solidarity. Hemer et al. (2020:2) note that the recent debate on conviviality has largely emerged from Gilroy's refashioning of the concept 'against the backdrop of social, racial and religious tensions in post-imperial Britain'. Gilroy (1993:19) uses the concept of the 'Black Atlantic' to capture the tension between the 'strategic choices' of Black movements and individuals embedded in national political cultures, and the desire to transcend ethnic and national particularities. While the 'Black Atlantic' describes a specific political and cultural formation, at a broader theoretical level it points to the simultaneously categorical and dialogical nature of all human life, and in later work Gilroy (2004) extends this thinking to the concept of 'conviviality'. According to Abspoel (2017:242), conviviality 'makes it possible for us to see and value the differences between people; at the same time, it bridges the gaps between individuals by strengthening the belief that all, in their own way, contribute to the richness of a larger whole'. Like integration, the concept of conviviality resonates with the I-It/I-Thou alternation and with modern understandings of 'solidarity' as a 'communicative, in-process understanding of the "we"...an achievement, the result of active struggle to construct the universal on the basis of particulars/differences' (Mohanty, 2003:7).

Conviviality is a contested concept with a range of meanings and interpretations (Nowicka and Vertovec, 2014; Berg et al., 2019). Schiller and Çağlar (2016) point out that while studies of multiculturalism and conviviality recognise that sociabilities can be built across difference,

they tend to assume that this ‘difference’ is ethnic or religious in nature. Similarly, Wessendorf (2016:3) observes that conviviality is usually conceptualised as being between people of different ethnic or national backgrounds, although notes Morawska’s (2014) definition as an exception. Morawska (ibid.:359) states that ‘conviviality involves the recognition by people of individual and group differences – be they ethnic, racial, religious or sexual – as legitimate at least, and at best welcome features of society’. Drawing on Walzer’s (1989) work on ‘particularist universalism’, Morawska (ibid.) also suggests that conviviality ‘at least allows for and at best invites a Weltanschauung [worldview] that...combines elements of group-specific concerns and loyalties and a commitment to broader societal and/or universal human values and purposes’. However, Lofland (1989 in Wessendorf, 2016:9) argues that while ‘civility towards diversity’ is an ‘interactional principle’, it does not necessarily imply a specific appreciation of diversity. Other studies highlight the important role of active curiosity as opposed to mere ‘civility’ towards the other in convivial encounters (Noble, 2009; Wise and Noble, 2016). Wessendorf’s (2013) description of an ‘ethos of mixing’ in a superdiverse London neighbourhood echoes Ager and Strang’s (2008:177) finding that ‘integration’ means more than the absence of conflict and ‘toleration’ and requires ‘active “mixing” of people from different groups’. The idea of active mixing contrasts with multiculturalist policies, which in advocating ‘tolerance’ for the other foster ‘I-It relations that distance and objectify’ (Shady and Larson, 2010:87).

Illich (1973:17) describes conviviality as ‘individual freedom realised in personal interdependence and, as such, an intrinsic ethical value’. Wise and Noble (2016:427) note that although considerable epistemological attention has been paid to the idea of conviviality as an ethic of mutual care, there is still a dearth of empirical research on the ‘embodied, affective and sensory dimensions of lived difference’. Nowicka and Vertovec (2014:2) propose that conviviality can and should be used as ‘an analytical tool to ask and explore in what ways, and under what conditions, people constructively create modes of togetherness’. An increasing number of empirical studies explore the conditions in which multiculturalism and conviviality are established in different contexts. Most of these studies consider co-occupancy and proximity as fundamental conditions for conviviality (Amin, 2002; Gilroy, 2004; Georgiou, 2017; Back and Sinha, 2018; Rzepnikowska, 2020). The condition of co-occupancy means that conviviality is often depicted as urban. It is therefore

unsurprising that academic interest in the concept has predominantly focused on social relations and their diversities in urban spaces (Schiller and Çağlar, 2016). However, it has also been suggested that the concept of conviviality could be relevant to non-urban settings. Wise (2005) applies the concept of 'multiculture' to suburban social life in Australia while Neal and Walters (2008) argue that the notion of conviviality has as much relevance to rural environments as to urban. Moreover, Rogaly's (2020) description of everyday cosmopolitanism in a provincial English city counters assumptions of conviviality as a solely metropolitan phenomenon. Humphris (2015) points to the potential relevance of 'superdiversity' outside global metropolises. It has also been emphasised that although proximity is necessary for encounter, it cannot guarantee it, and indeed may have the effect of compounding mistrust and entrenching group differences (Amin, 2002; Gilroy, 2006; Wessendorf, 2014b; Schiller and Çağlar, 2016).

Studies have highlighted that possibilities for encounter are strongly shaped by structural inequalities (Wallerstein, 1996; Amin, 2002; Valentine, 2008; Schiller and Çağlar, 2016; Erasmus, 2017; Wilson, 2017; Morrice, 2018). Friedman (1947:xiii) points out that encounter is contingent on the degree to which society is characterised by I-It relations: 'When the It swells up and blocks the return to the Thou, then man's existence becomes unhealthy, his personal and social life inauthentic'. Similarly, Amin (2002:967) suggests that the question of what it takes to live with difference and cultural exchange in a multi-ethnic society is influenced by 'the extent and depth of racism (popular, organised, and institutional), differentials of inequality and deprivation, discourses of immigration and minority rights, and patterns of cultural contact'. In their empirical research in New Zealand, Wang and Collins (2016:2792) found that adolescent Chinese migrants experience substantial barriers as well as opportunities to 'becoming cosmopolitan' as they negotiate encounters in a 'complex and power-laden social landscape'. Valentine (2008:334) underlines the specific impact of economic inequalities on convivial attitudes, noting that participants in her research in the West Midlands with 'the most cosmopolitan and non-prejudiced attitudes were those who considered their own lives to be full of opportunity and who were most optimistic about their own futures'. Butler (2012:150) argues that the human condition of 'precariousness' – our inherent interdependence and mutual vulnerability – produces an

ethical obligation to find political and economic forms that minimise precarity and establish economic political equality.

The influence of racial and economic inequalities on opportunities for encounter indicates the need for 'a just social order' under which people 'can attain the most undamaged possible self-relation, and thus individual autonomy' (Fraser and Honneth, 2003:259). Some have suggested that this might be achieved through a 'politics of difference'. According to Taylor (1994), the 'politics of difference' as a means to 'recognition' involves promoting the rights of particular groups on the basis of their cultural distinctiveness – in this mode of politics, 'we have to recognize and even foster particularity' (ibid.:42). Watters (2001, 2008) explores how service providers 'strategically categorise' refugees as traumatised in order to facilitate their access to certain benefits and rights. Watters (2008:129) argues that as such, service providers 'are not necessarily mere functionaries operating within a hegemonic discourse, but actors who may engage strategically to further refugees' aspirations in sophisticated ways'. Jensen (2011) also examines how young ethnic minority men in Denmark draw on the public stereotype of the black male to 'capitalise' on othering discourse. Like Watters, Jensen (ibid.:73) highlights the role of agency in capitalisation but also emphasises its reproductive dimensions: 'it can be interpreted as an attempt to challenge the devaluation of the other, although it does not disrupt the category'. Strategies of categorisation and capitalisation therefore entail a paradox as 'power structures condition agency and...historical symbolic meanings frame the possibilities at hand for negotiating identity' (ibid.). It has been argued that the politics of difference can reify and compound difference by reproducing rather than disrupting dominant categories, as has been shown with multiculturalism (Hall, 1991; Waldron, 1992; Gilroy, 1993; Appiah, 2005; Sen, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Appiah (1994:26) warns, for example, that rights-based approaches that emphasise distinctiveness can essentialise, and in doing so engender further division, thus risking the replacement of 'one kind of tyranny with another'.

Recent research examines the role of convivial capabilities in intercultural encounter. Back and Sinha (2018:10) find that young migrants employ 'a toolbox of convivial capabilities' to navigate life in post-colonial London, including attentiveness and curiosity, care for the life of the city, and the capacity to put oneself in another's place. They suggest that these

capabilities have the potential to create the conditions for social inclusion. However, scholars have challenged the common assumption that convivial capabilities inhere in the individual as organic forms of morality – instead, they illustrate how these are developed through social *practice* (Noble, 2009; Hansen, 2012; Wise and Noble, 2016). Wise and Noble (2016:426) suggest that ‘practices of recognition, enquiry, negotiation, incorporation, care and accommodation are not simple attributes of already-formed civic-minded people, but forms of labour which create relationship and meaning’. Wise (2005:182) asserts that common to the ‘hopeful intercultural encounters’ she observed in her fieldwork were ‘certain forms of manners, recognition, gratitude and hospitality, which have the capacity to facilitate the development over time of forms of interethnic belonging, security and trust’. Wise (ibid.) argues that this ‘interethnic social capital...is an essential prerequisite for the creation of dispositions of the open, joyful and hopeful kind, full of possibilities for opening up to otherness’. In the same vein, Back and Sinha (2018:17) posit that the ‘convivial life’ made by the young migrants in their research in East London ‘ruins racism, withers its destructive power and allows for different terms of urban existence – however fleetingly – to be established’. Empirical research has devoted particular attention to how the practice of friendship ‘creates the conditions for social inclusion by cultivating dispositions of openness and reciprocity’ (Harris, 2016:502). Other studies explore the transgressive role of humour and laughter in negotiating and subverting ethnic and racial differences in contexts of ethnic diversity (Winkler Reid, 2015; Wise, 2016).

Scholars have pointed to the role of politics, policies, and programmes in cultivating dispositions for encounter. According to Buber (1937:30), ‘The Thou knows no system of coordination’. Yet Friedman (1976:21) also argues that it ‘makes no sense to talk of pure spontaneity; for structures are necessary and without them we would not have that margin within which spontaneity can arise’. Georgiou (2017:25) emphasises the significance of political structures by suggesting that conviviality as an ethic of mutual care requires commitment to ‘a politics of civic engagement and solidarity’. Meanwhile Vollebergh (2016) finds that, paradoxically, Flemish residents in Antwerp sometimes draw on culturalist social cohesion policies to give expression to a sincere and ethical desire to get to know and establish relationships with their culturally different neighbours. At the programmatic level, Wilson (2017:615) notes the impossibility of ‘organising encounter’ but draws on Bennett’s

(2001) work on enchantment and surprise to argue that institutions and organisations can, and should, provide spaces which ‘cultivate openness to the “surprise” or difference of others’. Oldenburg (1989) highlights the importance of informal ‘third places’ such as cafés, libraries, community centres and parks for democracy and civil engagement, while Soja (1996) builds on postcolonial thinking to apply the concept of ‘Thirdspace’ to physical geography, territory, and place. Amin (2002:969) explores the potential role of everyday urban spaces or ‘micro-publics’ such as workplaces, schools, colleges, youth centres, and sports clubs as ‘sites of unnoticeable cultural questioning or transgression’. These spaces can provide ‘openings for contact and dialogue with others as equals, so that mutual fear and misunderstanding may be overcome and so that new attitudes and identities can arise from engagement’ (ibid.:972).

Like scholarship on integration and social capital, studies of multicultural and conviviality capture the interplay between the I-It and I-Thou relation but emphasise the relational nature of these processes. Academic preoccupation with the ethical nature of conviviality has led to a lack of empirical research on convivial practices at the everyday level. However, an increasing number of studies examine the conditions required for convivial encounter. These studies emphasise the importance of co-occupancy while pointing to the impact of structural inequalities on opportunities for encounter. Although rights-based approaches have been proposed as an effective way of addressing these inequalities, some have voiced concerns about the potentially reifying consequences of a ‘politics of difference’ (Taylor, 1994). Research also highlights the role of intercultural capabilities and tools, suggesting that these can be cultivated through policies and programmes and developed in civic spaces and ‘micro-publics’ (Amin, 2002).

3.5. The role of education

Schools, as ‘micro-publics’, can be sites of prosaic cultural negotiation and transgression. This section explores the role of schools and school-based interventions in providing support to migrant and refugee children, showing how this support can encourage their participation in intercultural encounter. The section also examines the active role of schools

and psychosocial interventions in promoting ‘dialogue’ among young people from diverse backgrounds.

3.5.1. Support for encounter

Integration studies highlight schools as the primary point of social contact between migrant and refugee adolescents and the host society (Sarr and Mosselson, 2010; Rutter, 2015; Bartlett et al., 2017). The conviviality literature similarly identifies schools as important sites for intercultural encounter (Hollingworth and Mansaray, 2012; Neal and Vincent, 2013; Wilson, 2013; Neal et al., 2016; Vincent et al., 2017). Nevertheless, Barrett (2010:7) contends that students enter the school and classroom space ‘with different degrees of power and privilege based on their membership in privileged (or oppressed) social categories’. This suggests the importance of targeted support to provide young people with the tools for engagement in the vulnerability of the I-Thou relation, which cannot occur ‘if I am not ready to respond or if I attempt to respond with anything less than my whole being insofar as my resources in this particular situation allow’ (Friedman, 1947:xii). As Brown (2017) suggests, practising vulnerability requires grounded confidence. However, drawing on Mezirow’s (1991) work on ‘transformative’ learning, Barrett (2010:11) points out that a balance must be achieved between appropriate levels of ‘support’ and ‘challenge’ in education, noting that providing high levels of ‘support’ without aspects of challenge may contribute to student dependency. Crucially, Wilson (2017:612) suggests that if we are to take ‘the unknowability of encounter seriously, for encounters to happen something has to be left open’.

Ainscow et al. (2006) note that beyond special educational needs (SEN), numerous barriers exist to the inclusion of young people in education. Numerous scholars emphasise that language support is necessary in order to increase the self-confidence of young newcomers and consequently to enhance their capabilities for social interaction (Candappa, 2000; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017; Jørgensen, 2017; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018; Ott and O’Higgins, 2019; Borsch et al., 2020; McMullen et al., 2020). Within the literature on the participation of migrant and refugee youth in school life, several studies call for an ‘inclusive’ school ethos involving respect for diverse sociocultural identities and perspectives (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017; Mendenhall et al.,

2017; Borsch et al., 2020; McMullen et al., 2020). An increasing number of studies point to the role of post-migration stressors in causing or exacerbating pre-existing mental health problems among young migrants and refugees, including poverty, isolation, racism and uncertain migration status (Watters, 2001; Rutter, 2006; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). Gladwell and Chetwynd (2018) highlight a consequent need for high levels of pastoral care and mental health support in the school setting for young refugees and asylum seekers. Mental health and psychosocial programmes in schools also respond to the particular psychosocial needs of migrant and refugee youth. Various studies examine the efficacy of school-based interventions, including trauma programmes and creative arts techniques, in promoting the mental health of refugee and asylum-seeking children in the global North (Tyrer and Fazel, 2014; Fazel and Betancourt, 2018; Mancini, 2020; Durbeej et al., 2021). However, few effective examples of such interventions have been recorded to date (Tyrer and Fazel, 2014; Fazel and Betancourt, 2018).

According to Wilson (2017:614), 'safe spaces' can 'offer an important site of respite and self-definition for marginalised groups'. But it has also been pointed out that safe spaces and other rights-based approaches towards education and psychosocial support for migrants and refugees can sometimes have the counterproductive effect of entrenching cultural differences and precluding possibilities for intercultural encounter. On the basis of research conducted in international high schools in New York City, Bartlett et al. (2017:117) argue that schools' efforts to celebrate cultural difference, including clubs based on language or geographical region, class projects, and special cultural days, may inadvertently reify 'home' and 'school' cultures. Consequently Bartlett et al. (ibid.:118) recommend that schools take a 'processual' approach to culture that shows 'cultural production and cultural reinvention as the norm'. Multicultural models in education have been widely criticised for essentialising the 'cultures' of young migrants and refugees (Troyna, 1993; Banks, 1995, 2013; Sidhu and Taylor, 2007). Watters (2001:1712) also notes that even psychosocial interventions that seek to employ 'culturally sensitive' approaches may 'homogenise a diverse range of refugees and essentialise their cultures'. Studies have also drawn attention to the essentialising influence of 'trauma' discourses in mental health and psychosocial support for refugees (Bracken et al., 1995; Summerfield, 1995, 1999; Watters and Ingleby, 2004; Watters, 2007, 2011; Gilbert, 2009). These studies argue that war exposure 'should not be

assumed to be the sole, or even primary, source of distress among refugees' (Miller and Rasmussen, 2017:130), and point to the key impact of post-migration stressors on mental health and psychosocial wellbeing.

3.5.2. Dialogical practices

Buber (1947:116) asserts that 'the relation in education is one of pure dialogue'. He contends that it is the primary role of the teacher to engage in dialogue with the student and in doing so, to model the I-Thou relation with and for their students. According to Buber (ibid.:123), the teacher's concern must always be for the student as an equal subject or 'as a whole, both in the actuality in which he lives before you now and in his possibilities, what he can become'. The teacher must be equally present in the relation: 'For educating characters you do not need a moral genius, but you do need a man who is wholly alive and able to communicate himself directly to his fellow beings' (ibid.:124). Skrefsrud (2019) draws parallels between Buber's I-Thou encounter and Gadamer's (1975) concept of 'Bildung' to show that, as well as increased self-awareness and self-insight, dialogical education can lead to new and nuanced perspectives that extend horizons of interpretation for both student and teacher. Relatedly, Piersol (2013) suggests that educators can inspire a sense of 'wonder' at the world, and in doing so, foster a sense of mystery and humility, which both contribute to the development of perspective. Schinkel (2020:487) argues that wonder is educationally important because it 'defamiliarizes' the world and helps us to see it anew.

Scholars of critical pedagogy have built on Buber's work to explore the transformative aspects of dialogue in education settings. Freire (1970:51) suggests that in critical pedagogy, the teacher becomes the student and vice versa so that they are 'both Subjects'. For Freire (1970:62), dialogue involves the development of a critical consciousness about students' roles 'in the world and with the world' and also develops personhood: 'apart from inquiry, apart from the praxis, individuals cannot be truly human' (ibid.:72). In later work Freire (2014:96) suggests that through dialogue people 'become agents of curiosity, become investigators, become subjects in an ongoing process or quest for the revelation of the "why" of things and facts'. bell hooks (1994) draws on Freire's work to define education as 'the practice of freedom', describing the classroom as a radical and political 'space of possibility' in which teaching can enable 'transgressions – a movement against and beyond

boundaries' (ibid.:12). Like Buber, hooks (ibid.:21) foregrounds the teacher's presence or 'vulnerability' in the pedagogical relation. Similarly, Wolbert and Schinkel (2021:447) assert that in order to stimulate 'wonder' in young people, the teacher must be capable of wonder herself, an experience which involves doubt and vulnerability: 'proper education requires putting oneself on the line'.

An emerging literature explores how schools and school-based interventions in multi-ethnic contexts can actively encourage intercultural understanding through dialogical practices. Various studies emphasise the influence of teacher-student relationships and classroom climate on newcomer belonging and attitudes towards school (Chiu et al., 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Borsch et al., 2019; Häggström et al., 2020; McMullen et al., 2020). Vincent et al. (2018) also discuss the influence of school policies and teaching practices on children's friendships in the context of diversity. Classrooms are described as important sites in which to teach intercultural competences and skills to young people (Parekh, 2000; Banks and Banks, 2009; Barrett, 2013; Morrice, 2018). Morrice (2018:649) points to the key role of the educator in exploring and shaping processes of 'spontaneous, embodied and unpredictable learning' in the context of transnational migration. Roets et al. (2012 in ibid.:660) assert that acknowledging and exploring the ambiguities of living with diversity is an important aspect of intercultural learning. Goldstein (2007) also submits that it is the duty of culturally responsive teachers to develop their own 'intercultural capital', or the knowledge and dispositions that are required in order to support intercultural exchanges in teaching and learning.

Fazel and Betancourt (2018) suggest that, in the context of migration and displacement, school-based interventions have the potential to support peer relationships and a sense of belonging. These programmes are usually 'explicitly designed for cultural confrontation and change through interaction' (Amin, 2002:970). Harris (2016:503) notes that in the context of increasing ethnic diversity in the global North, 'the issue of youthful sociabilities has been typically apprehended through an overarching paradigm of contact across ethnic difference'. Educational research finds that social contact programmes can positively influence interethnic attitudes among young people (Aboud and Fenwick, 1999; Bigler, 1999; Turner and Brown, 2008; Aboud et al., 2012; Aboud and Spears Brown, 2013).

However, Bigler (1999:688) asserts that emphasis on theory in the psychological literature has meant that ‘far less attention has been paid to intervention’. Harris (2016) also suggests that an interethnic framework may not always be applicable and can limit understandings of how and why young people construct friendships in settings of diversity. In recognition of these issues, Amin (2002) and Noble (2015) recommend that social contact interventions meaningfully engage with situated social dynamics. Watters (2010) also emphasises the importance of political awareness in mental health and psychosocial support for refugees in Europe.

3.6. Conclusion

This chapter examined how the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees have been conceptualised across the interdisciplinary migration literature, including in studies of superdiversity, cosmopolitanism, integration and social capital, and multicultural and conviviality. The aim has been to generate ‘thoughtful engagement across these literatures’ in the hope of producing ‘rich new insights’ (Wise and Noble, 2016:428). ‘Foucauldian’ studies allow us to scrutinise how I-It relations are produced by migration policies and (re)produced in sociological research through methodological nationalism and ethnicism, while an emergent focus on agency reveals how migrants and refugees negotiate the social categories that are imposed on them. Scholarship on superdiversity points to the role of multiple and intersecting social differences in migrant lives. Meanwhile, cosmopolitan studies reflect Buber’s I-Thou relation by focusing on mutually humanising processes and category transcendence in the liminal third space. Buber’s ideal of alternation between the I-It and I-Thou relation is captured in the complementary development of ethnonational ‘bonds’ and ‘bridges’ in the integration and social capital literature. Studies of multicultural and conviviality also explore how young people negotiate sociabilities both within and across difference. There is increasing awareness in both bodies of literature of the complexity of these processes, as well as the contingency of relations on context. Finally, studies of migrant and refugee education have emphasised the role of the school as a space for ‘encounter’ but have also highlighted the need to promote inclusion in these spaces through additional support in relation to language, culture, and pastoral and mental health needs. A number of studies have examined how schools and school-based interventions can

actively promote intercultural 'dialogue' through teaching practices and social contact programmes. The next chapter will build on this review of the literature by exploring methodological approaches and the use of specific methodologies in research on the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees.

4. Methodology

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this study is to understand how and why young people relate to each other in different ways in two specific contexts of migration and displacement in the UK. The current chapter describes the research methodology and reflects on the epistemological, practical, and ethical issues encountered during the research process. The first section sets out the research approach, explaining why qualitative research is particularly well-suited to the study of peer relationships in contexts of migration and displacement, and situating this research in the wider RWS project. Issues of access and decisions around participant selection are then discussed in the second section. The third section describes the various research methods, using empirical data to reflect on the process of data collection and analysis. The fourth section considers ethics in relation to research with marginalised and vulnerable populations, including children and young people from refugee backgrounds. It also discusses the possibility of the research process as an ethical relation, suggesting that research as ‘encounter’ is a transformative but ephemeral possibility that is contingent on the ebb and flow of power between the positionalities of researcher and participant. The importance of a reflexive stance on behalf of the researcher throughout the research process is underlined. The final section sets out the rationale for the decisions made during the analytical process primarily in relation to presenting and interpreting the research data. The ‘problem of representation’ and its potentially harmful effects on research participants is considered, and various mitigating solutions are suggested.

4.2. Research approach

The RWS project seeks to improve the ‘integration’ of young migrants and refugees through school-based interventions providing social support. My role on the project was to organise the interventions and their evaluations in schools in the UK. This provided an opportunity to conduct ethnographic research on how young migrants and refugees ‘integrated’ with their peers at the two schools. The rationale for conducting ethnographic research was to move away from a typically quantitative approach in integration studies (Kennedy and MacNeela, 2014) towards a relational perspective that would allow me to explore young people’s ethnonational identities as contingent, negotiated, and constructed (Schiller, 2005; Schinkel,

2018). Emerson et al. (1995:7) suggest that ethnographic research can help to capture the continuously evolving dynamics of 'social life as process', and makes it possible 'to see beyond fixed, static entities, to grasp the active "doing" of social life'. A relational view helps to foreground young people's active agency in constructing difference. It builds on studies which emphasise the agency of migrant youth (Fass, 2005; Knörr, 2005; White et al., 2011), and broader studies of youth and childhood which highlight young people's role as social actors (James and Prout, 1990; James et al., 1998; Mayall, 2002; Christensen and James, 2008). Nevertheless, it became apparent after several weeks at Bradbrook that viewing young people's peer relationships through a one-dimensional ethnonational lens would be highly limiting and would have the effect of ignoring the rich, complex, and kaleidoscopic nature of their social lives.

Increased understanding of the complexity of young people's social lives at Bradbrook School prompted a shift in my research approach towards seeing the identities of young migrants and their peers as diverse and multiple and 'as products of intersectional identifications' (La Barbera, 2015:5). La Barbera (ibid.) notes that this intersectional perspective requires 'a procedural and dynamic understanding'. In migration studies, intersectional and multidimensional viewpoints are foregrounded in research on 'superdiversity', which investigates how multiple, migration-related differences are constructed through social relations at the local level (Berg and Sigona, 2013). The demographic of Bradbrook, a highly diverse, inner-city London school, fits the traditional understanding of 'superdiversity' as occurring in larger urban areas (Boccagni, 2015; Foner et al., 2019; Berg et al., 2019). Indeed, the concept of superdiversity initially emerged to describe changing migration patterns and implications for increased social complexity in post-colonial London (Vertovec, 2006, 2007). However, Berg and Sigona (2013:352) suggest that if 'we take seriously the multiplication and increasingly complex intersection of axes of difference, we need to understand how it plays out differently in different conditions, at different scales, in particular places'. While a significant amount of research has been dedicated to exploring social interaction in urban neighbourhoods (ibid.), less is known about what 'superdiversity' might look like in other areas (Vertovec, 2007; Humphris, 2015). On this basis, ethnographic research at the suburban Seaview School allowed me to compare and contrast relational processes of superdiversity in inner-city and suburban

areas, asking ‘how, what, when, where, why, and for whom differences are produced, made socially significant, experienced, and represented’ (Berg et al., 2019:2724). It was therefore possible to explore the diverse and contingent ways in which young people ‘did things’ with multiple social categories at both schools (Brubaker, 2002:169).

Although awareness of superdiversity helped to move the research beyond narrow ethnonational understandings, it also became clear during the fieldwork that young people’s peer relationships could not always be captured within a categorial framework premised on the construction of difference. Rather, their relationships could occasionally be characterised as non-normative moments of ‘being with’. These moments of encounter did not involve the negotiation of social boundaries but simply denoted a mutual presence and a shared sense of ‘being human’ – what Buber (1937:15) describes as ‘love’ or the I-Thou encounter. The I-Thou, Buber argues, is in direct contrast to an increasing ‘dogma of gradual process’ which ‘leaves no room for freedom’ and ‘allows you in its game only the choice to observe the rules or to retire’ (ibid.:57). In this ‘I-It’ framework, ‘difference’ must involve some form of ‘domination’ (Said, 1995:100). Buber’s (1937) insistence on the value of the I-Thou relation resonates with contemporary arguments of the need to go beyond dominant understandings of ‘in- and exclusion’ in migration studies in order to see sociality as ‘entanglement, as being-together’ (Schinkel, 2019:6). However, recognising the I-Thou relation also presented me with new methodological challenges.

The I-Thou relation is ‘unknowable’ in that it cannot be ‘represented’ through language or image: the act of representation returns the I-Thou to the end-means paradigm and ‘the structure of knowledge’ (Buber, 1937:40). It has been suggested that the impossibility of representing encounter is part of its power (Lewis, 1961). Schinkel (2019:6) asserts that, in contrast to classifying ‘scientific’ understandings in migration studies, ‘love’ is ‘a thoroughly un-academic way of speaking about sociality as entanglement, as being-together. That is its strength’. He calls for a fine-grained and ‘detailed ethnographic sensibility’ to counter the ‘detachment and abstraction’ of the large-scale longitudinal surveys typical of research on ‘immigrant integration’ (ibid.:14). Similarly, Kennedy and MacNeela (2014) posit that, in contrast to the dominant use of quantitative, aggregating methodologies for research on acculturation, ethnographic methods can help to provide nuanced, contextualized, and

individual-level accounts of interacting experiential domains. Highlighting Glissant's (1997) work on the 'poetics' of relation, James (2016:4) notes that ethnographic research can 'draw attention to the irreducibility of human relations – attending to its interactive, creative, plural and un-categorisable qualities'. In the same vein, Duru (2020:128) suggests that 'in-depth, ethnographic exploration of everyday practices of living together in diversity' can move migration studies beyond 'the normative analysis of multiculturalism' and 'philosophical reflections at an abstract or institutional level'.

Implementing the RWS project in Bradbrook and Seaview schools presented a significant opportunity to conduct ethnographic research on the policies and practices of the two schools and the RWS project, and to examine their influence on young people's peer relationships. As a core member of the UK team on the project, it was my role to organise the interventions at each school as well as to plan and conduct the quantitative and qualitative evaluations. Working on the project gave me insights into the dynamics of school life and also accorded me legitimacy among school staff. The RWS project was perceived by senior leadership to be potentially beneficial to the schools, both in terms of potential improvement to student wellbeing as well as helping to meet RSHE requirements. My work on the project may also have helped teachers to see me as an ally in their efforts to promote the wellbeing of their students. On the other hand, there were some negative aspects to my 'threshold' position (Eyben, 2009) as researcher-practitioner. At times it was difficult to balance the work involved in organising the interventions and evaluations with the desire to devote my time to 'pure' research. Furthermore, as RWS project representative, I was the point of contact for complaints from school staff about the additional pressures the project was putting them under, for example by requiring them to oversee the completion of student questionnaires during their tutor times. In these instances, I felt torn between the need to fulfil my responsibilities on the RWS project by collecting student data, and guilt about adding to teachers' already immense workload in doing so. At a broader level, however, there were also advantages to working on a European-wide project, which allowed me to compare and contrast the emerging ethnographic findings from the two schools with anecdotal reports from project members in other countries. It also gave me the opportunity to discuss the findings with the whole project team and to benefit from their multidisciplinary insights and expertise.

4.3. Access and participant selection

My research sample is both purposive (intentionally sampled across identity data) and based on convenience and access (Cohen et al., 2007). Schools were invited to participate in the RWS project based on the demographics of their student populations. The Classroom Drama workshop would ideally be implemented with a majority of migrant and refugee students, while the PIER intervention required a more equal balance of students from 'host' and migrant or refugee backgrounds. Although the school sample was purposive, the final sample was also contingent on convenience and access. While most other country teams on the RWS project were able to recruit schools through central government pathways, the decentralised schooling system in the UK meant that individual schools had to be approached directly. Initial phone calls and meetings were held with senior staff at several schools in the UK, but many were deterred by the significant amount of time and effort that participation in the project would require. Bradbrook and Seaview were the only schools who decided to participate in the project in the UK. The enthusiasm of both schools towards participating in the RWS project is a factor for potential selection bias. Furthermore, there is significant gender bias in the school sample since Bradbrook is a boys' school.

The Classroom Drama workshop was implemented with Year 8 and Year 9 students (aged 12-14) at Bradbrook, and the PIER programme with Year 8 students (aged 12-13) at Seaview. The two interventions were evaluated using focus groups and questionnaires at two timepoints: once before the intervention (T1) and once after (T2). Focus groups were conducted with a random sample of students who were participating in the interventions. The focus groups were designed by a qualitative team within the RWS project, of which I was a core member. We collaborated on a guide for the focus groups at T1 and T2 (included in Appendices). The aim of the focus groups at T1 was to gather information about young people's social and emotional wellbeing in each context. The questions at T2 aimed to evaluate the interventions and to understand contextual factors which might have influenced their effectiveness. Eight focus groups were conducted in relation to the Classroom Drama intervention at Bradbrook: two with students and one with teachers at T1, and four with students and one with the drama therapists at T2. At Seaview, nine focus

groups were conducted for the PIER intervention: three with students and one with teachers at T1, and four with students and one with the EAL team at T2. The T2 focus groups at Seaview had to be conducted online due to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020. The questionnaires were developed by the whole RWS project team and finalised by a quantitative sub-team.¹³ They were conducted with both ‘intervention’ and ‘control’ groups at each school. Although the questionnaire data is not used in this research, observation during the quantitative evaluations allowed me to see how young people responded in different ways to the language of the RWS project. The second round of questionnaires at Seaview had to be conducted online due to the Covid-19 ‘lockdown’ in March 2020, meaning that it was not possible to observe young people’s responses.

The principals of both schools allowed me to conduct participant observation and interviews on the condition of receiving ethics approval from the University of Sussex and passing DBS checks. Ethics approval for the research was granted by the University (included in Appendices). Participant observation at the two schools was mostly structured around the organisation, implementation, and evaluation of the RWS project. In the run-up to each intervention, I spent time at the schools meeting with school staff and preparing the questionnaires and focus groups. At Bradbrook I was able to observe in the classroom, corridors, staffroom, and playground. I observed one Classroom Drama session and also attended several parents’ evenings and coffee mornings. At Seaview I spent a lot of time in the staffroom and EAL office but was unable to spend significant time among students in the classroom or playground. However, facilitating the PIER intervention provided me with deep insight into young people’s peer relationships in the classroom context. I conducted a total of 38 interviews at both schools. Due to the lockdown, I was only able to conduct two interviews at Seaview, both with members of the EAL team. The lack of teacher or student interviews at Seaview was supplemented however by a large number of meetings and informal conversations with the EAL team during the research process, and by extensive participant observation during the PIER sessions. 36 interviews were conducted at Bradbrook School and in the local borough: with students (13), teachers (eight), other

¹³ For more information on the design of the RWS questionnaires, see Verelst et al. (2022), Kankaanpää et al. (2022), and Spaas et al. (2021).

school staff (three), parents (six), and staff working at local organisations (six).¹⁴ Student interviews were conducted with young people between the ages of 13 and 16. I aimed to interview students from a variety of migration and ethnic backgrounds so that my research sample would be broadly representative of the overall student population, challenging the traditional focus of superdiversity studies on specific groups (Wessendorf, 2014b).

My physical access to the two schools varied. During the research I was living in North London. The journey from North London to Bradbrook School in East London was around an hour on the London Underground, while the journey to Seaview in Brighton & Hove could take up to two and a half hours on the train. The experience of travelling to and from each school was informative – as Berg and Sigona (2013:352) note, ‘geography matters fundamentally’. Commuting to Bradbrook during the early morning rush hour, I observed a daily exodus of office workers alighting from the tube in central London, while the carriage slowly filled with industrial workers as the journey progressed into the heart of East London. I came to understand this change in demographic as symbolic of London’s entrenched inequalities (Wessendorf, 2014b). Meanwhile the journey to Seaview often involved Uber rides with drivers who told me more about the area and described changes in local demographics in recent years. After passing safeguarding checks at Seaview, I was given my own electronic pass, which allowed me to come and go as I pleased. My access to Bradbrook was more restricted, as I had to sign in at reception every day and borrow classroom keys from teachers if I needed them.

4.4. Research methods

My research at Bradbrook and Seaview employed three methods: participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. Participant observation allowed me to observe how young people negotiated their differences at the everyday level, while the semi-structured interviews and focus groups engaged the perspectives of young people, parents, school staff, and local community workers. Said (1978:327) suggests that as a

¹⁴ These organisations included a youth centre for young refugees and migrants, a community centre, a complementary education initiative, two organisations supporting Roma and Albanian communities, and an interpreting service.

researcher one should 'submit one's method to critical scrutiny'. The following section critically examines the methods used in this research.

4.4.1. Participant observation

Participant observation is the main research method in ethnography (Munck and Sobo, 1998). According to Agar (1996:163), the term 'participant observation' suggests that 'you are directly involved in community life, observing and talking with people as you learn from them their view of reality'. Emerson et al. (1995:2) highlight that the effect of the ethnographer's presence is not neutral but 'inevitably has implications and consequences for what is taking place, since the fieldworker must necessarily interact with and hence have some impact on those studied'. At Seaview I conducted the bulk of my participant observation from my perspective as facilitator during the PIER interventions. My role as facilitator is highly likely to have influenced the way that young people interacted with each other during the sessions. However, walking around the classroom during group activities also allowed me to take a position of 'unobtrusive observation' (Jabeen, 2009:412). In contrast, at Bradbrook I found it relatively easy to blend in with the students, who presumed that I was a new teaching assistant or from Ofsted. Bradbrook's principal suggested that tying my hair up and wearing trousers would help me to blend in. Unobtrusive observation was more difficult around teachers. For example, one teacher allowed me to sit at the back of his classroom to observe his lesson.¹⁵ The class contained some challenging characters and threatened to descend into chaos at several points. In a candid moment several months later, the teacher told me that my presence had compounded the stress he felt during the class. His discomfort was understandable in the managerial climate and 'audit culture' of contemporary western education (Guilherme and Morgan, 2016:138). I tried to avoid passive observation at Bradbrook by taking an active role where possible, such as supporting students with their reading during 'Accelerated Reading' sessions in the library. This helped me to develop rapport with students and to make teachers feel more at ease. At the same time, the possibility of becoming a real 'participant' or member of either school community was always constrained by my status as

¹⁵ When asking to observe lessons, I always made it clear to teachers that it was not my aim to observe their teaching but rather to increase my understanding of how young people interacted with their peers in the classroom setting.

a researcher. Emerson et al. (1995:2) confirm that even with ‘intensive resocialisation, the ethnographer never becomes a member in the same sense that those “naturally” in the setting are members’.

One of the challenges of participant observation was knowing what and how much of my experiences to record (Agar, 1996). Emerson et al. (1995:5) note that the ethnographer’s sense of what might be interesting or important to future readers is constantly changing. New insights and understandings emerged as I spent more time at each research site. Mattingly and Lawlor (2001:153) describe relationship building as ‘the real work of ethnography’, and this quickly became apparent at both schools. I learnt the importance of having informal conversations with teachers and of being able to make small talk in the staffroom – these interactions helped teachers to get to know me and vice versa. They also helped to develop my understanding of what was important to teachers from a ‘one-down’ position rather than imposing my own views through specific questions. Agar (1996:140) highlights the importance of these ‘informal ethnographic interviews’ in the early stages of research. Several teachers became key ‘informants’ about school life, often pointing out things they thought I might find interesting for my research and ‘collecting, retaining, and transmitting information’ (ibid.:139). Participant observation also involved ethical decisions about what or what not to record. For example, I was present in the room when a student reported domestic abuse to his teachers at Bradbrook; I decided that to write down the details of what he told his teachers would be unethical. Emerson et al. (1995:9) confirm that participant observation may involve moments of uncertainty ‘about whether to include intimate or humiliating incidents in their fieldnotes’.

Deciding when, where, and how to write fieldnotes was another challenge of participant observation. Emerson et al. (1995:10) suggest that ‘far from simply mundane matters, such decisions can have tremendous import for relations with those in the field’. I found this to be particularly true in regard to my relations with school staff, as evidenced in this exchange at Seaview with George and Shaima,¹⁶ who were members of the EAL team:

¹⁶ As with the names of both schools, the names of all research participants have been pseudonymised.

George, Shaima and I are having lunch in the staffroom when we're joined by another teacher, Joe. They reflect on the EAL support that is provided to newcomers at Seaview, and I take out my notebook with the aim of jotting down some notes. There's an immediate change in atmosphere – their sentences become stilted, and they keep glancing at the notebook. I ask if the notetaking bothers them. 'Most of us get a bit anxious when we see someone with a notebook,' laughs George. 'I never realised how off-putting it is until I was observed in lessons,' Joe adds. [fieldnotes]

At Bradbrook, the unease created by writing things down in a notebook was evident in the following encounter with a teacher:

Rohan walks into the pastoral office with another teacher, sighing, 'I don't have time for this! I've got shit to do'. He sees me and looks taken aback. 'Oh, I didn't realise there was an external in the room...I shouldn't be talking like this when an external is here. She'll be writing notes on me – "Asian teacher, said he had shit to do"'. His tone is deadpan, and I can't tell if he's joking or serious. Maybe both. [fieldnotes]

Rohan's reaction to me as 'an external' firmly positioned me as an outsider. His tongue-in-cheek reference to himself as 'Asian teacher' could be read as a parodic commentary on the act of 'writing notes on' the research object and its categorising and potentially exoticizing effects. Similarly, a participant in Jensen's (2011:72) research with ethnic minority young men in Sweden asked him, 'What do you want to write about us. What is there to write?'. On the basis of these encounters with school staff I decided to change my notetaking strategy. This meant coming up with 'unique means to avoid or minimise awkward interactions' (Emerson et al., 1995:12). Rather than use a notebook I decided to write fieldnotes in the 'Notes' application on my phone. However, both schools had a no-phone policy, and teachers were encouraged to set a good example by refraining from regular use of their phones. I therefore typed brief jottings on my phone where it was appropriate to do so and wrote them up properly later. The inability to take comprehensive fieldnotes during the school day may have ultimately been beneficial for the research because it meant that I gave more attention to the events happening around me (Agar, 1996). I sometimes recorded audio notes on my phone after leaving the school, usually on the walk to the tube or train station. Audio notes enable the researcher to 'speak back' to themselves and avoid the self-censorship involved in textual renderings of experience (Mazanderani, 2017). Doing so as soon as possible after leaving the school was important in order to preserve the accuracy of the notes in light of the 'problem' of memory (Agar, 1996:161).

Some peer relationships were impossible to observe, notably those which happened outside school grounds either in person or online. Brown and Klute (2003:344) assert that 'adolescents have a penchant for significant interactions with peers outside of adults' eyesight'. Bradbrook teachers reflected on this issue during a focus group when discussing peer dynamics among established Romanian students and Romanian newcomers: 'I think a lot of it does happen outside of the lesson. In the corridors, after school, before school'. Interviews therefore had an important role in increasing my understanding of the situated aspects of peer relationships in spaces which were beyond my view as a researcher. In the absence of opportunities for observation in those spaces, conducting interviews helped to expand what would otherwise have been a restricted view of possible influences on young people's peer relationships. Morrow (1999:759) points out that many studies on social capital 'seem to assume that individual children are only influenced by family structure and school' and notes that these studies 'do not give an account of the broader social context, such as friends, social networks, out-of-school activities such as paid work, and children's activities in their communities'. Since I was unable to conduct observation in online spaces, I interviewed young people about their online relationships. Investigating transnational dynamics and connections as well as those in the local area helped to avoid methodological 'neighbourhoodism' (Berg and Sigona, 2013; Berg et al., 2019). It was impossible to observe historic elements in peer relationships; Borsch et al. (2020) note that biographical experiences across time cannot be observed and must instead be elicited in interviews.

4.4.2. Semi-structured interviews

I began to conduct semi-structured interviews after completing several months of observation at each school. The initial period of observation helped to give me a sense of what might be meaningful to ask participants about during the interviews; Agar (1996:139) advises that the 'starting position' for an interview should be knowing 'enough about local talk to actually conduct an interview'. At Bradbrook, this observation period was also a time to develop relationships with school staff, who became key 'gatekeepers' (Freeman and Mathison, 2008) to other research informants. They put me in touch with parents who were willing to be interviewed and also connected me with several informants working with local organisations in the borough. I contacted other local informants directly and also

interviewed an interpreter after meeting her at a parents' evening at the school. Staff also suggested different students to speak to and helped me to invite them to participate in the interviews. The link between teachers and students was often key to securing young people's trust. For example, when I asked Hussein, an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) from the Middle East, if he would be willing to have an interview, he was initially suspicious and asked many questions about the research and what it would be used for. However, when I mentioned that I happened to be good friends with one of his teachers as we had attended university together, he became visibly more relaxed and open in demeanour. When inviting young people to be interviewed, I sometimes avoided using the word 'interview' because of its formal and potentially negative connotations, particularly for young asylum-seekers or refugees (Haile et al., 2020). However, the formality of the term 'interview' also seemed to incentivise some young people to participate in the research: a teacher told me that being asked to participate in interviews made students 'feel important'. Similarly, Jabeen (2009:413) notes that children in her research in India 'took pride in being asked to participate in research – a serious grown-ups' business'.

Jørgensen (2017) suggests that teenage research participants may feel more comfortable speaking to researchers in small groups, while young men in Punch's (2002) research preferred group interviews due to the supportive company of their peers. On this basis I offered young people the option of being interviewed in groups – most students chose to have individual interviews, although Batu, a Mongolian student, and Yasir, a Somali refugee, chose to be interviewed together. It is widely considered best practice to conduct interviews in quiet, private spaces. Sinha and Back (2014:474) argue, however, that these conditions are ironically 'antithetical to the establishment of a genuine two-way dialogue'. They contend that for young migrants in particular, this type of interview is 'often more in keeping with being questioned by the police or immigration officers'. I aimed therefore to make the interview setting with students as informal and relaxed as possible, while still ensuring some degree of privacy. I tried to conduct interviews in an empty classroom and would leave the door of the room ajar. However, when interviews were conducted at break or lunchtime, other students would occasionally walk in and out of the room, briefly disrupting the flow of the interview. A teacher was present in the room during one student interview; we agreed beforehand that she would wear headphones to ensure the student's

confidentiality and I made it clear to the student that the teacher could not hear the interview. Most parent interviews were conducted in a small meeting room at the school, and I provided snacks and drinks at these interviews. Rohini, a Bengali mother who had recently arrived from Italy with her family, invited me to conduct the interview at her home in East London, where her daughter Saaleha helped to interpret. I brought refreshments, and after the interview Rohini and her husband invited me to join them for tea, biscuits, and fruit.

Kvale (1996:14) highlights the interview as a site for the co-construction of knowledge *inter* the *views* of the researcher and subject: 'An interview is literally an *inter view*, an interchange of views between two persons conversing about a theme of mutual interest'. The interview can thus be understood as a site for potential dialogue between the researcher and participant. However, Kvale (ibid.:6) also notes that 'The research interview is not a conversation between equal partners, because the researcher defines and controls the situation'. Halford et al. (1997) and Miller (2000) emphasise the subjective and biased nature of the interview, in that the knowledge produced responds to the specific questions or interest of the researcher. The act of speaking about oneself always involves a 'biographical illusion' (Bourdieu, 1986a): the interview is influenced by perceptions of what the researcher wants to hear and what the interview participant feels it is appropriate to tell (Gardner, 2002). I tried to reduce these power differences by being as open as possible, usually by sharing information about my own background where relevant. As a Northern Irish woman, I often emphasised my lack of familiarity with the English context to teachers; similarly, Wessendorf (2014b:18) remarks that in her research in East London, the fact that she was not from London sometimes helped to facilitate conversations. I sometimes began student interviews by showing students a photo of myself at the international high school I had attended as a teenager in Malawi, in the hope of prompting questions about my own experiences of migration as a young person and thus encouraging informal conversation. Young people's ability to ask me questions, however, appeared to depend on their perceptions of me as a researcher, their own 'convivial' capabilities, and their sense of ease in the interview space.

I developed a semi-structured interview guide (included in Appendices). During interviews I used this guide as a jumping-off point to ask participants about different aspects of their peer relationships or about social dynamics in the local school and community. I sometimes focused on a particular social dynamic that I had picked up on during observation, such as the involvement of some students in gangs or the use of certain words in the corridors like 'freshie' or 'refugee'. In theory, semi-structured interviews create space for participants to direct the conversation (Smith, 2012) and help to avoid 'muting' the participant by categorising certain aspects of the conversation as off-topic (Townsend et al., 2010:621). Asking indirect, depersonalising questions helped to level power differentials where the subject matter was particularly sensitive. In these instances, Agar (1996:146) advises the researcher to create a 'self/other' distinction by asking questions such as, 'Does it ever happen that someone...?', rather than 'Did your...?'. I employed this technique when asking Hussein, the Middle Eastern UASC, about gang violence in the borough, since it was clear that he did not want to reveal his involvement in gangs to me. The use of indirect questions helped me to gain his perspectives on this issue without causing embarrassment or distress. I conducted follow-up interviews at Bradbrook with a Somali parent, Faduma, and a Bengali student, Nadir, in order to increase my understanding of specific issues and thus obtain 'more substantive content and poetic depth' (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009:12). The interview with Faduma was conducted over the phone and with Nadir over Zoom, as by then Nadir had left Bradbrook to go to sixth form college. In both instances I found it useful to have already met and established a relationship with the participants in person. It was often impossible to conduct follow-up interviews with Bradbrook students due to their transnational mobility, which Falzon (2009) describes as a particular challenge in multi-sited ethnographic research.

All interviews with young people, teachers, and community workers were conducted in English. Several parent interviews at Bradbrook were conducted in their own languages: I conducted an interview with a Bolivian mother (Reina) in Spanish, and used an interpreter for my interview with Gianna, an Italian mother. The interpreter was also from Italy, and as the interview progressed, she began to share some of her own experiences of moving to the UK. This helped to create a sense of trust and made the interview feel less transactional. The interpreter's direct influence on the interview challenges traditional understandings of the

interpreter as 'a conduit linking the interviewer with the interviewee' and ideally as 'a neutral party who should not add or subtract from what the primary parties communicate to each other' (Freed, 1988:316). Temple and Edwards (2002:5) note that in this 'value-free' model of interpreting, the interpreter is 'posed as a neutral mouthpiece, faithfully and passively translating back and forth between languages'. They argue that the interpreter must instead be located as an active agent in the production of research accounts. It is also important to recognise the role of power in the interpreting relation, which is likely to involve the interpreter 'screening and filtering information' (Williams, 2005:40) as they navigate the complexities of transferring meaning across cultures and language. Rohini's daughter Saaleha helped to interpret for her mother during our interview and also became involved in the conversation, sharing her own perspectives on various issues and adding detail and colour to Rohini's comments.¹⁷

All of the interviews were recorded with the participants' consent. Recording is generally thought to be good practice in qualitative interviewing: without it 'all kinds of data are lost: the narrative itself, pauses, intonation, laughter' (Elliott, 2005:33). I used my phone to record the interviews. Recording often appeared to make participants self-conscious about what they were saying, as many sounded nervous at the start of the interview and tended towards using formal language. However, anxieties usually seemed to decrease as the interview progressed and participants became more comfortable, often appearing to forget about the presence of the phone on the table. One of the benefits of using a phone to record is that it is more of a 'commonplace' object than a traditional recording device. As in the case of participant observation, I noticed that writing notes during interviews often had the effect of making teachers and young people nervous, and they would frequently glance at my notebook. On this basis I largely stopped taking notes during interviews. I later transcribed the interviews verbatim with the aim of retaining their 'inelegant features' (Ellingson, 2017:138), such as 'um', 'like', pauses, and laughter. Doing so helped to counteract the 'flat form' of written words and to maintain 'the emotional overtones and nuances of the spoken text' (Bazeley, 2007:44). Moreover, Bazeley (ibid.:45) advises against

¹⁷ After the interview I asked Saaleha if she would be happy for me to include her views in the research. She agreed and signed a consent form.

correcting grammatical errors in order ‘to capture the form and style of the participant’s expression’. This was particularly important for the interviews with Bradbrook students and their parents since many of these were conducted in their second or third languages. I translated the interview with Reina from Spanish into English. Issues of power and race are inherent to the politics of translation: Spivak (2000:13) suggests that in ‘every possible sense, translation is necessary but impossible’. Language must be understood as a process of meaning construction whose contingency on context and audience negates the possibility of ever achieving a faithful ‘translation’.

4.4.3. Focus groups

Focus groups are able to give ‘concentrated and detailed information on an area of group life which is only occasionally, briefly and allusively available to the ethnographer over months and years of fieldwork’ (Bloor et al., 2001:6). At both Bradbrook and Seaview, teachers were invited via email to participate in teacher focus groups. There was also a sign-up sheet in the staffroom at Bradbrook. For the student focus groups at Bradbrook, I approached students directly and if they agreed to participate in the research, gave them a slip with the details of the group. At Seaview young people were recruited by the EAL team. During student recruitment I was mindful of research in Northern Irish schools which found that some children from refugee backgrounds preferred not to take part in focus groups because they did not want to appear different to their peers (McMullen et al., 2020:11). I therefore tried to avoid stigmatising language in communications around the focus groups. Gibson (2007:474) suggests that in focus group discussions with young people, groups of up to eight are viable with children over the age of ten. The first student focus group at Bradbrook had eight participants but it was a struggle to maintain order – thereafter, I aimed to have five to seven participants per group. Focus groups were held with students from the same year group on the basis that ‘style, ability, sensitivities and level of comprehension and abstraction differ substantially at different ages’ (ibid.).

At Bradbrook, the T1 student focus groups were conducted in vacant classrooms during class time, while the T1 teacher focus group was conducted in a vacant classroom after school. The T2 student focus groups were also conducted in school, while the T2 focus group with drama therapists was conducted in a coffee shop in central London. Gibson (2007:476)

notes that holding focus groups in school environments can help to balance power differentials between young participants and researchers given young people's familiarity with the school space. I tried to create a 'non-authoritarian climate' (ibid.:477) in the classroom by arranging chairs in a circle that allowed me to sit among participants. At Seaview, the student and teacher focus groups at T1 were also conducted in vacant classrooms during and after school. However, the T2 focus groups with Seaview students and the EAL team all had to be conducted online due to the national lockdown in March 2020. The T2 student focus groups were conducted some months after the PIER programme as a result of the school closures and consequently many young people had only vague memories of the intervention. The focus groups were difficult to conduct remotely. The EAL team placed a laptop, connected to a large screen, at the front of a vacant classroom. Students sat in a row in front of the laptop where I could see and hear them, and vice versa. This formal arrangement lost the non-authoritarian effect of the in-person circular seating arrangements. There were also several lapses in the internet connection.

Bagnoli and Clark (2010:103) note that the source of focus group data is group interaction or discussion, which the researcher plays an active role in creating. Before every student focus group, I introduced myself, asked the students to introduce themselves, and covered the 'ground rules' (Gibson, 2007:479). The latter involved advising young people that there were no 'right' or 'wrong' answers, reminding them that their responses would remain anonymous, and encouraging them to respect each other's views. The focus group guide developed by the RWS qualitative team suggested that students write a 'tweet' about their experiences in school as an opening activity. I decided, however, to adapt this exercise on the basis that young people aged 12-14 in the UK were unlikely to have had much previous engagement on Twitter. Instead of a tweet, I asked them to give me three words that described their experiences in school. This prompted discussion about why they had said those words. Gibson (ibid.:478) highlights the importance of a 'child-friendly repertoire, including patience, warmth, humour, respect, active listening and flexibility'. Since I had previously had the role of PIER facilitator, it was particularly important to use this repertoire during the T2 focus groups with Seaview students. I encouraged them to be as honest as possible about the intervention and assured them that no offence would be caused by negative views. The challenges of online research, however, as well as my position as

facilitator-researcher, may have influenced young people's capacity to be honest with me. Conversely, my lack of involvement in the Classroom Drama workshop may have encouraged honesty and candour during the T2 evaluation with Bradbrook students.

Bloor et al. (2001:43) note that debates that are stimulated during focus group discussions can help the researcher to 'understand (through subsequent analysis) the meanings and norms which underlie those group answers'. Similarly, Ayrton (2019:324) suggests that 'the micro-dynamics of power that play out in a focus group discussion are revealing of those that operate in the wider population'. Power dynamics were evidenced by interruptions during the focus groups ('Let me talk let me talk!'). Ethnographic observation before and after the focus groups also exposed power dynamics:

As the students leave the classroom, I hear Kingsley saying to Tariq, 'You're so sweaty!'. I admonish him – 'Why are you saying that? He's not sweaty at all!'. Kingsley responds, 'Not like that Miss...I mean he was trying so hard!'. [fieldnotes]

The process of conducting the focus groups involved power dynamics between the participants and me as researcher as I navigated the role of moderator. Wilkinson (1999:70) notes that focus group discussions encourage the 'relatively free-flowing and interactive exchange of views'. At Bradbrook School, where the focus groups consisted of all boys, this 'free-flowing' dialogue was often a lively process that sometimes verged on the chaotic. Students often added to each other's opinions in order generate a 'collective consciousness' (Gibson, 2007:474):

R2¹⁸: *And this is why some teachers are sometimes very angry or strict. Because they have a life too, they are not-*

R3: *Ogres-*

R6: *...it's kind of like we're living in two different-*

R5: *Worlds-*

R6: *Mindsets, of each other, and we don't go together. [focus group (FG)]*

¹⁸ 'R' refers to 'Respondent'.

Hennessey and Heary (2005) suggest that an important role of the moderator is to maintain a balance between allowing young people to direct discussion and keeping discussion focused on the topic at hand. I sometimes found it difficult to find a balance between allowing young people to follow different pathways and maintaining some degree of control over the topic of conversation. Yet Bagnoli and Clark (2010:104) also highlight methodological arguments that in decreasing researcher control, the group situation can redress the ‘power of the researcher over participants’ and encourage ‘the free expression of ideas during informal interaction’. The above example illustrates how focus group participants can exercise a collective, creative power in the production of the research ‘product’, challenging assumptions in the methodological literature of the research participant as necessarily ‘oppressed’ (Thapar-Björkert and Henry, 2004).

A member of the EAL team at Seaview interpreted for two Brazilian newcomers during a student focus group. While this helped to minimise the power differentials created by a lack of fluency in English, the presence of EAL team members may have generally decreased young people’s willingness to be open about their experiences at school. At Bradbrook, a teacher advised that young people could interpret for each other during the student focus groups since this was common practice at the school. In some ways this was an advantage since the presence of official interpreters is likely to change the research dynamic (Gardner, 2002). Peer-to-peer interpreting may, however, have exacerbated existing power imbalances among young people. Williams (2005) notes that requiring the services of any interpreter can be a disempowering experience – this may be especially true in light of the complexity of peer dynamics during adolescence (Brown and Klute, 2003). Moreover, asking young people to assume the labour of interpreting for their peers may have limited their capacity to voice their own opinions. The literature on ‘language brokering’ among migrant and refugee youth provides insights into some of the negative psychosocial effects (anxiety, stress) of interpreting for family members (Kosner et al., 2014; Rainey et al., 2014; Crafter and Iqbal, 2020) – these insights could also be relevant here. I transcribed all the focus groups in full.

4.5. Ethical considerations

This chapter has already touched on ethical issues relating to the research at Bradbrook and Seaview schools. This section continues to explore ethical elements of the research. It begins by discussing my engagement with issues of rights and recognition during the research. It goes on to explore the potential for the research exchange to be an ethical relationship, highlighting its transformative possibilities as well as its contingency on intersectional power dynamics. The section also considers the ethical roles of emotion and vulnerability on the part of the researcher.

4.5.1. Rights-based research

According to Murphy and Dingwall (2001:2), ethical research ‘does not just leave participants unscathed but also avoids infringing their rights... Like all researchers, ethnographers have a responsibility not only to protect research participants from harm, but also to have regard to their rights’. The methodological literature on research with children and young people often specifically mentions the rights enshrined in the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). For example, in reference to the UNCRC, Beazley et al. (2009:370) assert that the ‘right to be properly researched’ should translate into ‘children being participants in research; using methods that make it easy for them to express their opinions, views and experiences; [and] being protected from harm that might result from taking part in research’. The compelling case for rights-based research with children led me to take a rights-based approach to my ethnographic research at Bradbrook and Seaview schools. Maintaining this approach required responsiveness to what Murphy and Dingwall (2001:3) describe as ‘method-specific issues’, which often demanded that the ‘common principles’ of ethical research be ‘operationalized in different ways’ according to social, political, and historical contingencies.

Information sheets and consent forms were given to all research participants, including young people, school staff, and other adult informants.¹⁹ Although the language of the student consent forms had been simplified as much as possible, some terms such as

¹⁹ The thesis appendices contain the information sheets and consent forms for the doctoral research (ER/ES457/3). Separate information sheets and consent forms were provided for the interviews and focus groups on the RWS project (ER/ES457/2).

‘consent’, ‘anonymity’, and ‘data protection’ still caused confusion for young people and I spent a significant amount of time explaining them. Gibson (2007:479) emphasises the importance of explaining the concepts of anonymity and confidentiality ‘in a way that children will understand’. However, some young people, particularly those from asylum seeker and refugee backgrounds, remained wary. This scenario was not atypical. Jo, who had set up a youth club for young migrants and refugees in the local borough at Bradbrook, told me,

Last night a few young Afghan boys turned up [at the club] and you could tell they were really quite wary of me, like, ‘Why are you asking my name, why do you want my number? I don’t have a phone...’. I was like, ‘It’s in your hand!’ [laughs]. And then some of the other boys were like, ‘It’s alright, it’s just Jo, she’s just gonna text you and tell you about club!’. So then they’re like, ‘Ok, my number’s this’, you know... [interview]

In this instance, the assurance of peers helped to build trust towards Jo as a community worker. At Bradbrook, Yasir was a 13-year-old student who had arrived in the UK from Somalia several years previously. He agreed to speak to me in an interview with his Mongolian friend Batu. However, after reading through the consent form he seemed increasingly anxious and ultimately decided not to participate in the research, even though Batu was comfortable to continue. Like the Afghan boys at the local youth club, Yasir may have been afraid that his details would be shared with the Home Office. Haile et al. (2020:25) report a similar issue in their research with unaccompanied asylum-seekers in the UK, many of whom were ‘very anxious and cautious about taking part’. Yasir’s case is a reminder that consent is an ongoing and negotiated process which is contingent on perception, language, and context.

Boddy (2014:98) points out that language can be ‘a critical barrier to participation in research for participants who are immigrants to the study country, and can undermine freely given informed consent’. As part of the RWS project, information sheets and consent forms relating to the questionnaires and focus groups were translated into 18 different languages. Parental consent was required for participants in the RWS evaluation who were below the age of 13. Boddy (ibid.) suggests that ethical problems may arise when young people are asked to act as ‘language brokers’ for their parents, and that these issues can be

avoided by translating information sheets and consent forms where necessary. Parental information sheets and consent forms were therefore translated into several different languages. At Seaview, EAL staff helped me to compose a short accompanying note about the project to send to parents. This was a learning exercise in the politics of the local area, where George told me that ‘migration’ was a sensitive issue:

George says that we need to frame the letter to the parents carefully. He explains that the families at the school are a ‘mixed clientele’. Although the school is in a ‘middle-class’ area, students come from all over Brighton & Hove and parents have very mixed views about migration. ‘Migrant and refugee integration is a topic that needs to be handled carefully...it’s sensitive, from both sides,’ he cautions. He says that talking about ‘multicultural communities’ always gets a bit of an eyebrow raise from Arab kids and their families who’ve been here for many years. [fieldnotes]

George and other members of the EAL team advised me to remove reference to ‘migration’, ‘diversity’, and ‘refugees’ from the letter to Seaview parents, including the title of the project. The final letter read,

At Seaview, half of Year 8 (selected randomly) will be participating in the 8-week PIER programme, which uses activities such as stories and role play to increase empathy and build understanding between young people from different backgrounds for 45 minutes per week.

The letter contained a link to the RWS project but did not mention it by name. This example highlights the importance of context-sensitive research that is informed by local knowledge and perspectives.

Although not legally mandated, Bradbrook staff asked me to gain caregiver permission for my interviews with UASC. I received caregiver permission to interview Hussein. However, I was unable to secure caregiver consent from the foster carers of several other unaccompanied minors. This involved dealing with my feelings of disappointment after having engaged in lengthy email chains, or what Kušić and Záhora (2020) describe as reckoning with a sense of fieldwork as ‘failure’. There is always the possibility that focus groups and interviews with young people might trigger traumatic or psychosocial stress (Hennessey and Heary, 2005). This is a particular risk in research with young refugees and asylum seekers, who may have been exposed to traumatic events (Bean et al., 2007;

Vervliet et al., 2014; Franco, 2018; Spaas et al., 2021). The information sheet provided participants with information about who to speak to should they feel upset after having taken part in the research; it also informed participants that they could withdraw from the research at any stage in the process. I regularly reminded both parents and students that their participation in the research would be anonymised. Anonymity also emerged as an important aspect during interviews with teachers, who often asked for reassurance of anonymity before giving their perspectives on school policies or sharing information that could compromise the school's public image. Pseudonyms were used to anonymise the names of people and places in the research, as recommended by Murphy and Dingwall (2001). This helped to humanise the people and places described; I tried to choose names that reflected national, ethnic, and/or religious backgrounds.

4.5.2. Research as encounter?

Researchers can take practical steps to mitigate the risk of ethical issues by employing a rights-based approach. However, questions remain in relation to the wider ethical implications of qualitative research. Can qualitative research be an ethical tool in and of itself? Some have argued that, under appropriate conditions, the research interaction can constitute a mutual exchange or 'dialogue' between the researcher and participant (Back and Sinha, 2018; Back, 2019). Back (2016) highlights the importance of listening to *understand* rather than to respond. Scheper-Hughes (1995:418) contends that in ethnographic research, 'Seeing, listening, touching, recording can be, if done with care and sensitivity, acts of solidarity'. But the possibilities of research as 'encounter' are also shaped by the various positionalities of researcher and participants, which influence power relations during the research process (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001). Thapar-Björkert and Henry (2004) suggest that the ebb and flow of power during the research process is impacted by the multiple identities of researchers and research participants, which are continuously negotiated on issues of national location, age, generation, and reciprocity.

Recognising the influence of positionalities on the research process involves reflexivity, a key principle of ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2019). Reflexivity means 'thinking critically about what you are doing and why, confronting and often challenging your own assumptions, and recognising the extent to which your thoughts, actions and decisions

shape how you research and what you see' (Mason, 2002:5). In Horsburgh's (2003:309) words, reflexivity involves 'active acknowledgement by the researcher that their own actions and decisions will inevitably impact upon the meaning and context of the experience under investigation'. My status as a White British, female researcher in her late 20s had implications for how young people and adults related to me. At Seaview School I represented the ethnic majority. Borsch et al. (2019) suggest that when the researcher is part of the ethnic majority, minority ethnic participants may withhold criticisms of life in the 'host' society – I noted relatively few reports of negative experiences from Seaview newcomers. In contrast, at Bradbrook I was in the ethnic minority, and students seemed comfortable to tell me about their experiences of racism and discrimination during the interviews and focus groups.

Morrow (2008) notes that power differentials are particularly obvious in research with children. Young people's perception of me as an authority figure was evident in my interaction with several Bradbrook students after school:

Heading to the tube station, I'm waiting at the traffic lights next to some Year 9 boys, including Dylan, a big personality with an afro. They haven't noticed me. One of them says something to Dylan and he responds jokingly with an extremely colourful expletive. Dylan suddenly sees me and exaggeratedly reels back, exclaiming 'OH MY GOD!'. He shoots me a sheepish grin. 'You didn't hear that, did you Miss?!'. 'No, no, I didn't hear anything...' I respond, tongue-in-cheek. 'Sorry, Miss,' he says, and they all laugh awkwardly. [fieldnotes]

At the end of a focus group with Seaview students, the EAL staff asked them what might have made them feel more comfortable during the discussion. One student commented, 'Sometimes it's about the age... Sometimes people don't wanna talk to adults because you know, they're adults, and they would rather talk to someone their age, because they might feel safe or something like that'. Certainly, there often appeared to be limits to what young people felt comfortable sharing with me as an older researcher. For example, although Hussein's teachers had told me that he was involved in a gang, when I raised the subject of gangs in our interview, he gave no indication that he was part of one. Aaron, who worked at a local community centre, noted that 'it takes a lot of time to build up those relationships with young people... And even then, you still don't sometimes get to know what's going on'.

Similarly, Vincent et al. (2017:1978) acknowledge that ‘not all children would be willing to “own” peer conflict in a discussion with adults’. Bradbrook students often asked if I was an Ofsted inspector, and teachers who did not know me may have shared the same misconception. As Bradbrook was a boys’ school, there was also a gender dynamic to negotiate.

Verhallen (2016:457) suggests that the way that the researcher engages in research is influenced by their personal history. I tried to draw on my own experiences and identifications in order to create opportunities for encounter with research participants (Valentine, 2008; Ryan, 2015; Morrice, 2018). For example, having recently moved to London from rural Northern Ireland, I empathised with the experiences of a Bengali Italian mother who had moved to London from a small town in Italy and had struggled to adjust to life in a big city. At the same time, Hollway and Jefferson (2000:60) warn that the interviewer should not impose their ‘own relevancies (thus destroying the interviewee’s gestalt)’. Buber (1947:61) posits that ultimately the I-Thou encounter is not a process of empathy but of ‘inclusion’, in which the other’s personhood and uniqueness is confirmed: ‘This person is other, essentially other than myself, and this otherness of his is what I mean, because I mean him; I confirm it’. Moments of encounter during the research process had transformative effects:

As we leave Gianna says she really enjoyed the interview. It’s great to hear that she got something from the process – that it didn’t feel ‘transactional’ but actually enhanced her day somehow, even after a long day at work. I’ve enjoyed it too and tell her so. We talk about going for coffee sometime. [fieldnotes]

After one focus group, several students said that they felt that it had been quite ‘therapeutic’. Similarly, Flothmann and Josselin (2021:175) highlight the value that their research participants gave to being able to share their experiences of the asylum system and the ‘relief of being able to open up to someone who would care to listen out of compassion’.

Buber (1937) emphasises that the I-Thou relation is always in interplay with the power dynamics of the I-It relation. As Jensen (2011:68) notes of his fieldwork with young ethnic

minority males in Denmark, 'I consider field work a meeting of (complex) social positions as well as a meeting between unique individuals'. Jensen adds that in some research situations he was explicitly considered a 'friend' and at other times positioned as member of a powerful majority. When I met Gianna for coffee a few months after our interview, it was as a 'friend' rather than a researcher – however, I sometimes struggled against the academic impulse to ask her questions that would give me further insight on particular areas of my research. Buber (1937) suggests that both the I-It and I-Thou shape the 'I' in different ways, creating roles and developing personhood. The complex social dynamics involved in the research process certainly had an effect on me as a researcher and as a person: Pool (2017:282) remarks that 'the ethnographer who emerges after such fieldwork is sometimes no longer quite the same person who embarked on it. In other words, part of the "data" is embodied in the researcher'. The following section briefly discusses how I engaged with the embodied and emotional aspects of the research process.

4.5.3. Emotion in fieldwork

Reflecting on the affective elements of her ethnographic fieldwork, Punch (2012) argues that the traditional research focus on the positionalities of gender, class, and ethnicity should be expanded to include issues such as personality and emotions. Punch joins others (Agar, 1996; Ennew and Plateau, 2004; Mills and Morton, 2013) in suggesting that the researcher keeps a field diary to encourage critical engagement with the feelings, emotions, and struggles that emerge before, during, and after fieldwork. Field diaries can capture the 'messy and complex' elements of the research process (Punch, 2012:90) and 'sustain the sense of bewilderment that also allows the emergence of new understanding' (Mills and Morton, 2013:152). 'One of the reasons that we wonder', O'Donohue (2015:6) reflects, 'is because we are limited, and that limitation is one of the great gateways of wonder'. Field diaries can encourage reflexivity and be 'a useful avenue for seeking self-scrutiny and transparency of the context in which knowledge was produced' (Punch, 2012:87). Agar (1996:163) posits that field diaries can bring the ethnographer's role 'more explicitly into the research process'. Punch (2012:91) also highlights the vulnerability inherent in the use of the field diary: 'Our participants are vulnerable when we ask them to reveal their emotions and open up to us. Why should we, as researchers, not be honest about the

difficult process of generating that data?'. In encouraging openness to wonder and vulnerability, the field diary may foster an orientation towards 'research as encounter'.

Agar (1996:163) contends that field diaries 'would profit from more careful development as an ethnographic method in their own right'. Similarly, Punch (2012:93) suggests that diary extracts or reporting of emotional experiences could potentially be incorporated into research findings, rather than simply being included in methodology sections or accounts. Emerson et al. (1995:6) go further in asserting that the distinction between fieldnote 'data' and 'personal reactions' is 'deeply misleading' because it separates the ethnographer from the process of inquiry. I tried to include my own activities, thoughts, and responses in my fieldnotes, in recognition that these factors 'shape the process of observing and recording others' lives' (ibid.). Describing her experience of conducting research in Chicago, Goffman (2014:231) notes that ethnography can sometimes be a deeply uncomfortable process: 'I often felt like an idiot, an outsider, at times a powerless young woman...'. Comparably, I felt awkward during the first weeks at each school and often felt uncomfortable when trying to 'hang out' in the playground or quietly observe in the classroom. Emerson et al. (1995:6) argue that the reactions and perceptions of the researcher are themselves important 'avenues of insight into significant processes in the setting' and therefore propose that these should be valued more highly. Reflecting on my own emotions during the research, I can see how in many cases they were symptomatic of social dynamics in the field setting. For example, my feelings after hearing stories of domestic abuse and witnessing child hunger reflected a sense of despair among many teachers about the inequalities that were affecting the wellbeing of their students. At other times I felt inspired by the ways in which young people transcended their differences in hopeful moments of encounter, even in the presence of marginalisation.

4.6. Data analysis

This final section of the chapter discusses how the research findings were analysed. It describes methodological decisions made on how to present the findings and the politics of representation involved. It also explores the process of interpreting data, considering the 'right' to interpretation, and highlighting the ethical and political nature of analysis.

4.6.1. Presenting findings

The research findings are organised into two chapters. The first chapter presents the social differences that were significant to Bradbrook and Seaview students and describes how they negotiated these differences. The second shows how the policies and practices of education and psychosocial support influenced young people and their peer relationships. These research ‘findings’ are neither neutral nor objective. Said (1978:21) insists that in ‘any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a re-presence, or a representation’. In the same way, ethnography cannot avoid ‘representational politics’ (Neumann, 1996). Writing up research findings involves choosing which words to include, what to edit out, and how to frame those words (Gardner, 2002). As Emerson et al. (1995:19) argue, ‘data do not stand alone; rather analysis pervades all phases of the research enterprise’.

It was decided that each RWS country team would work from a shared coding scheme to categorise their own focus group data, which would then be synthesised with the quantitative data to form an all-country effectiveness report. The RWS qualitative sub-team worked together to develop a coding tree, which aimed to understand psychosocial care needs and contextualise from the baseline data, and to identify cross-intervention and intervention-specific outcomes, working mechanisms, and context variables. The qualitative team recommended that each country team use NVivo, a type of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS), to code their focus group data in line with the shared coding scheme. The advantages and drawbacks of using technological (versus manual) analytical approaches have been discussed in the literature (Richards and Richards, 1994; Basit, 2003; Mangabeira et al., 2004; García-Horta and Guerra-Ramos, 2009). García-Horta & Guerra-Ramos (2009) point to the benefits, limitations, and potential risks of using qualitative analysis software. They note that NVivo makes it possible to organise and store large volumes of data, deal with data overload, and enable fast and efficient retrieval of relevant information. They caution, however, against assumptions that ‘meaning-making’ can be computerised, emphasising that qualitative software ‘does not substitute the researcher’s analytical capacities to assign meaning, identify similarities and differences, establish relations, etc.’ (ibid.:152). There is a risk of decontextualising the data through

‘coding’ and of fragmenting a wider view of the data (Maher et al., 2018). Although using NVivo was necessary in order to be able to compare and contrast the RWS findings across countries, for the purposes of the thesis I chose to combine the NVivo coding with manual coding of the focus group transcripts. Maher et al. (ibid.:12) advocate such an approach, noting that software packages like NVivo cannot ‘fully scaffold’ the analysis process and recommending that digital coding be combined with traditional materials, including coloured pens, paper, and sticky notes. I ‘manually’ coded my interview and fieldnote data using the manual data analysis process described by Braun and Clarke (2006). This involves ‘writing notes on the texts you are analysing, by using highlighters or coloured pens to indicate potential patterns, or by using “post-it” notes to identify segments of data’ (ibid.:89). Braun and Clarke describe ‘thematic’ analysis as a highly iterative process that involves reading and re-reading data, coding, generating initial themes, and review. I returned to the data many times to consolidate the themes before writing the two findings chapters.

The two findings chapters respond to the research questions:

1. What differences matter in the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees, and how do young people bond along, and bridge across, these differences?
2. How do secondary education and psychosocial support influence young people’s peer relationships by providing support for their encounter and promoting dialogue?

The first findings chapter is structured according to the differences that mattered in young people’s peer relationships at Bradbrook and Seaview: migration status, race and ethnicity, language, religion, and socioeconomic status. During the research process, these social categories all emerged as significant, intersecting with and co-constituting each other in complex ways (Crenshaw, 1989). Multiplying the conceptual axes used to understand and explore difference helps to provide a certain methodological freedom. At the same time, however, complexity and even confusion may arise ‘when the subject of analysis expands to include multiple dimensions of social life and categories of analysis’ (McCall, 2005:1772). I have tried to avoid what Butler (1989) describes as the exhaustion of the ‘et cetera’ by using a maximum of five thematic categories to organise the findings on young people’s peer

relationships. This has meant highlighting specific differences while deciding not to thematise others, such as gender. The fact that Bradbrook was a boys' school made it difficult to compare and contrast the significance of gender in peer relationships at Bradbrook and Seaview. Yet it undoubtedly had a strong influence on how young people related to each other at each school. I eventually decided not to include gender as a theme and instead pointed out where it intersected with other social categories in specific instances, such as when misogynistic insults led to particularly strong tensions between Eastern European and other students at Bradbrook. Each section compares and contrasts how Bradbrook and Seaview students negotiated a particular identity in their peer relationships, underscoring the contingency of social difference.

Recognising that categorical differentiations are subjective, I have tried to use participants' own descriptions of themselves where possible, for example in relation to ethnicity and nationality; Wessendorf (2014b:11) describes taking a similar approach in her research. In order to protect anonymity, the thesis only refers to the specific ethnicity or nationality of the research participant in cases where it is relevant to do so and where it would not be possible to identify them on this basis. For example, a large number of Bengali Italian students attended Bradbrook School and lived in the East London borough. Here references to nationality are relevant to the discussion at hand but are unlikely to compromise anonymity. On the other hand, it was not considered appropriate to describe the nationality or ethnicity of research participants whose origins were less commonplace or who had unusual family or personal histories of migration, such as UASC. In these instances, the regional or continental background of the young person or adult is given only (for example, 'Middle Eastern' or 'African European'). In line with the 1951 Refugee Convention, the thesis uses the term 'refugee' to describe young people or adults who had been forced to leave their home countries due to fear of persecution. In cases where the legal immigration status of the research participant is unclear or unknown, the thesis uses the term 'migrant'. Studies highlight that 'refugee' and 'migrant' are highly politicised, contested, and evolving labels (Zetter, 1991; Crawley and Skleparis, 2018; Erdal and Oeppen, 2018; Sigona, 2018). As the thesis will show, these terms hold powerful discursive significance and must be understood as socially constructed and contingent. In line with the RWS project's use of

terminology, the thesis uses the term ‘newcomers’ to describe people who had moved to the host country within the last five years.

The second findings chapter shows how the policies and practices of the two schools and the RWS project supported encounter and promoted dialogue. During the research, national education policies, school-level policies, and teaching practices emerged as key intersecting influences on encounter and dialogue. This understanding is supported by sociological studies on school belonging, which often draw on Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model of human development to examine the macro- to micro-level impact of education on peer relationships. For example, Allen et al. (2016) present a socio-ecological framework of school belonging in secondary schools with reference to the micro-system (including family, friends, teachers, and peers), meso-system (organisational factors including school resources, processes, policies, rules, and practices), exo-system (broader school community) and macro-system (legislation, history, and social climate). McIntyre and Hall (2018) also use Bronfenbrenner’s model to explore systemic barriers to the inclusion of young refugees and asylum seekers in English secondary schools. Other migration studies highlight the influence of macro- to micro-level factors on the acculturation and development of young refugees at school (Watters, 2008; Schachner et al., 2018). The findings in relation to psychosocial support indicate the influence of the RWS policies at the meso and micro levels, both in relation to evaluation processes and to the intersection of intervention policy and practice in the implementation of the Classroom Drama workshop and the PIER programme. At the macro level, the RWS project was informed by an overarching paradigm in European policymaking of migrant and refugee ‘integration’; the findings reveal the empirical impact of this ethnonational framework on young people’s peer relationships.

Murphy and Dingwall (2001:4) note that ethnographic researchers ‘have relatively limited control over the use of their findings in the public domain’, adding that ethnographic reports may be sensationalised by the mass media. For example, it has been noted that reporting of gangs and youth violence in the British media often focuses on race, with the effect of detracting from class elements (Wessendorf, 2016; Gunter, 2017; Akala, 2018). In the US, Aguilar (2021:574) emphasises that presenting statistics on the involvement of unaccompanied minors in gangs without providing contextual background may lead to ‘an

overly simplistic and incomplete analysis that creates a misleading perception'. Consequently, it is crucial to contextualise the findings, particularly when documenting highly charged issues of migration and race. Although Bradbrook students engaged in playful banter about their cultural differences with the aim of inclusion, these jokes may appear 'outwardly racist to the outside observer' (Wise, 2016:485) and 'translate into negative or mocking portrayals when they are converted verbatim into written text' (Bourgois and Schonberg, 2009:13). Corden and Sainsbury (2006) therefore advocate accompanying verbatim quotes with a detailed explanation of the context in which they were spoken. This has helped me to provide a multidimensional, politically complex picture of young people's social lives rather than categorising them through flat, stereotyped representations (Said, 1970). The inclusion of a short chapter on context also gives important background to this picture by embedding the research findings in historical, political, and cultural realities.

4.6.2. Interpreting data

Hodge (2013:293) contends that an 'entirely detached and passive anthropology is not an ethical one'. This suggests that the researcher should provide their own interpretations of the research data. Analytical interpretation of the research findings was for me an ongoing, iterative process. During the fieldwork I would often use the 'Notes' app on my phone to record my thoughts about the findings, or to make connections between the literature I was reading at the time and the things I was seeing and hearing at the two schools. This helped to expose 'theory to ethnography and ethnography to theory' (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001:15). I would often run my analyses past students or teachers, recognising that they were the real 'experts on their own worlds' (Bagnoli and Clark, 2010:103). Adult research participants tended to be more reflective and analytical than younger participants (Gardner, 2002). The possibility of more than one interpretation of the 'findings' raises important questions around the 'right' to interpret. Murphy and Dingwall (2001:11) ask, 'Who has the right to interpret another's reality, to define what should or should not be excluded and what meanings should or should not be attributed, and by what right do they do so?'. They argue that interpretations on behalf of the researcher can disempower research participants by robbing them of the freedom to make sense of their own experiences – they suggest that the researcher can mitigate this risk by making themselves visible in the text. This helps to

show how the authority of their interpretations is ‘attained’ rather than ‘assumed and inscribed’ (ibid.:12) and also helps to separate ‘value’ from ‘fact’ (ibid.:15).

Buber’s (1937) I-It and I-Thou relational framework provides a structure within which to interpret the research findings. Buber expressed ‘a sense that the world is out of joint’ (Schinkel, 2020:484) and pointed to alternation between the I-It and I-Thou relation as a political and educational ideal. As a Jew in exile from Nazi Germany, Buber’s relative closeness to geopolitical events in twentieth-century Europe lends ‘a particular urgency’ to his hope for renewal (ibid.). His framework has continued relevance today. To me, Buber’s vision is a valuable and workable political ideal, and this ‘moderate’ political perspective is reflected in the thesis. Mason (2002) notes that the researcher’s positionality inevitably influences how research findings are interpreted, while Verhallen (2016) highlights the specific role of political and cultural identity in shaping interpretations of ethnographic data. Scheper-Hughes (1995:417) goes further in contending that the ethnographer has an active and ethical responsibility to produce ‘politically complicated and morally demanding texts and images’. The political and moral responsibility of the ethnographer is particularly pressing in light of highly charged debates on social cohesion in contexts of ethnic diversity. A study by ETHNOS (2006:29) points, for example, to the significant influence of the right-wing media on public attitudes towards ‘integration’ in the UK, and suggests that ‘evidence-based economic, political and moral arguments are needed’. In using Buber’s framework to interpret the research findings, I aim to make a moral and political argument for ‘integration’ while avoiding explicitly communitarian or cosmopolitan conceptualisations of an ‘ideal type of good society’ (Amin, 2012:28). Rather, as with Back (1996:2) in his research on urban ‘multiculture’, I hope to offer ‘an account of a cultural politics that avoids banal optimism while holding on to the possibility of transcendence’. Buber’s ideas have previously been applied in other socio-political contexts, perhaps most notably by Martin Luther King (1963:142), who argued that racial segregation ‘substitutes an “I-It” relationship for the “I-Thou” relationship, and relegates persons to the status of things’. In spite of the continued relevance of Buber’s ideas, some of his language is now out-dated. This is notable in his extensive use of masculine pronouns, which I have tried to offset where possible by using female or gender-neutral pronouns in the text.

4.7. Conclusion

This chapter considered some of the epistemological, practical, and ethical issues involved in conducting the research at Bradbrook and Seaview schools. It discussed the merits of a qualitative approach towards researching peer relationships in the context of migration and displacement. It described how I navigated issues of access and participant selection at both schools. It discussed the challenges and opportunities of using participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups as qualitative methods. It then examined the ethical importance of a rights-based approach, the ephemeral possibility of research as 'encounter', and the role of emotion in fieldwork. Finally, it explored the process of data analysis, considering representational dynamics and the moral and political implications of the research framework. The following two chapters contain the research findings.

5. Peer relationships

5.1. Introduction

Bradbrook School for boys is a newly built concrete building on a busy main street in Inner East London. Its entrance is protected from the street by wide metal gates which are open before and after school and locked during the school day. After being buzzed through at the gates, visitors sign in at a small reception and vacuum-sealed doors slide open to give them entry to the main school building. The wide corridors have grey vinyl floors and freshly painted white walls lined with colourful displays relating to 'diversity'. Students play football and basketball in the spacious playground at the back of the school.

60 miles to the south of London on the south coast, Seaview School is an old, brick building nestled in the hilly suburbs of Brighton & Hove. The grey-blue English Channel can be seen in the distance. Elm trees line the school fence and there is a broad grassy area in front of the school building, with a small playground to the side and a larger playing field at the back. A large reception area gives visitors access to the main school, a maze of narrow winding corridors with crumbling red tiles and old wooden floors. A massive world map at reception reflects the school's international orientation and its relatively large newcomer demographic. [fieldnotes]

In these two highly contrasting school settings, young migrants and their peers negotiated multiple differences. This chapter explores the complex and intersecting ways in which they related to each other at each school. It is organised thematically according to the main differences that 'made a difference' (Berg et al., 2019) to young people at each school: migration status, race and ethnicity, language, religion, and socioeconomic status. The chapter considers how Bradbrook and Seaview students drew boundaries along these lines of identification but also bridged these differences in moments of encounter. Migration status shaped young people's relationships in terms of mobility, local attitudes, traumatic exposure, and transnational communication. In addition, the ethnic composition of each school influenced attitudes towards ethnic and racial difference, which sometimes included xenophobia. Language and religion also emerged as key sources of difference and encounter. Finally, socioeconomic status had an overarching influence, shaping young people's peer relationships inside and outside the grounds of each school. The chapter draws on ethnographic observations made in and around the two schools; interviews with students, parents, teachers, and community workers; and focus groups with students and teachers.

5.2. Migration status

Migration status significantly shaped how young people related to each other at Bradbrook and Seaview schools, confirming studies which highlight the relational impact of mobility and ‘temporariness’ (Sime and Fox, 2015; Wessendorf, 2016), local discourses of reception (Ager and Strang, 2008; Phillimore, 2021), traumatic exposure (Bean et al., 2007; Vervliet et al., 2014; Franco, 2018; Spaas et al., 2021), and transnational connectivity (Jung and Lee, 2004; Ozer, 2020). The influence of these factors on peer relationships varied according to the patterns of migration at each school. While migration was highly commonplace at Bradbrook School, Seaview School hosted fewer migrants and refugees. The historical and contemporary landscape of migration and displacement in each setting had implications for how newcomers were received and included in (or excluded from) different aspects of everyday school life.

At Bradbrook School, the arrival of new students was a regular, almost daily occurrence. As such, students took little notice of new arrivals – ‘They don’t bat an eyelid,’ said Emily, the school nurse. Many students arrived during the school year as ‘mid-phase admissions’. Hassan, a teacher at Bradbrook, told me, ‘Kids are just coming continuously, so it’s just like, it’s just a normal day for the kids already here’. Recent newcomers to Bradbrook included a large number of Italian Bengalis who had lived in Italy before coming to the UK. A significant proportion of newcomers also came from Eastern Europe, particularly Poland and Lithuania. There were several Roma newcomers, including Bogdan, a Year 8 student from Romania with a cheeky smile, messy brown hair, and an ear piercing, which he told me was representative of Roma culture. Some students had been out of school for some time and were unaccustomed to school life. Four Somali brothers had travelled through Libya to get to the UK, and Hussein, the Middle Eastern UASC introduced in the previous chapter, had been in the Calais ‘Jungle’ in France.

Many young newcomers to Bradbrook displayed an active sense of agency in making friends. Kamran, who was born in Southeast Asia to a Bengali family, described attempts to connect with his peers when he arrived a few years previously: ‘When I first came here...the

people have their own friend groups. And it's...I think that I had to, like, prove myself before getting into a friend circle. So it took me a while. It took like around probably three or four months'. He described 'building' a circle of friends at Bradbrook. Some newcomers may have been suffering from the effects of trauma. When I interviewed Hussein, he commented of his life in his home country, 'I don't remember that stuff like that now. I don't know...like, I can't remember it like...I'm trying'. Another pastoral team member, Amy, told me that the team was trying to get in touch with the family of a Syrian refugee student whose behaviour in class was becoming increasingly disruptive.

High levels of mobility meant that many Bradbrook students faced uncertain futures. Ahmed was a tall, thin student who was born in Northeast Africa but had lived in Northern Europe for most of his life. Sitting in the library, he casually slipped off his shoes, explaining, 'This is what we do in [Northern European country], my home country'. He said that he would be moving back to Northern Europe soon with his mum and sister. Although he was amiable towards his peers, he appeared to hold them at a distance and cut something of a lone figure in the corridors and the playground.²⁰ A local community worker, Aaron, later spoke of high levels of mobility in the local borough: 'Some areas are very, very transient. So you get lots of new people in, lots of people leaving'. He noted that Brexit had had an impact on local attitudes: 'I was speaking to a few [families] again. They're not sure of what lies for their future. Are they still able to live here, work here...?'. Ana, a teacher, observed that when young people visited their home countries, 'A lot of them don't know if they're going to come back'. Emily, and Myna, the school librarian, discussed mobility among the students:

'They're on the move so much. Always telling me they're moving...' says Myna. Emily shakes her head: 'How are they supposed to settle and be happy?'. They laugh affectionately about 'bruva and bruva', two brothers who had been at the school last year and looked exactly the same despite being different ages. Their family had been forced to leave very suddenly when their visas ran out and they weren't able to renew them. This is a familiar story. Just yesterday Ana told me that Mahmud, the Italian Bengali student who I interviewed last month, has had to leave the country suddenly. Visa issues, they think. [fieldnotes]

²⁰ It later transpired that Ahmed and his family would not be moving back to Northern Europe but staying in London. He became good friends with Vasile, a newcomer from Moldova.

Diana, a senior member of the pastoral team at Bradbrook, said that most students had very little say in their families' decisions to leave their home countries. Tessa commented, 'People here are constantly on the move. So kids think, "What's the point in making friends?"'.

In contrast to Bradbrook, Seaview School had a large White British student population and a smaller number of migrant and refugee students. Most newcomers started school at the beginning of the school year. Some had never been to school before, including a Middle Eastern UASC named Berfan. A member of the English as an Additional Language (EAL) team, Alex, noted that many newcomers to Seaview 'feel that they leave everything behind and they have to start all over again'. She added that 'at this age, as a teenager, it's really difficult'. Another member of the EAL team, George, said that many newcomers feared being judged by their peers:

Generally speaking, migrant kids who have come into secondary school, on the whole I think their number one rationale is, 'I want to fit in, I don't want to be different, I don't want to be seen to be different', and they will guard against that. Being sporty is helpful, but I've found that most of the EAL kids I've got to know, they at first, certainly, usually feel a sort of shyness and almost embarrassment at the fact that they're from somewhere else. [interview]

Plenty and Jonsson (2017:1276) confirm that in less ethnically diverse schools, immigrant or ethnic minority students who discernibly deviate from the group norm in appearance or behaviour may be perceived as not 'fitting in'. Mid-phase admissions were much less frequent at Seaview than at Bradbrook, potentially making welcoming newcomers a more daunting task for students. Alex suggested that including newcomers meant that 'you have to come out of your comfort zone... most of the students don't have this maturity to, you know, to go the extra mile'. Many White British students at Seaview knew each other from primary school or had started school together in Year 7. George observed that by the time newcomers arrived, 'an awful lot of peer group has already happened', while Alex noted that many British students 'already have their friends, so they have their friendships settled. So I think it's more difficult for them to accept other students'.

Similarly, at Bradbrook, Nadir, a slim Bengali student with glasses, remarked that newcomers joining later on in the school year or in school life might find it more difficult to integrate because ‘more often than not, groups have already been formed’. However, Karla, a teaching assistant at Bradbrook, said that ‘most of the kids that come here new, they kind of blend in. And I’ve seen kids that have really tried to take care of the ones who do not speak that much English’. It was common to hear Bradbrook students discussing passports and visas in the corridors and the classroom. In class I observed an exchange between a Bengali student and a newcomer from Goa who spoke Konkani and very little English. Using his fingers to indicate the days of the week, the Bengali student explained that half term was next week: ‘Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, no school’. Most Bradbrook students could empathise with each other’s experiences of migration, either having migrated themselves or having family who had done so. They often drew on these experiences to care for newcomers:

Emma [E]: *What’s your perception of, like, when someone arrives – what’s it like for them?*

Abshir: *Uh, I mean of course it’s scary. You know, especially when they don’t know the language, definitely it is quite hard, that language barrier. Trying to teach them where everything is...you still get lost. Even people that can speak the language, you know, this might be a slightly smaller school compared to others, but at the same time, it’s all new to them.*

E: *Yeah. And what was it like for you when you came?*

Abshir: *Oh, yeah [laughs]. It wasn’t too great. I missed the induction day, so where the Year 6s come and everyone was so used to where they were going. And then thankfully I had one of the friends, the Tanzanian one...he said, ‘Yeah, come this way’. We’re in the same form class now. So he helped me out a lot. [interview]*

During the Year 8 focus group at Bradbrook, Vasile, a newcomer from Moldova, said that Kingsley, a boisterous African European student, had helped him when he first arrived at school, and that Vasile helped him in return: ‘And I have a lot of friends in this school that are very good with me, Kingsley is very good with me, we don’t see many times, but every time he is good with me – I share with him, he shares with me. And that’s very cool’. He added, ‘I like to help peoples’. Mahmud, an Italian Bengali, also described supporting newcomers: ‘For me it’s ok if there come a lot of people. I can help them’.

Like Bradbrook students, some Seaview students described caring for newcomers. During a focus group Amelia, a tall, softly spoken English student, drew on her experiences of starting late to school in order to empathise with newcomers from outside the country: ‘When I first started school in Reception, I joined, I think, like two months later than everyone else. And it was like a bit hard to fit in. But then you can imagine, like coming from a whole other country, like speaking a different language into a different culture...’. George noted that looking or sounding different could sometimes be ‘a door opener because many of the host kids would think, “Oh, this chap’s different, you know, let me help, let me do something positive”’. Alfie, who was White British, emphasised students’ agency in welcoming newcomers:

E: Do your teachers help you to be welcoming?

Alfie: I guess, sometimes, there’s a point where it’s too much, and you’re...it’s, yeah, like it’s too much helping, it’s not helpful at that point.

E: Mmm, in what way would it be...can you give me an example?

Alfie: Say if someone’s trying to build a tower, and you basically build the entire tower for them, they might feel like, really upset, because they wanted to build it on their own. So you’ve helped too much. And now, if they want to build another one, they need more help, because they don’t know how, because you built the first one.
[FG]

Attitudes towards migration among White British parents at Seaview were mixed. The school was in an area that had historically voted for UKIP, and on my walk to school from the train station I passed a large UKIP poster prominently displayed in a house window. In a focus group, Shaima commented that ‘the current context is quite another thing that kind of will have an impact on the students, you know, with the whole Brexit thing, and that kind of rhetoric around foreigners and immigrants and all that kind of stuff’. George noted that newcomers were often aware of xenophobic views and that this affected their peer relationships:

I think the migrant kid is aware that many of the host kids would judge them like that, and that they wouldn’t be understood. And why should they? The boy who has just come from Syria, and has had experiences just in what he’s seen, and been

through or not been through, which are so different, that when someone in the class says something, it's likely to be so simplistic that either the kid gets upset by it, or actually refuses to be engaged with it. I'm thinking of certain kids. [interview]

George added that for many newcomers at Seaview it was easier to withdraw from the 'host' group and to bond with other newcomers who 'also had a story and could actually relate to what they were saying'. Newcomer students often sat together during class and spent their break and lunchtimes together.

At Bradbrook, students often called each other 'freshie' (meaning 'newcomer'). This term was used in a light-hearted way to comment on someone's newness to the country or to ask when they had arrived ('Are you a freshie?'), and usually met with laughter. However, Bradbrook students also used terms such as 'migrant', 'refugee', and 'asylum seeker' as insults in exchanges such as 'You're an immigrant!' and 'Are you a refugee?', often resulting in conflict. Teachers emphasised that young people tended to use these terms without understanding their real meaning – in other words, they were used in a general sense rather than being specifically targeted at newcomers. Amy commented,

I mean I suppose it's constantly, you know, in the media, in the press and you know, those things got filtered down and get diluted and just cherry picked out. Um, but then...I think if you got groups of students together and talked about these kinds of issues, you'd find a lot of empathy. You'd find a lot of shared experiences. You'd find a lot of, um, knowledge and experience of that. But then if you listen to cussing in the playground, it will be around, you know, 'You're an asylum seeker', you know, it's a cuss word. [interview]

Like Amy, Hamza noted, 'So a lot of the things that the boys talk about...is what they hear in the media... They tend to throw around words such as "immigrant, you're an immigrant, you're a refugee". And they don't know the full extent of those words'.

A small number of Bradbrook students appeared to have genuinely xenophobic attitudes towards newcomers, which teachers told me had been influenced by their parents. Emily commented that in her experience, the views of many White British people from the local borough were 'very narrow. And a lot of them have moved out of the area. They tend to all live out in Essex now, because they don't like how everyone was "coming and taking over"'.

Some longer-term migrants in the local borough also displayed xenophobia towards newcomers, in particular towards Italian Bengalis and Romanians, who formed large groups in the school and local community. Nadir observed, 'There's a big Eastern European group, there's a big Italian group because they started coming later, so they started forming their own groups'. Yonas, a teacher from Northeast Africa, contrasted Bradbrook students' current experiences of integrating with those of his own in the early 1990s:

Until 26 years ago, not many migrants, I don't think there were. Not as much as it is today. I think you didn't have a lot of- the makeup wasn't as diverse as we have now. So, yeah, that helped probably learning the language and, you know, appreciate, uh, everything [...] Whereas now a kid coming into such as our school can feel like they're almost walking into their own country in a mini version of, uh, you know...they're not going to feel like they're walking into an English community. When I came here, it was definitely, uh, into a community of English...culture, if that makes sense.
[interview]

Yonas felt that the ethnically diverse context made it easier for newcomers to stay in 'their own little pocket of cultures'. Similarly, Aaron noted that the local borough 'has its own little pockets of different communities. Some really, really keep themselves to themselves, and others generally tend to mix'. This idea of 'pockets' of culture aligns with Wessendorf's (2014b:60) finding that as well as facilitating social bridging, superdiversity also 'makes it easier to find one's own social milieu' and 'enables people to lead separate lives'. For migrants who had come to the UK many years previously, the perceived lack of effort by newcomers to integrate was a sore point. In our second interview, Nadir (who had left Bradbrook by that point to go to college) explained:

I've heard people say things like, you know, 'We've already faced so much struggle and we've worked this hard to build all of this up. And then now all of these people are here'... and then even, whilst I was at Bradbrook, I started seeing like...you see, when the Italians would form their own groups and stuff, I'd see like other groups making condescending comments about them like, you know, 'Why did they all have to come at once?' and stuff like that. Nothing too serious, but it's noticeable.
[interview]

Mahmud was born in Italy to Bengali parents. He said, 'I've got a lot of friends [in Italy]. And then when we decide to come here, I...I didn't feel good because I...uh, how can I say, I lost my friends... But now I know lot of places, I have a lot of friends. Uh, there are a lot of

Italians are good friends. And...now, I like this place'. In spite of having made Italian friends, Mahmud also mentioned being bullied by a Bengali student: 'He say to everybody to don't talk with me, to go away. And every time he say to me, "Go in your country, go in Italy, don't come in London, is our country, don't come..."'. Mahmud chose not to engage in conflict and to join his Italian Bengali peers in embracing the role of student instead: 'I don't care if the people say, "You are new, you can do nothing". I say, "I come to learn, you come to learn. You stay on your side I stay on my side. Don't disturb me"'. Italian Bengali students had a reputation for working hard and were described by other students as 'the smart ones'. Anwar, a Bengali Italian student in Year 9, said that his family came to the UK 'because they want me to have a good future. If you here study good, you can have a better future'. Anwar had made friends with other Bengali Italians in London. He said that they had warned him about bullies but that it wasn't a problem in the end 'because if you make friends, you don't care about bullies'. He described returning to Italy to visit:

Anwar: I went to Italy again for like one week and actually it was weird like- you know what is the situation in Italy now, like the Bengalis? There's no Bengalis, like...there is a new, like, how do you say-

E: *Prime Minister?*

Anwar: Yeah, Prime Minister. And he's...no one is coming to Italy because he don't want immigrants. So like the people were looking at me like, weird. And I feel...bad, so bad. But they asked me, 'You like London or Italy? If you're a true Italian, you're going to say is Italian'. But I said, 'Is London because there's more Bengalis here'. So you can...like you feel you are in Bangladesh. And there's more Italian. Here there is Italian and Bengali, so...it's good. [interview]

During our interview, Anwar fluctuated between describing himself as 'Italian', 'Bengali Italian', 'Bengali', and 'Italian Bengali'. Saaleha, the sister of an Italian Bengali student at the school, said that if people in Italy asked where she was from and she said 'Italy', they would respond, 'Yes, but where are you *really* from?'. She felt that in London she could respond as she liked without question. However, towards the end of our interview Saaleha quietly noted, 'I feel that I'm a citizen of the world...but also that I don't really belong anywhere'.

Romanian students formed a tight-knit group at Bradbrook:

Walking from the staffroom to Ana's room just after the bell rings, I notice a tall, well-built Romanian boy with blond hair and an earring walking in front of me with two other Romanians. They are going up to other students and pushing them hard in the chest, seemingly at random. I'm shocked. When I tell Ana later, she's not surprised. The older Romanian boys have formed a close group and have a reputation in the school for being thugs – 'They are literally a gang,' she says. [fieldnotes]

Students in the Year 8 focus group brought up 'Romanian people' when I asked them to reflect on negative aspects at the school:

R5: You know, some people they're scared of the Romanians, because you know they're big. As in, physically, they're strong. Cos they're also older than us, they're trying to...you know, you know how olders are, they always try to target youngsters-

R4: Money-

R5: Yeah, especially money. Oh, Miss, that's the worst thing!

R7: Oh my God!

R5: When you go past the Buffalo Chicken and...it's beep beep beep beep beep...you going to Burger King, 'I know you have money, so bust me some right now, otherwise watch or I cut you in school!'. [FG]

Ana talked about a Romanian student who would 'kind of be embarrassed of some of the Romanians in our school. I mean you know like, "Oh these are kind of like bad Romanians"'. I spoke to several Romanian young people who, like the students mentioned by Ana, did not want to be associated with the Romanian 'gang' and made efforts to distance themselves by making friends with other students. Daniel, a Romanian student in Year 8 with trendy blue glasses and a fringe, said, 'Like, from Romania I don't have like really friends...but like I have more English friends here because I don't like really Romanians how they...like in the school the Romanians are not really good like behaving or something like that'. Daniel had arrived from Romania with his father 16 months earlier. He was highly academic and proudly showed me the achievement badges pinned to his crisply ironed blazer.

Bradbrook students with personal histories of migration often stayed in contact with the friends and family they had left behind. Ahmed told me that he didn't have any memories of Somalia but that he sometimes spoke to his grandmother and cousins there. He regularly

communicated with his friends in Norway using Snapchat and WhatsApp. An African European student, Abshir, said that he still had family and friends in Northeast Africa and kept in touch with them through WhatsApp and phone calls: 'You've got to keep up the same talking level before it gets all awkward and stuff,' he observed drily. Students discussed the pros and cons of online communication during an English support class before school with Justina, a teaching assistant:

They are talking about the merits of face-to-face versus online communication. Someone says they prefer online, 'because you can talk to friends and family in other countries'. One boy says he would prefer face-to-face – 'So you can get across what you actually want to say and not have to use emojis or stuff like that'. [fieldnotes]

Similarly, newcomers to Seaview School described keeping in touch with their peers in their home countries. Alex reported that Romanian students had told her,

We spend a lot of time when we go home on our PCs, playing games or video games or...and yeah, we don't communicate with other people, with other people our age. We just communicate when we play games with our friends from Romania. And that's the friendships we have, like virtual friendships, which is definitely not the same as real ones. [interview]

During a focus group, Faiza, a quiet Middle Eastern student who had grown up in Central Europe, described keeping in touch with her friends in Europe using WhatsApp. Another student, Hala, had come to the UK from the Middle East six months previously and said that 'from the first day I made three friends, um and they really helped me a lot. And I didn't feel so lonely or something because I had people to hang out with, and to be with, so...'. However, she later elaborated on her friendships at Seaview:

Hala: Me and my friends at this school aren't that close. They don't know a lot about me, and I don't know a lot about them. Like, my other friends know a lot about me. They like to talk to me 24/7, like we always share secrets. But with them, I still don't trust them one hundred percent, so I don't tell them everything.

E: Ok, and you talked about your other friends, where are they?

Hala: All in [the Middle East] [...] I talk to them 24/7. And I sometimes get punished for that.²¹ I don't do my work – I just keep talking to them. [FG]

²¹ Both Seaview and Bradbrook had no-phone policies.

The parents of several newcomers to Seaview managed their children's contact with friends in their home countries. Aarush, a Year 8 student with a huge smile, had recently arrived from South Asia. During the focus group he said, 'I had a phone back in [South Asia], but I've just kept it there cos I'm not allowed in here. Because my dad doesn't like socialising that much. I can get like an idea, I talk to my friends...he lets me talk with them once every month, I share my feelings with them'.

Migration status affected the peer relationships of Bradbrook and Seaview students in complex ways. These findings add to an emerging literature on the impact of transnational mobility on local experiences of 'belonging' and peer connection (Sime and Fox, 2015; Ní Laoire et al., 2016; Wessendorf, 2016). They also confirm the psychosocial impact of trauma for young asylum seekers and refugees, including UASC (Chase, 2013; Ellis et al., 2015; Spaas et al., 2021). At both Bradbrook and Seaview, migration-related stereotypes were strongly shaped by media discourse, supporting studies which highlight the dehumanising nature of media reporting on migration and displacement (Esses et al., 2013; Dempster and Hargrave, 2017; Lecheler et al., 2019). Previous research indicates that schools can be sites of bullying of migrant and refugee children (Watters, 2008; Wise and Noble, 2016; Back and Sinha, 2018; Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018; McMullen et al., 2020). Xenophobia on behalf of White British and long-established ethnic minorities led to defined newcomer groupings: newcomers often bonded at Seaview, while at Bradbrook Romanian and Bengali-Italian students tended to form tightly knit groups. At both schools, keeping in touch with family and peers in other countries was important for young people with migration backgrounds, confirming studies which foreground the role of digital technologies in maintaining and strengthening transnational connections for young migrants and refugees (Jung and Lee, 2004; Jensen et al., 2011; Portes and Rumbaut, 2014; Ozer, 2020).

5.3. Race and ethnicity

Seaview and Bradbrook schools had strongly contrasting levels of ethnic diversity. The ethnic composition of each school significantly influenced young people's peer relationships, confirming studies of 'acculturation' which suggest that ethnic diversity

influences social inclusion at a classroom and school level (Watters et al., 2009; Plenty and Jonsson, 2017; Juvonen et al., 2018). The boundaries of interethnic conviviality were shaped by a shared sense of 'feeling different' at Seaview, although intercultural solidarities also gradually emerged through social contact at the wider school level. At Bradbrook, convivial humour based on ethnic difference co-existed with interethnic divisions. At both schools, family attitudes influenced diverse forms of interaction with racial difference.

In Brighton & Hove there was a distinct 'English' community. Faith, who had Central African parents and grew up in Scotland before moving to England, said, 'Like you feel happy in school, with all your friends, but then when you're outside, you're not with them, and it's difficult because you don't know these people and they're different to you. And you don't know what they think about you'. She noted that the wider Brighton & Hove area was 'not really diverse'. George suggested that parental attitudes influenced implicit racism towards newcomers: 'Without an overt racist comment about, "Oh, he's a foreigner", or something else, they might brand them as, you know, "migrants", "immigrants", or whatever, and pick up on the media speak and the sort of...accusative language that many people hold, that some of our British kids hear in their own households'. He observed that for many ethnic and religious minorities at Seaview, 'feeling different' was what brought them together:

And just this lunchtime, I discover a gaggle of four girls stood outside the Muslim prayer room, just trying to get a peep, you know, 'What are the boys doing in there, and which one is smiling at me?'. One's wearing an African badge and she's sure that, you know, 'Black is beautiful', and her family are from Jamaica. She's talking with the girl from Libya in the hijab...and then the two friends who join them, both Bangladeshi, and one says, 'I'm half Malaysian', and she's learning Malay. So we've got there an international group all speaking English, all bonded and making friends... And it's this 'feeling different' which has actually brought them together.
[FG]

George added that students who bonded over a shared sense of 'feeling different' were 'all finding a new identity, knowing that they've got another identity, you know. And whatever the other identity is, it's not the British White working class or the British White middle class'. However, Faith also talked about intercultural understanding gradually emerging as a result of peer encounters at school: 'I always had braids in my hair...and then I took it off

and I just kept my natural hair, and then everyone was like, asking me questions like, “How is your hair like that?”. I think people like, understand better now’.

In contrast to Seaview, the local area at Bradbrook School had an eclectic mix of cultural influences:

Walking to school at 8:15 am, I pass several bargain food stores selling ‘world foods’, three fast food chains, a halal butcher, and a couple of newsagents advertising cheap international calls to Ghana and Pakistan. There is a Turkish barber shop and an Afro Caribbean hair and cosmetics store. I pass an Asian hairdresser, African and Eastern European beauty parlours, an Italian pizzeria, several Turkish kebab shops, and a Polish bakery with sweet buns in the window. There’s Buffalo Chicken where the students go after school, and the community centre where I interviewed Aaron on Tuesday. I usually join the teachers for lunch at the local Turkish café for lunch on Fridays. A large grocery store advertises ‘Eastern European, European, Asian, Russian, Brazilian and Hungarian groceries’. Upbeat Eastern European music drifts from its windows. I pass the marketplace – it’s market day and they’re loading boxes of colourful fruit and vegetables into the stalls. I pop into the copy shop to ask the Pakistani owner about printing some more questionnaires. [fieldnotes]

This ‘commonplace diversity’ (Wessendorf, 2014b) was reflected in the student population at Bradbrook. Amy noted that in being ‘different’, students were ‘all in the same pot’. After telling Ana my surprise at how well the students got along with each other despite being from diverse ethnic backgrounds, she replied, ‘They don’t have a choice, in a school like this’. Similarly, Nadir said, ‘You know, at the most basic level, I don’t have a choice but to get along with everyone because I’m put in a situation where, if I get on with people, I’m with people. If not, I’m alone’. This resonates with Wessendorf’s (2014a:398) finding that commonplace diversity leads to a certain cosmopolitan ‘pragmatism’ where in order to function in society ‘you cannot afford not to be civil towards people who are different’. Nadir added,

But for me personally, I love learning about different cultures. I love like, just learning about different countries and religions and things. It’s incredibly interesting to get to know someone who’s had like a completely different upbringing than me...who has a culture or a faith that’s one hundred percent different to mine, because, you know, I think it’s just so important to like, listen to each other and understand why...they view the world in the way they do. [interview]

Other students displayed a similar curiosity towards difference. Mohamed, a Year 9 Somali student who had come to the UK in 2012, said during a focus group,

I think if you had studied separately, like brown people here, black people there, white people here, we would all have stereotypes about each other. Now when we're learning together, we break down those stereotypes and we, like, learn about individuality and other stuff, like personality and things like that. [FG]

Abshir told me, 'I think it's quite nice, to be honest. You've got such a wide array of different people, different colours, different cultures. I mean you want to learn as much as you can from other people's culture. And they also want to learn'. Students often engaged unprompted in discussion about their differences, such as the conversation between Kingsley (African European), Martim (African European), and Vasile (Eastern European) during a Year 8 focus group:

E: You don't actually need to call her 'Miss', cos she's not a teacher, she's a drama therapist.

Kingsley: Yeah well my parents said, you're not allowed, if someone's older than you, like waaay older than you, you have to call them by 'Uncle', either 'Sir' or 'Miss'.

Martim: Yeah it's- it's like an African thing. My mum and dad-

Vasile: No, it's everywhere! [FG]

Students in the same focus group asked each other about their differences (Will was White British):

Patrick: I was born here. My parents are from Congo.

E: Have you ever gone to the Congo?

Patrick: Uh, yeah! Three times, but I was young. I'm going next week.

Martim: What language do they speak there?

Patrick: What? Oh! Many languages!

Kingsley: Swahili?

Patrick: French.

Will: *Oh, they speak French?*

Martim: *Oh yeah, French, they share a part of Congo or something innit...*

Patrick: *Belgium.* [FG]

In the corridors and the playground at Bradbrook, I heard students using food-based terms to playfully refer to each other as 'fish' (meaning Bengalis), 'curry' (Asians), and 'fish and chips' (White British). I asked Nadir about the use of these terms in our second interview:

I think like...almost in every one of those instances, there's never like any malicious intent. They don't want to offend anyone, it's... You know, the Spanish friend in our group, we called him 'paella' from time to time [laughs] and I think as long as they know that it's a joke, as long as they know they're not being...they're not being left out of the group, or they're not being bullied...I think, I don't think it should be seen as something that's like very serious, because the majority of the time, I do think it's just a- just a joke. [interview]

Ganav, a senior staff member, said that although young people did acknowledge their differences, it was all 'banter' and rarely meant to be discriminatory. I asked Abdi, a teacher, if he ever saw any racism or prejudice among the students. He responded, 'No, no. They, they roast each other from for, for being from a different country. They accept each other. They're not racist with each other, but they just make fun of...um what they eat. So, "You eat curry", or like, "Go eat some fish and chips", or just to wind each other up'. In a separate interview Hassan agreed with Abdi's statement, but added, 'Unfortunately, sometimes the joke goes a bit too far'. This was particularly obvious in the case of misogynistic and sexualised insults among students, which were particularly divisive when directed towards young people from Eastern European countries. Marjeta, a community worker who worked with Albanian young people in the borough, explained, 'Sometimes very often the fight will go...just because you said something about my mum or use the F word, it's used here in different context. They take it really personal. So because that is not allowed, you know, it's the mum and the sister, are the two figures in the house that need to be protected'. The use of this language often led to physical fights among Bradbrook students.

Jo, who ran a local youth club for refugees and migrants in the East London borough, expressed her surprise at the lack of interethnic divisions among young people from Sudan: 'You've got like different types of Sudanese, ones that are from different factions. Like, you know, would definitely not have been friends in Sudan. And they're just...it just never seems to come up, you know?'. However, interethnic divisions were obvious among Romanian students at Bradbrook. Bogdan, the Roma student, had been in the UK for a year before starting school at Bradbrook; he said that his aunt and uncle had 'made him afraid' to attend school. Cristian, who worked for a local Roma support charity, told me that many Roma families worried that previous experiences of discrimination in Romania would be repeated in the UK. I saw this play out in the classroom:

Bogdan is telling Ana about the differences between Romania and the UK. He says that the UK is much more 'legal'. When Ana asks what he means, he says that in Romania you didn't need a driving licence. The other Romanians (non-Roma) say that's dangerous, and it wasn't like that where they lived. They ask him where he lived and when he responds one of them says something to the other in Romanian and they start to snigger. [fieldnotes]

Cristian explained, 'Many non-Roma children coming from Eastern Europe, they know what Roma is and they have their own image of that. And those children will bring these things in schools... And this is, you know affecting, uh, Roma children, because then, you know, all the children who have no idea who Roma are, are hearing those kinds of things'. Fortunately, the negative attitudes of the Romanian boys towards Bogdan did not appear to stop other students from making friends with him. He was a gregarious character and asked me many questions about myself during our interview. His confidence and curiosity towards difference may have helped him to secure friendships with students from Portugal, Romania, England, and other countries: 'Sergio, Mariusz, Charlie...a lot'.

Xenophobia towards newcomers at Bradbrook was often racially inflected. An Italian student, Giorgio, said that when he started at Bradbrook, his peers were 'very, very racist, and very discriminating,' saying, 'Go back to Italy, you white something-something...'. Kingsley, an African European student, complained that Bradbrook students 'bully Nigerians, call them big nose, big lips...Somalians, white people...!'. Like teachers at Seaview, Bradbrook teachers noted that parental attitudes strongly influenced racism among

students. Ana talked about Robbie, a White British student who was struggling to reconcile his father's racist views with his own experiences of attending a multicultural school:

Most of the time he lived with mum and went to school here and mixed with like a lot of different boys from different cultures and that was absolutely fine. But his dad was extremely racist. And so like whenever he went to live with his dad, who would like spew all these horrible racist things, he kind of had that...I think it was like him trying to figure out whether he was like his dad's son or his mum's son in a way...he had real difficulties in school, like behaviour and stuff, I think kind of stemmed from that a little bit. [interview]

Faduma, Abshir's mother, had experienced racism from a White British woman at the job centre after arriving in the UK from Northern Europe:

She was so rude and she say, 'Why do you come here?...I don't understand these people why they come, and [Northern European country] is very nice, so why did you come here?'... I said, 'I come here...but I didn't come here for you! And now I'm here, I'm not taking money from you, I come here to look after job'. She became so angry, her face was so red. I was scared inside a little bit, but I talked like that [laughs]. [interview]

Faduma told me that she had shared her experiences of racism with Abshir in the hope that he would learn from them: 'Every time we're talking about it. Every time I'm giving him idea, if it happen something like this, how he can protect himself or how he can talk with him'.

Faduma had a strong Muslim faith and thought that everyone should be treated the same, regardless of their religion, gender, race, or class. During a Year 8 focus group, Vasile, who was Moldovan, described his experiences with 'black peoples' and 'white guys':

Vasile: I want to say that black peoples for me are more beautiful than white guys. And they can have a bigger heart than white guys. And if you want to ask for help to a black guy, they will help me, I am sure for that. Because...because my mum was, when my mum go first time to the work, she go to white guy to ask him for help and he doesn't understand, but when he go to a black guy, he help her...

E: I appreciate the point that you're making, but it's also important not to distinguish between people just like...oh, the black people are...

Waleed: Just because one person is...

E: Exactly! [FG]

Here Waleed, who was born in England to Bengali parents, stepped in to problematise the essentialist views that Vasile had picked up from his mother. Bradbrook students often challenged each other's views when they perceived them to be racist. Ana commented, 'Like there might be like the occasional racial slur, but like they're all very like aware of kind of racist comments. So, like, uh, they're very quick to step in and shut that down pretty quickly. When it comes to racism, there's a very clear line of like, no, that's not ok'. At the same time, many Bradbrook students appeared to be confused about the actual definition of 'racism' and how to identify it. As I walked around the classroom during a group activity, a Kenyan student asked me, 'Miss, is it rude to ask where you're from?'. Ana highlighted this confusion during the teacher focus group:

Not so much that people are racist, but I think not understanding really what racism is, because a lot of the time, they're, 'Oh I don't want to be racist, but the boy in the picture is white', and like that's not racist to identify. I think there's kind of almost, they're overly conscious about talking about race, being politically correct. And other times, they'll say, 'Oh, you're a Somalian pirate!' in the same breath, and not realise that that's actually quite racist. So I think sometimes them not understanding how the subtleties of racism... [FG]

The findings described in this section show how ethnic diversity influenced belonging at Seaview and Bradbrook. At Seaview, ethnic and religious minorities tended to group together as a result of 'feeling different'. In contrast, Bradbrook School had high levels of ethnic diversity. This 'commonplace diversity' (Wessendorf, 2014b) engendered a cosmopolitan sense of curiosity about, and openness towards, the ethnic other (Noble, 2009; Harris, 2016; Back and Sinha, 2018). In this superdiverse setting, ethnic differences became the source of 'banter'. However, there were interethnic divisions between Roma and non-Roma Romanians; misogynistic insults were also the source of tension between Eastern Europeans and other students. Racism combined with xenophobia at both schools. The findings show that parental attitudes significantly shaped how young people navigated their racial differences; similarly, previous studies have highlighted parents' management of their children's relationships with raced (and classed) others (Reay et al., 2011; Vincent et al., 2017). At Bradbrook, the findings also point to young people's agency in critically engaging with issues of race and racism.

5.4. Language

Language intersected with migration status and ethnicity to shape how Bradbrook and Seaview students related to each other at school. Migration studies have highlighted language as a particularly important facilitator of integration (Ager and Strang, 2008; Tip et al., 2017). The present findings show how young people's familiarity with the English language significantly influenced their ability to build peer connections in the school space. However, they also reveal how young people drew on their language differences as a source of encounter. As with differences of race, parents played an important role in the languages spoken by their children.

Young people at both schools described the challenges of learning English when they first arrived in the UK. At Bradbrook, Batu, who was from Mongolia, said that he didn't know any English at all before arriving in London, while Abshir described the challenges of learning English in a city where you heard so many different accents. Hussein, the UASC from the Middle East, told me that he had no choice but to learn English when he arrived at Bradbrook because no one else spoke his language. Like Hussein, Nadir said that 'when I got here, I had no choice but to speak in English, to get my message across'. Hassan said that many newcomer students in his classes at Bradbrook 'kind of keep themselves to themselves' and 'don't really want to be the centre of attention'. Similarly, at Seaview, George noted that students would say, "I don't want to get it wrong" - but really, they don't want to give an answer where all the other kids in the class look at them or giggle because of the accent and pronunciation'. He observed, 'There's a big difference between laughing with, and laughing at, and they're very aware of that'. This was evident during a student focus group where Aarush described his peers laughing at his accent:

Aarush: Some people still go on with my accent, and they try to pretend my accent like whatever I'm saying, and they're saying stuff about [South Asian country] as well...

E: Mm, ok, and how does that make you feel?

Aarush: It makes me feel sad, but I can't really do anything about it. [FG]

At Bradbrook, Diana said that an English accent was a status symbol for some newcomers. Martim had come to the UK from Southern Europe in 2013. When I suggested that he already had quite a British accent, he broke into a huge smile and said, 'Oh, I didn't know that! Thank you, Miss'. Billy, who was White British, said that his decision to make friends with newcomers 'probably depends on where they come from. So, like, you wouldn't wanna be friends with them if they've got a heavy accent, and you can't understand what they're saying'. Ana told me that Hussein was very self-conscious about his English abilities: 'I wonder if like, because he sometimes doesn't pronounce things correctly in English that he feels like he's not smart sometimes, or that he doesn't come across as smart'. During our interview Hussein said that his peers had commented on his English: 'Yeah, cos there's bare [a lot of] people told me innit, "You learn in the street"'. Hussein's language was full of urban British slang. Abdi said that he himself had used slang as a way of integrating when he arrived in London as a teenager: 'I think I picked up slang before I picked up like, standard English. Yeah, it was an easy way into the community too, and everybody spoke like that'.

At Seaview, teachers noted an increase in linguistic groupings among students in recent years:

R2: I do notice down the corridors when I'm walking...that people stay in their own group, you know, that cultural group.

R4: It's become more common, hasn't it?

R1: Definitely. [FG]

Zuzanna, who had arrived from Poland in Year 7, said that only having Polish friends had limited her English language learning at the beginning: 'I had this one friend and she also speaks Polish...and it really wasn't much help with English'. Alex observed that newcomers often grouped together, explaining, 'I think they see that in a way they are foreigners, and maybe they feel that, you know, they are not judged...if they make mistakes. If they can't find the right words to express themselves, maybe they feel more accepted among students who come from a foreign background'. She added that EAL students used 'more or less the same vocabulary. They don't choose like, jokes they don't understand, you know, words they don't understand'.

Like the linguistic groupings at Seaview, at Bradbrook Emily remarked that when large numbers of students spoke the same language, they often tended to stick together. Nadir contrasted the experience of Italian Bengalis, who all spoke Italian, to his own experience as a Bengali newcomer: 'For them, they can find someone that speaks for them, so firstly it's not as urgent for them to learn English, and secondly, they will obviously try and stick with them, because they're in their comfort zone'. According to Yonas, for many newcomers at Bradbrook, 'You don't have to worry about whether you can speak English or not, because...you know there will be someone to speak your language'. Ana said that this was particularly obvious in the case of the Romanian 'gang':

It's like, well if I have come here and I only speak Romanian it's like my only choices here are other Romanian speakers. Um and so I think like it's interesting to see how that kind of develops. Like there was one kid who came from Romania who actually didn't want to be part of the specific Romanian gang. Uh, so he was like quite reluctant to do that. But he kind of had to find like other Romanian kids because he's not yet fluent in English. [interview]

During the teacher focus group, Ana commented:

Recently, with the younger kids in Year 8 who have come from Romania, they've kind of felt the need to be part of the Romanian group, the older kids, as well. And quite a few of them have expressed, 'I don't wanna be part of this group, but actually I want to be friends with other people'. But they've kind of got that struggle between going to that particular group of boys who speak their language, who aren't particularly a good influence... [FG]

The Romanian group often used the Romanian language to exclude other students:

Ana's classroom is empty. A Colombian student arrives to provide his 'statement' about the fight at breaktime. Ana asks him who was involved – 'It was the Romanians...'. He says that they were talking about him and calling him names in Romanian. Ana asks him how he knows that. He says that some other Romanian boys told him. [fieldnotes]

However, some Bradbrook students challenged linguistic groupings by speaking English. I observed Vasile attempting to speak English to his Romanian-speaking peers. They refused to respond to him in English and carried on speaking Romanian. He eventually appeared to

give up on this endeavour and became good friends with Ahmed, an African European newcomer. I noticed that Vasile and Ahmed sometimes helped each other with the English language. For example, Vasile corrected Ahmed one day in class: 'It's sheep, not "sheeps"'. At Seaview, Zuzanna said that her English had improved after she made friends with non-Polish students: 'I finally got out with friends with two boys and we hang out a lot, and they're not Polish so...my English really improved'.

In addition to the English language, Bradbrook students used their language differences as a source of connection:

The students are arriving to class. Kalam (Bengali) says to Emmanuel (Congolese English), 'Salaam alaikum'. Emmanuel laughs and says it back, adding, 'But I'm not Muslim'. Kalam responds, 'Yeah, but it's still nice to say it anyway!'. Later that day at lunchtime, I'm walking behind two students in the corridor. I hear them ask an older boy if he's Spanish. He mumbles something back. One of them responds jokingly, 'Yo hablo española' [sic]. [fieldnotes]

Similarly, students from ethnic minority backgrounds at Seaview sometimes used their language differences to connect with each other. During a focus group, Mona, who was born in England to North African parents, said, 'Oh, I mean me, me and my other friends we switch from English to Arabic within a split second. Just to annoy Faith! But she does it to me as well so...'. Both Mona and Faith laughed loudly at this comment. They were close friends who played netball, enjoyed 'group chats', and were united in their dislike for 'fakeness'. Lewis, an English student with Scottish parents, spoke Spanish and told George that he would like to help to welcome Spanish newcomers in the future.

At Bradbrook, parents influenced the language spoken by their children. Nadir's parents encouraged him to maintain his Bengali by speaking it with him at home: 'They say, "It's your heritage, you have to hold onto it"'. Gianna, an Italian mother, said that she spoke Italian to her son Luca because she didn't want him to lose it. She described this as a 'sacrifice' as she really wanted to improve her English: 'It is only for him. All the sacrifices are for him,' she laughed. Reina, who was from Bolivia, described her son Alberto helping her with her English. She also encouraged him to connect with his English-speaking peers at Bradbrook:

You can't take away from him the right to speak to other students in Spanish. This is difficult. This is really difficult... So I said to him, 'You can speak to the kids who speak Spanish, but you should also connect with the other children. Don't do this dividing into categories: only with them, only with them, only...'. And he has done it! He tells me, 'Mum, I speak with- I have English friends, and I always stick up for them when there are problems'. I really like that about him. He connects with them and speaks with them. [interview (translated)]

Ana noted that newcomers would often translate for their parents at doctor's appointments, lettings agents, and parents' evenings. Saaleha described the process of translating for her parents when they first arrived in London from Italy as both challenging and rewarding:

So like when we had to like...make agreements like contracts for like the bills, the house, I had to do everything [laughs]...GP, enrol like in the schools. It was a good thing because I felt like I was...doing stuff, and like I was becoming a proper adult. But at the same time, it was exhausting! [laughs] But it was good experience. [interview]

These findings show that inclusion at Bradbrook and Seaview was influenced by the ability to speak the English language, by the presence of an English accent, and by the use of British urban vernacular. At both schools, students who spoke the same language or whose English was limited tended to group together; Bartlett et al. (2017) find that a shared language often facilitates peer connections for newly arrived students in international high schools in New York City. Although Bradbrook students used English to challenge linguistic groupings, they also drew on language differences as a source of connection. The parents of Bradbrook students managed the languages spoken by their children at home and at school, underscoring their significant role in shaping the language practices of young migrants and refugees (Watters, 2011; Titzmann, 2012; Kwon, 2015). Bradbrook students often translated for their parents with different outcomes; other studies also point to the diverse psychosocial impact of 'language brokering' among young people (Orellana, 2001; Rainey et al., 2014; Aumann and Titzmann, 2020; Crafter and Iqbal, 2020).

5.5. Religion

A growing body of literature highlights the role of religion in the peer relationships of migrant and refugee youth (Hurh and Kim, 1990; Kogan et al., 2020). Although religion was the source of divisions at Seaview and Bradbrook, it also provided material for bridging encounters. Bradbrook students drew on their critical capabilities to problematise Islamophobic narratives in the media and at school.

At Seaview, George noted that most of the White British population were ‘nominally Christian’ but secular in practice. On several occasions at Seaview, I noticed religious prejudices among young people, particularly in relation to Islam.

I am sitting in the library between PIER sessions. It's empty until a teacher comes in with two Middle Eastern boys. They start to fill out an incident report. One of the boys, Ali, is translating for the other, Ahmad. Ali has a British accent. He tells the teacher that an English boy named Josh and his friends have been laughing at and making fun of Ahmad's accent in the playground. He imitates them enunciating the guttural 'Ah' sound of Ahmad's name. He adds that they've been saying, 'Allah Akbar and that stuff which you know like is offensive to Muslims'. He concludes, 'Ahmad's got nothing against him, Josh has been trying to cause trouble and problems, but he just wants to be left alone. Ahmad ignores him and doesn't talk to him, but he keeps annoying him, I've seen this happening. He's abused, harassed, assaulted Ahmad so many times'. [fieldnotes]

Kasia was an Eastern European student whose stepfather was from the Middle East.

Although Kasia had worn a hijab during Year 7, Shaima told me that she had started to wear it intermittently in Year 8 and was ‘quite confused about her identity’. During a PIER session, I observed an interaction between Kasia and Margret, a Nordic newcomer:

The students are working on the first activity with the cards. I hear Margret ask Kasia, who is at another desk, 'Kasia, why are you wearing that today?' (Kasia is wearing a hijab). Margret is smirking. Someone else chips in, 'Yeah, why are you wearing that?' and there is some tittering. Kasia's face goes bright red. She explodes, 'Because it's Friday and I was praying and it's my religion, ok!'. She is badly behaved for the rest of the lesson and keeps blowing the cards off her desk. Eventually the teacher sends her out. [fieldnotes]

Kasia's experience recalls that of a young Muslim woman reported in research in Northern Irish schools, where levels of ethnic and religious diversity are comparable to those at

Seaview: 'The boys laugh at me and keep asking "Why do you wear this? Why do you wear this?" (head scarf) and I still tell them it is part of my religion' (McMullen et al., 2020:7).

In contrast to Seaview, the religious majority at Bradbrook was Muslim. Muslim students at Bradbrook often shared similar religious practices. Many attended local mosques and would often see each other there after school. Muslim students also interacted in the school prayer room, which Nadir described as a place to encounter new students: 'At lunchtimes I would go to pray and I would meet people there every day. Every day I would meet new people'. Hassan noted that during Ramadan he would hear Muslim students in the corridors 'asking if each other is fasting'. Watching Romeo and Juliet during an English lesson, around a third of the class turned around in their seats when a love scene came on the screen – 'That's haram, Miss,' one boy said to the teacher. There were, however, intra-religious tensions. Saaleha and her mother Rohini said that in Italy they had both worn t-shirts and jeans without wearing the hijab. Saaleha explained that in London, 'There are, like many women from Bangladesh that in Italy...used to act like us. But when they moved here in London, they started to wear the hijab and the burka'. Since arriving in London, Rohini and Saaleha had continued to go without the hijab. They described responses from their Muslim peers:

Saaleha: There are many people that say um...we don't actually look like a real Muslim [Rohini speaks Italian and Saaleha translates]. Yes, we pray, we practice Ramadan and everything...

Rohini: And not use burka...You mean, I am not real Muslim?

Saaleha: Yes, some people started to judge us like, 'You are not really religious'. But just because I'm wearing a t-shirt doesn't mean that I'm less Muslim than other people! [laughs] [interview]

Rohini noted that her son's peers at Bradbrook had been curious about this dynamic:

Saaleha: Yes, so like my mum is saying that at school like, uh, my youngest sibling, the one that goes to Bradbrook, there are many students there that ask him, 'Why doesn't your mum-'

Rohini: 'Your mum...not use burka, not use hijab?' [laughs]. [interview]

This instance unsettles assumptions of monolithic Muslim ‘communities’; Warsi (2017) highlights the complex heterogeneity of Muslims in Britain in terms of race, sexuality, clothing, financial circumstances, and levels of religiosity.

Religious differences were also the source of encounter at Seaview and Bradbrook. Seaview students sometimes discussed their religious differences amongst themselves. During a PIER session I heard Hanna, an Eastern European student, ask Cameron, a White British student, ‘Do you pray?’. He responded, ‘A bit, I do sometimes, but I like to meditate more’. Mona, the student with North African parents, said that when she had started wearing her headscarf to school, ‘I sort of got isolated a bit...it wasn’t really, how can I say it, I think it’s not *normal*, maybe. Maybe it’s like the first time they’ve seen it’. She continued, ‘But then it got, like, better. So, like, now people just accept me for who I am’. At Bradbrook, Nadir, who was Muslim, said, ‘Interestingly, I think I can practise my religion better in this country than I can in Bangladesh... And I’d say people are a lot more judgemental there as well’. Nadir enjoyed researching other religions, noting that having friends from many different faiths meant that he was ‘very much interested in finding out what they have to say. It’s only right for me to go back and like...read what their beliefs are’. Gianna told me that her decision to move to London had been influenced by the city’s religious diversity, in contrast to the city she had come from in Italy:

I would like my son to open up his mind wider, to accept every religion, every culture. This is extremely important for me. I was a foreigner in my own city, this is how I felt, because of the way people think...I breathe, I feel free here. I breathe the smog [laughs], but I breathe freely. And I want my son to be free. [interview]

In spite of London’s religious diversity, some Muslim students at Bradbrook described experiencing Islamophobia in less ethnically diverse parts of the city. Their peer interactions also indicated an awareness of media stereotypes. Walking in the corridor at lunchtime, I heard a Black student ask another Black student, ‘Are you a member of Al-Shabaab?’. They both laughed. As with racism, Bradbrook students would sometimes step in to challenge each other’s views on religion, particularly where these were Islamophobic:

Ana tells me that Oscar, a White British boy in Year 7, made some mocking comments about another boy’s Muslim clothing on the last non-uniform day. But the

other kids called him out on it, and he quickly realised that he was in the minority for thinking it was funny. [fieldnotes]

During a focus group, students used the example of Islamophobia to respond to one student's comments on violence:

R5: So...and then, also, because where they're from, their country, their mindset is different. They might think that violence is better because their country is more violent, or stuff like that, so...

R4: Well you don't, like- that's like saying, y'know, you know when the ISIS thing happened, everyone was saying Muslims were terrorists or stuff like that yeah, but just cos a group of people, that's like in the country, doesn't mean the whole country is like that.

R5 and R3: *Yeah.* [FG]

The findings from Seaview and Bradbrook indicate the contrasting role of religion in young people's peer relationships. Some Seaview students had Islamophobic attitudes, while in East London, different religious practices created divisions among Bengali Italians, challenging essentialist views of Muslim 'communities' in Britain (Warsi, 2017). Some Bradbrook students experienced Islamophobia in less ethnically diverse parts of the city. At the same time, the findings reveal how young people bridged religious differences and also made them the source of critical discussion.

5.6. Socioeconomic status

Socioeconomic status played a critical role in the peer relationships of Bradbrook and Seaview students. Socioeconomic status reflects one's economic and social position in society and is typically measured using a combination of income, education, and occupation. The notion of 'precarity' describes the condition of insecurity produced by a lack of steady income and stable work. Butler (2012) suggests that precarity is distinct from the universal human experience of 'precariousness' precisely because it is unequally distributed; in other words, socioeconomic inequalities persist. Lorey (2015) builds on Butler's work to examine how precarity is normalised and internalised in contemporary neoliberal systems through 'governmental precarization'. Berlant (2011) also explores the embodied and affective dimensions of precarity. Relatedly, migration studies increasingly point to the psychosocial

effects of post-migration stressors such as lack of employment and income (Silove et al., 2000; Miller and Rasmussen, 2010, 2017; Hynie, 2018). The findings from both schools show that precarity had strongly divisive effects in young people's peer relationships, including gang violence in East London. However, the findings also show how socioeconomic divisions interacted with moments of friendship and neighbourliness characterised by openness and reciprocity.

At Bradbrook, Yonas told me, 'Most students are not from a well-off family. They might be, some might be ok, from an ok income, but nothing well-off'. According to Abdi, 'A lot of them are on free school meals'. During the teacher focus group, Bradbrook teachers described hunger and temporary homelessness as the biggest issues affecting young people at the school. They estimated that around 30 students (10%) were 'technically' homeless. Kate, a White British teacher, explained that this meant 'sofa-hopping with people...living in overcrowded relatives' house...have to be rehoused in some sort of hostel...whole family living in one bedroom in a bed-and-breakfast type thing, without washing clothes facilities, or proper cooking facilities'. Tessa, the behavioural support teacher at Bradbrook, told me that she had recently learned that one student had been sleeping in a car. Gentrification meant that council housing was increasingly scarce in the local area as houses were converted into flats for city workers. Describing his experiences as a newcomer to the UK, Abshir mentioned that his family had been evicted from their first house in London.

Ana said that it was 'pretty normal' for Bradbrook students to live with other families. She explained, 'For a lot of them, especially like coming over here, like for a limited amount of time – or you think that you're going to be here for a limited amount of time – like just go to these houses where you live with, like a whole bunch of different people. Not even having...like, everyone being in one room all together'. Tessa described students living with 18 other people, with six people to a room. Matis, a Lithuanian student, said that he shared a house with another family, noting, 'I really don't like it but for now it will be good...we're just saving money right now'. Another student told me that he lived with his cousins but quickly added that this was 'confidential'. Young people talked to each other about their living situations:

The English class is about to have a group discussion and the teacher has asked them to move the chairs into a circle. As they're moving the chairs, I hear Eric making fun of another student whose name I don't know: 'You brush your teeth and get dressed in school, man, that's so weird! You're supposed to do that at home'. He adds, 'You don't have a bedroom to get dressed in'. [fieldnotes]

A number of Bradbrook students had caring responsibilities at home. Billy, a White British student in Year 9, was a young carer, a fact which appeared to influence his peer relationships at school:

E: Billy, what do you think [about what makes you feel good at school]?

Billy: Nothing.

E: Nothing makes you feel good?

Imran: This guy's on drugs or something [laughing]. Do you know how he comes into school every day?

E: So how would you describe your wellbeing at school, then, Billy?

Billy: Bored.

Imran: But you know how he comes in school? He comes in like, late every day. This is how he comes in, like [miming zombie], like he's a drunk or something [everyone, including Billy, laughs]. [FG]

Billy was absent from the next focus group with the same students:

I do a head count. Billy isn't here. 'Is Billy not in today?', I ask. Imran, who is British Bengali, looks up – 'Billy, the white one? No'. He adds under his breath, 'He's on drugs'. 'That's not very kind,' I tell him. 'Miss, he looks like an alcoholic or something! His eyes are always drooping, and he looks asleep!' he responds. 'Well,' I say, 'He must be very tired'. We get started. [fieldnotes]

On one occasion I observed Ryan, a Year 8 Bradbrook student, reporting domestic abuse to his teachers after school. He was accompanied by his friend, Camilo.

It's 4:15 pm. I'm sitting in the back of the classroom sorting out the questionnaires when Diana and Ana come in with Ryan and Camilo. Diana asks Ryan to tell them the story. He quietly recounts the details of the physical abuse he has been experiencing at home. Diana tells Ryan that a social worker will be coming to the school and that

he won't be staying at home tonight. She looks at Camilo and says solemnly, 'Thank you for being such a good friend to Ryan'. [fieldnotes]

Unlike Bradbrook, where most students came from economically deprived families, the socioeconomic backgrounds of Seaview students varied widely. White British students were from both working- and middle-class families. Newcomer parents had come to the UK for different types of work, including in the service sector or as doctors; George said that many worked long hours 'to make ends meet' and noted that several migrant families at Seaview had no recourse to public funds (NRPF). Shaima, who was another member of the EAL team at Seaview, remarked that socioeconomic background 'absolutely' influenced who young people spent time with at school: 'Definitely, there's definite groups of students who all kind of like to hang out according to their socioeconomic status, usually'. I asked Seaview students how they felt when they weren't at school:

R4: *When I'm not school, I feel like I've got a weight off my shoulders.*

R3: *Yeah, especially on Friday.*

R2: *When there's not a billion eyes looking at you, judging you! [FG]*

Alfie [R2], who described 'a billion eyes...judging you', had a complex family background and had been assigned a social worker. He was short, with a slight build and dark blond hair to his shoulders. Shaima noted, 'I think he's free school meals – and he's completely different to the "middle-class" students here'. Outside school, students from different socioeconomic backgrounds did very different activities. During a focus group, Amelia, an English student from a middle-class family, said that she took dance lessons after school with her close friends. Other students in the group from working-class backgrounds, including several newcomers, said that they met up with their friends in town or in the park.

James, a White British teacher at Seaview, suggested that social and emotional problems among students were often due to poverty:

A third of the country is living under the poverty line. And that would be quite a lot of our kids, I would imagine. Even with parents who are working...and some are working nights. And then if there's also a family breakdown as well...probably a lot of

what they're doing is acting out stuff that's from home or from instability at home.
[FG]

This supports recent studies which find that socioeconomic deprivation is a strong risk factor for behavioural problems among children and young people (Flouri et al., 2019; Visser et al., 2021). Similarly, behavioural problems among Bradbrook students often stemmed from their socioeconomic circumstances. Hassan remarked on the link between the behaviour of Bradbrook students and their family backgrounds: 'I think some of the kids that draw attention to themselves a lot are...kids that come from broken homes and, um, there is no father figure around...and that has an effect on them seeking attention constantly, uh, being disruptive'. Tyler, a short, overweight Caribbean student at Bradbrook, lived with his mother and older brother. Ana said that they had come to the UK several years earlier, and were 'going to be um evicted soon, um...and they're just kind of like waiting, waiting, waiting'. She mentioned that Tyler's mother had severe depression and was 'struggling to cope'. Tyler had serious behavioural issues. I observed the effect of Tyler's behaviour on his peer relationships:

I see Tyler come into the classroom. He just got back from the special behavioural school – Ana says that although his behaviour has definitely improved, it's still quite erratic. I hear Tyler ask Bogdan if he can sit next to him. Bogdan shrugs and mutters what I presume to be a negative response because Tyler looks disappointed and goes to sit on his own. I've noticed that Bogdan has been keeping his head down since the initial rocky period of settling into student life. Ana tells me that he hasn't been in internal exclusion for a while. [fieldnote]

Some Bradbrook students displayed moral attitudes towards poor behaviour from their peers. In a Philosophy for Children ('p4c') session on 'identity', students commented that decisions about who to spend time with were 'about your morals'. Nadir told me that his Muslim faith had 'played a part in not going with the wrong crowd...like, for example, if I finish school, I'm with a friend, and I saw them smoking. Yes, I know smoking's you know, it's objectively a bad thing, but my faith sort of played a role in making sure that, you know, I don't- I don't hang around with them anymore'. In a similar vein, Seaview students indicated that peer behaviour influenced who they chose to spend time with:

E: And what do you think stops you from being a closer friend to someone?

R3: *It depends. I know some people in the school that smoke...and do some weird things that I wouldn't like doing. I don't really push myself to be involved with any of them.*

R2: *Just don't wanna get involved in it.*

R4: *Don't wanna get involved. They're troublemakers. Yeah. Sometimes they get in trouble and it's always like crazy, crazy bad. Like some people got kicked out of the school for stupid- like they do something dumb, I don't hang out with them a lot. I think they're a bit weird. I'm not weird.*

R5: *According to me, the people who are like, indulged in various mischievous things, I don't get along with them, most of them. [FG]*

At Bradbrook, many students had parents who had multiple jobs and worked long hours. Imran in Year 9 talked about being out on the streets until his mum got home from work at 7 in the evening; other students spoke of not going home until 10 o'clock at night. Kate reflected, 'The supervision of young people who, for large periods of time – after school, the weekends, the holidays – are left to their own devices, is quite staggering'. This influenced how young people spent their time outside school: 'We have students who wake up alone, go to sleep alone, because their parents are so busy working, so they can barely come to school on time and get home rather than, you know, go outside of London and on holidays,' noted Hamza in our interview. In the teacher focus group, he said that 'for a lot of our students, this small bit of town is all they see of the world – not even the bigger picture of East London, let alone the bigger picture of London, let alone the bigger picture of the country'. A significant number of students at Bradbrook were involved in gangs, either on the fringes, or actively getting involved. According to Rohan, a teacher and member of the pastoral team, gang involvement for students was 'all about belonging'. He added,

So it's...the concept is they have no parental control as soon as they leave us, and maybe their parents get back at six or seven. So they've got like a three hour gap of where they're chilling in the park, chilling in the road. And they have that...older boys have the opportunity with the boys. And they just get them in that way, say buy them trainers, buy them a top... [interview]

In our second interview, Nadir remarked that Bradbrook students had often 'tried to outdo each other on social media where, you know, someone's got a designer this and someone else will go and try and top that'. Hamza suggested that the combination of peer pressure

and deprivation might also make young people turn to gangs: 'For example, their friends might have the fanciest phones. They might not...they might want it, they can't afford it, what are they going to do? They're going to steal it, or they might get money to get it from somewhere'. Aaron said that for many young people, gangs offered a quick route to financial gain: 'They really want to go from A to Z, and they want to be at Z, but they don't recognise that journey in between, and that process'. He added that being in a gang helped some young people to provide for their families: 'They may not have enough money at home, so to go out and sell drugs or be a runner for a gang, it just helps ease the financial situation at home'.

At Seaview, George noted that the Albanian 'mafia' were recruiting young people in Albania and on the streets of Brighton & Hove for 'county line' gangs, which moved drugs around the country. In East London, gang membership also involved moving drugs but operated on the basis of postcodes rather than ethnicity. Drill music videos on YouTube and Instagram were a common way to communicate threats between gang members from different postcodes. Hamza noted,

I think media is a big part of it as well now, because on one hand, for example, social media allows the boys to communicate with these gangs and for example, drill music and, you know, rap music. These kids are kind of drawn into it. [interview]

Fernández-Planells et al. (2021) confirm that social media plays an important role in gang membership. Ana told me about a Bradbrook student who had recently used Instagram to send 'like a diss...to a famous drill artist and stuff – well, not "famous, famous", but like famous for here, you know. And yeah, it's like you're having to sit down with dad like, "Your son is now in danger"'. Ana said that the school had advised the family to move to a different area – 'And that happens like a fair amount as well, like where kids like get really involved with gang stuff and the whole family has to move'.

The presence of gangs on the streets of the East London borough meant that being in the wrong place at the wrong time could have devastating consequences for young people. I asked Hussein what he normally did after school:

E: *And outside school, where do you spend the most time?*

Hussein [H]: *The most time? The park [laughs].*

E: *Oh, really, what do you do there?*

H: *Just playing...do push-ups, see friends, sit. Sometimes, they won't, like...if my friend is busy, I'm staying at home. Just stay home.*

E: *Do your family, like, want you to stay home or...?*

H: *They just want me to stay safe, and that's it. And they just want to see me happy.*

E: *Yeah. What about like 'staying safe' here? What does that mean?*

H: *Like...cos here, it's like everything's different innit...there's bare people like getting stabbed like me. I got stabbed as well innit. I was stabbed like, just by accident. It wasn't like...that's why I'm listening to them and therefore I respect them, show them respect. It's...pfft. [interview]*

Hussein lived with his uncle and cousins. After recovering from the stabbing (teachers told me that he had been on life support for several weeks), his uncle insisted on driving him to and from school:

E: *After you got stabbed, like, did you feel like you needed to protect yourself?*

H: *Yeah, yeah. I was...I used to- my uncle used to drop me in school in car every day.*

E: *Yeah. And does he still do that?*

H: *Uh, he's still doing it, but I was like to him, 'I can go, you can go to...like, you can drop your children, I can go now'. So like I'm coming school.*

E: *Yeah. And do you feel...like do you feel ok like on the street, or scared sometimes?*

H: *Probably like...if you wear nice clothes, like smart clothes, you get stabbed for no reason because they think like you are someone, or something.*

E: *That's interesting. So you're better to like maybe not...?*

H: *Or you have like nice clothes or nice shoes or nice phone...and you, they just...like a lot of people I saw them, that happened to them. [interview]*

Like Hussein's inferred tactic of not wearing 'nice clothes', other Bradbrook students adopted protective strategies outside school. Abshir described 'taking caution' in certain parts of town:

Abshir: You know, it's worrying like, people fighting over postcodes and stuff like that. Sometimes it's like...there's a near 14s I want to join, but they do trainings late at night in the winter. So obviously, being from this side of whatever town and being in that side of town, playing football and then you just come back...you never know what's going to happen, unfortunately.

E: So do you feel, I mean, do you feel safe most of the time or...?

Abshir: Most of the time. But at the same time, you've always got that thought at the back of your head. You know, something might happen to me, or when you see a couple of guys or girls or whatever moving a bit suspicious. You just want to take caution. [interview]

Staying at home was the only safe option for many Bradbrook students, which parents actively enforced. Students said that they spent a lot of time playing video games such as 'Fortnite' with their friends from school, indicating the potential bridging function of digital technologies in the absence of spaces for face-to-face encounter outside school (Steinkuehler and Williams, 2006; Kowert et al., 2014). Momodou, a newcomer from rural Gambia, told me:

Momodou: One brother he feels sometimes that he wants to go back to Gambia. Every time he is sitting in the house, he don't go out. So he always like to go to Gambia...cos in Gambia he always play in the whole night. And many people are always outside.

E: Hmm. And why...why do you think here you don't go outside so much?

Momodou: My mum doesn't allow us many times to go outside. She sends us to shop, like that, and come back to her. She said it's not safe. [interview]

Ana showed me a survey that had been conducted at a recent Year 8 parents' evening: one question asked, 'We would like to run a series of workshops on keeping your son safe. Please indicate which of the workshops you would be interested in'. 24 parents (75%) chose 'Knife crime – keeping young people safe'. Emily told me, 'I make sure that I'm in contact with my children. As soon as he leaves school, on the way home. And he's meant to go

straight home from school'. However, she added, 'I think there's only so much you can do as a parent'. Rohini described collecting her youngest son every day from school. She had started doing so after her older son was mugged by a gang at knifepoint six months after the family arrived in London: 'Neighbours say, "This is normal. It's London. It's happening every day"'. Her daughter Saaleha added, 'Our neighbours who are from Pakistan they helped us, they called the police and that was really, really nice of them'.

Although Hussein's stabbing did not appear to be gang-related, teachers said that he was now heavily involved in gangs. Rohan told me that part of the pull of gangs was 'kind of like, you need to know people to make sure you're safe as well'. Hussein may have perceived gang membership as providing better protection than the strategy of not wearing 'nice clothes' on the street. Amy said that Hussein had recently been searched and that they had found three phones on him, including a Nokia 'brick' phone and lots of condoms ('Not for sexual use, but to put drugs in,' Hamza noted). Hussein wore a flashy ring – when I asked him where he got it, he told me that a 'friend' had given it to him. Ana observed that Hussein's gang involvement influenced his interactions with his peers: 'Like the way that the kids are around him, it's like quite obvious that, like, he is clearly fairly high up and there's definitely stuff going on. And like...he associates with a lot of other kids who are like definitely involved with like really terrible kind of crime things...'. Abdul, another UASC from the same country as Hussein, said that he didn't hang out with Hussein because he was a 'bad boy'. However, Ana also observed the complexity of Hussein's identity as both 'gang member' and 'student':

With Hussein, he is like this kind of like 'bad boy' and everything. But at the same time, like, I've never had a problem with him in my classes. You can see that drive and that motivation of like, 'I want to do well'. And he...it's interesting because he's got a lot of friendships in that class of like, kind of not very nice friendships, like kind of naughty gang stuff. Um, but when I ask them to get into their own groups, Hussein will always team up with Kwame, the one from Uganda who wants to be a doctor. So Hussein will team up with him and another kid called Andriy, both of them like super studious, like very nerdy, like no cool factor at all [laughs]. But like they'll always team up and they'll always work together. So it's interesting to see, like what kind of choices he makes... [interview]

The considerable impact of socioeconomic status on peer relationships at Bradbrook and Seaview challenges assumptions that ethnicity is the dominant source of division in contexts of migration and diversity (Putnam, 2000). Rather, the findings support studies which emphasise the fundamental role of socioeconomic status in shaping tensions in these settings (Phan, 2008; Portes and Vickstrom, 2011; Owen, 2013). Bradbrook students mostly came from economically deprived families while Seaview students had more diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. At both schools, social and emotional behavioural difficulties influenced peer relationships and often stemmed from precarity and instability at home. Neighbourhood violence was a particularly insidious issue at Bradbrook, leading to insecurity on the streets and influencing gang involvement for vulnerable young people, including UASC. The findings also add to our understanding of how, in the context of precarity, young migrants and refugees use digital technologies to develop belonging at the local level. Social media played an important role in gang lifestyle and, in the absence of opportunities for face-to-face encounter outside of school, video games had a potentially bridging function.

5.7. Conclusion

This chapter examined peer relationships among young people at Bradbrook and Seaview schools. It explored the differences that ‘made a difference’ (Berg et al., 2019) in their social lives, highlighting the significance of migration status, race and ethnicity, language, religion, and socioeconomic status. These differences intersected with gender, educational backgrounds, degrees of ‘newness’, and other factors. The multi-sited nature of the research gives insight into the complex ways in which location shapes the dynamics of ‘superdiversity’ and underscores the situated nature of convivial practices (Wise and Noble, 2016). The findings foreground young people’s significant agency in negotiating difference, showing how they created boundaries but also transcended societal divisions in moments of encounter. The findings also draw attention to the mediating role of digital technologies and family practices on peer relationships in the two settings. The next chapter will examine the influence of secondary education and the RWS project on young people’s peer relationships.

6. Education and psychosocial support

6.1. Introduction

Having explored how Bradbrook and Seaview students negotiated multiple dimensions of difference in their peer relationships, the thesis now examines the role of secondary education and psychosocial support in providing support for encounter and promoting dialogue. The chapter draws on ethnographic fieldnotes, and data from interviews and focus groups conducted with students and teachers.

6.2. Support and recognition

The literature suggests that schools and school-based interventions can encourage young people's encounter by addressing various inequalities through the provision of support and recognition. Studies highlight, however, that for encounter to occur something must also be 'left open' (Wilson, 2017:612). This section considers the extent to which the schools and RWS project were able to achieve a balance between 'supporting' and 'challenging' young people (Barrett, 2010), and explores the consequences for their peer relationships.

6.2.1. Language support

Newcomers quickly became immersed into life at Bradbrook, attending normal lessons from the start and, as Amy put it, being 'thrown in the deep end'. Students who were completely new to the English language received twice-weekly, two-hour EAL sessions during their first 12 weeks at the school. Several teachers felt that this support was not enough. Ana observed that 'because schools are so underfunded in general, money is quickly used up fighting fires elsewhere, rather than actually being able to invest in, like, proper EAL support'. Teachers discussed the effects of the lack of EAL support during a focus group:

R2: I also think that a source of stress for students who've been here for a while is that...their language is not progressing, because really there isn't adequate facility for teaching them English as a language. They're just dumped into an English class with everybody who's been, you know, using it for 11 years.

R4: Yeah, it's just immersion, isn't it?

R2: Yeah, and immersion doesn't work, and induction is too short-

R1: *Immersion works for I think some children who already come with English, but I think a lot of them do really still struggle.*

R2: *But also, because of how much setting is going on [putting students into sets based on ability], immersion doesn't work even then, because invariably they end up in the bottom sets straight away. [agreement] [FG]*

Bradbrook students who had not been to school before, or had been out of school for a time, also faced a steep learning curve. Bogdan had not attended school in Romania. He told me about his first day at Bradbrook: 'The first day when I went there, I did not say. There was a lot of people sitting there, I could not go out. I sat there. I didn't know what to say. So I was just looking at the book'. Barrett (2010:11) notes that failing to provide students with sufficient support in meeting challenges in the classroom may result in student anxiety. Yonas commented on the impact of the immersion system on young people and their peer relationships:

Uh...you know the boys, there are four brothers that came from Somalia, but they didn't have education for four years. But their timetable is full of different subjects. I teach one of the boys...and he refuses to do any work...but you know, he's been put in my class for a double lesson, and he's not going to understand anything at all. I mean, really, you would not be surprised if, if you ask this boy, Yusuf, you know, 'Do you know what photosynthesis is?'- you know, 'Do you know what energy is?', anything about any simple knowledge, he won't tell you, or anything that is distracting him not to be maybe in a gang or be in trouble. He hasn't been in school, we know it, we can see it... [interview]

Yonas felt that Yusuf 'should be on a reduced timetable and be taken out of a lesson and taught basic things to get him to near to where he's supposed to be'. Amy made a similar comment during our interview. Ana said that newcomers would, at GCSE stage, often 'kind of fall through the cracks...because we're having to focus basically exclusively on GCSEs. And so it's like we're not giving them time to even learn the language...'. Yonas showed me Yusuf's timetable and sighed, 'How is he meant to learn Spanish when he doesn't know English? He's getting "U"s in everything'.²² Gesturing with his hands, Yonas added, 'It's just adding this weight on him'. Ana reminded me that a lack of English progression would have long-term consequences for newcomers: 'A lot of the time they want to go to, like, do A-

²² A 'U' grade refers to an 'Unclassified' grade below the minimum standard required for a pass.

Levels [Advanced Level qualifications] and specific subjects. You think like, you're literally going to leave here and the only option you're going to have is an ESOL [English for Speakers of Other Languages] course. Because you're not...because their English isn't up to scratch'. In Gladwell and Chetwynd's (2018:41) research on newcomer education in the UK, multiple school and local authority-based professionals in England reported that the quality of EAL provision had largely deteriorated since the mainstreaming of EAL funding in 2011.

Ana highlighted the impact of the immersion system on teachers at Bradbrook: 'You're putting all that pressure on the teacher, really, like them having to develop resources and having to develop this thing and that thing. And we just don't have enough time really. We don't have enough time to do it properly'. Bradbrook teachers were rarely directly informed of a student's migration status. Sharon, a teaching assistant, remarked, 'We haven't really had refugees overtly identified, I mean we haven't had people with "refugee" labels...I do in my mind identify children as refugees, if that's what I think they are'. Ana described mid-phase admissions as 'a massive, massive problem' due to the lack of background information on special educational needs (SEN) in particular: 'A lot of times we don't know if there's any like special needs issues. A lot of times they go undiagnosed or like we don't get any information at all from their previous schools or anything. So it's really difficult to kind of integrate them quickly when we literally have no idea what their situation is at all'. Similarly, in Gladwell and Chetwynd's (ibid.) research, teachers highlighted the challenges of diagnosing and addressing SEN when combined with EAL needs.

Bradbrook School had an informal 'buddy' scheme where newcomers were paired with another student who, where possible, spoke their language. Students said that the buddy system had been helpful when they first arrived at school. Mahmud, for example, said, 'For me, it's difficult because in Italy I learn English, but here Miss talk a lot faster. And when I come in London the first day my Sir talk faster and I didn't understand. But Sir give me one Bengali friend with me. So he helped me to know all the school. And then...now I feel good'. However, teachers described the buddy system at Bradbrook as very informal and loosely regulated with 'no checks'. I observed the effects of the buddy system in class one day:

The Year 8 English class have finally settled down to listen to their teacher explain the poem that they are studying ('The Class Game', by Mary Casey). The teacher is explaining English slang words like 'ta-ra', 'corpy', 'semi', 'bog', and 'yard'. There's a knock on the door and a short, slight student is quickly ushered in. His blazer is far too big for him. The teacher quietly asks him his name and where is from – he is Mihai, from Romania. She sits him next to another Romanian boy, Florin, and gives him a blank workbook before returning to the front of the classroom. As the lesson continues, Mihai starts to speak to Florin in Romanian, first softly, then louder and louder. Florin is clearly trying to focus on the lesson. Their peers start to look over. After saying 'Shhh!' a few times to no avail, the teacher goes over and asks Mihai, 'Do you speak any English, at all?'. He shakes his head. 'Ok, you can do some translation but not talking over me all the time, ok?', she says. He nods and she goes back to the front. At the end of the class, I ask her if this is common. 'All the time,' she says wearily. [fieldnotes]

In contrast to Bradbrook, Seaview School placed a strong emphasis on English language support. Seaview had a five-person EAL team who worked in partnership with the local Ethnic Minority Achievement Service to support students with EAL or underachieving students from ethnic minority backgrounds. The EAL team provided one-to-one and small group support to newcomer students in their mainstream classes and occasionally conducted student interventions. Alex described the effect of EAL support on newcomers:

They just beam out, their face is radiant because they, especially at the beginning where they don't have friends, when they are not used to anything around them, you can see that, 'Oh, someone, you know, is listening to me. I can speak to that person. I can share my feelings with that person'. [interview]

George told me that in his experience, when young people were in their EAL groups they were 'much more outspoken, because they are all in the same boat as it were'. George suggested that EAL sessions provided a safe space for newcomers to 'speak about how they felt and perhaps what they missed'. He added that young people in the EAL sessions 'knew that these other people also had a story and could actually relate to what they were saying' and would 'willingly talk to other migrant kids who don't even speak their language, but they'll have a good crack at it in English because everyone accepts what they're given, you know- no one's perfect'. George ran a study support group with four girls from Greece, the Gambia, Moldova and Syria:

The four of them feel safe when we have a reading group. And by talking, and speaking, they're just learning about themselves and each other more. We're having

a laugh, because I use humour, but [laughs]...it's hard, to get four with different language abilities and different ethnic groups and all that, it's hard to get the laugh, unless it's you know, either slapstick or something that is so obviously funny you don't need the subtlety of language. And it is just...joking them along, you know. Anyway, we make it work. [interview]

George described EAL support as a space for newcomer students to 'flower' alongside their EAL peers:

If I found a new EAL kid who wasn't getting on, I would just take him along and hook him into one of the EAL kids and say, 'Look after this one' – boom, boom, sorted, you know. And immediately that kid could then flower. Unfortunately, they were then flowering in the international brigade! [interview]

George's comment captures the conviviality that blossomed among EAL students but also points to the role of EAL support in shaping the boundaries of this conviviality, restricting it to 'the international brigade'. The effects of this 'in-group' conviviality at wider school level were evident in the case of Sofia, a Romanian student who had gone to Seaview for just a term. Sofia had been 'buddied up' with another Romanian student and the pair had become close friends, attending EAL sessions together. However, on leaving Seaview Sofia told Alex that she would have appreciated more opportunities to encounter students from non-EAL backgrounds. Alex reported,

She said that sometimes she feels that if the teachers in front would encourage, you know, to pair up, to mix them, you know, with other students...and I don't know, maybe the tutor, you know, include them more, or I don't know, buddy them up with other English or...have these kinds of activities in which they, they mix them together, it would have been helpful for her. [interview]

Sofia's comment aligns with studies which show that many newcomers have an active desire to mix or 'integrate' within local communities but often lack the opportunities to do so (Ager and Strang, 2008). In providing separate EAL support while at the same time failing to encourage integration between English and EAL speakers, the school may have contributed to student dependency and perpetuated a multiculturalist narrative of 'tolerance' for the other. Lorde (1984:1) posits that 'the mere tolerance' of difference is 'the grossest reformism. It is a total denial of the creative function of difference in our lives'. In the presence of racism at the wider school level, tolerance for the other metamorphosed into

violence. Drin, an Eastern European UASC, had made good friends with another Eastern European newcomer and a Middle Eastern UASC during the EAL sessions; the three assaulted a White British student after he was racist towards the Middle Eastern student. This violence may be seen as an expression of the ‘in-group’ conviviality that had developed between Drin and his newcomer peers during the EAL sessions: Back and Sinha (2018:18) confirm that conviviality can ‘be forged from damaging formations of masculinity, misogyny and violence’.

6.2.2. Celebrating differences

At Bradbrook, cultural differences were, according to Nadir, ‘celebrated at every opportunity’. For example, a Romanian teacher ran a weekly ‘Romanian club’ where Romanian students would listen to Romanian music, watch Romanian TV and films, and eat Romanian food. Although this club may have given young Romanians a sense of confidence in their national identities, it may have contributed to the reification of a Romanian ‘group’ at Bradbrook. Romanian students continued to be seen by their peers and teachers as a threatening ‘gang’. Sharon also pointed out that differentiation could have damaging effects on young people’s sense of self:

Even where we’ve had adults who are from other countries, and they identify certain children as, ‘Right, he’s Polish’ or..., well, particularly Polish actually, I’ve seen this quite a lot over many years, that some of the children, it’s a disaster. Because as young men, they just want to be Londoners, they’re not interested in being Polish, or Romanian, and they don’t want your identity thing, thank you very much. And it’s a disaster. [FG]

Hamza described the effects of this type of cultural differentiation on school cohesion:

I think the majority of the students are very respectful of the differences, and I think that’s one thing that should be said. I think it is celebrated in the school, the fact that we’re so diverse, multiculturally. But at the same time, with some kids it is hard to get them to, you know, immerse into one identity with everyone else. So yes, you’ve got Nigerians, Ghanaians, you’ve got Pakistanis, Indians, and everyone does, ‘I am this, I am that’. But sometimes it’s difficult to say, you know what, despite that, we are all Bradbrook, we are all members – British values, for example. That’s what I think is a bit difficult sometimes. They do respect their differences, but they need to understand sometimes, you know what, they’re one as well, there should be a bit more unity in a sense. [FG]

Similarly, Yonas proposed that the solution for cohesion at school was to recognise young people's differences while emphasising their common humanity and status as students:

You gather a whole bunch of students, different cultures, and say, 'You're all humans' – [laughs] really, I don't want to be philosophical too much, but- 'You are. But, different colours, different religion, different culture, and you're willing to get on, support each other, and be the best you can and get the best grade, and support each other really. And we don't have that. [interview]

Like Yonas and Hamza, studies have called for an inclusive school ethos which promotes respect for sociocultural differences (Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017; Mendenhall et al., 2017; Borsch et al., 2020; McMullen et al., 2020). This inclusive ethos links to curricular approaches that recognise and respond to cultural diversity (Gay, 2013; Mendenhall et al., 2017). Such curricular approaches provide an embedded form of recognition for diverse cultural perspectives while recognising their contribution to a broader whole. However, teachers at both Bradbrook and Seaview noted that cultural recognition in the national curriculum is limited to British geography, religion, history, and literature.

At Bradbrook, an English teacher said that several years ago the GCSE English exam extract had referred to 'dinner' as 'tea' and that this confused a lot of the students, who asked her afterwards, 'How can you eat tea?!'. Another English teacher told me that while marking creative writing exercises she had noticed that the students almost always used 'really British names' in their stories, like 'Jessica', 'Tom', and 'Jack'. Seaview teachers also discussed the issue of recognising diverse cultural identities in the curriculum:

R1: They made changes recently. Geography wasn't as UK-focused before so, it's yeah...that's what they brought it back to.

R2: Oh, did they?

R1: Yeah, across all of it as well. And English Literature is to study all British authors. And so they have restricted the curriculum, yeah, that's what we're saying.

R4: I don't know what happened to History, but I can imagine the same thing happening!

R1: So, the things that impact on your wellbeing is understanding who you are, your role, identity...and I think we're saying that there isn't enough breadth, isn't enough freedom to teach... [FG]

James [R4] pointed to the need to explore salient issues in relation to the local demographic, and the 'white working-class' in particular:

We are in a south coast town and, you know, we are a white working-class, seaside town as well as, you know, a town with two universities. But that white working-class thing is...how to, you know, we've got quite a melting pot here, because we have got the white working-class kids, you know...and, you know, to make it work for everybody. [FG]

George added, 'They've got a story. And we don't listen to that story so much!'. James continued, 'I think...this is about working-class identity, but also about sort of BAME and multi-ethnic religious identities. Um, you know, I don't think our curriculum is broad and radical enough, really'. James also raised the need for more attention to foreign influences on western culture and civilisation in the Religious Education (RE) syllabus and broader curriculum:

But I do feel, you know, like, Islam has had a big impact on western, you know, culture and civilisation. Just to take one example. Now, that doesn't really fit in the RE syllabus, but, you know, there's a few acknowledgements that could be made there somewhere in the curriculum... I do think there should be some acknowledgement, you know, and it would be just great to be celebrating that... you know, finding other voices, right from across the spectrum. [FG]

Studies have similarly addressed the lack of diversity in the British curriculum. Shah (2013:194) suggests that recent educational policies in Britain have been informed by a desire 'to assert a single, national identity, enforced through a curriculum that advocates canonical literature and does not take account of the rich histories of diverse learners'. Kalra (2001:12 in Amin, 2002:964) observes that even in schools which recognise and accommodate diversity, 'the history curriculum will still consist almost entirely of European subjects and particularly of the British monarchy'. Joseph-Salisbury (2020) argues that the national curriculum fails to reflect the diversity of Britain's population, its history of immigration, and its colonial past. A more diverse curriculum may, like 'superdiversity', help

to establish a broader ‘fusion of horizons’ (Gadamer, 1975:305) in which to negotiate difference.

6.2.3. Supporting wellbeing

Both schools took holistic approaches to student wellbeing. Seaview School placed a strong emphasis on mental health and wellbeing in its policies. The school held a national Mental Health Award and there was a counselling office and an email address that students could email anonymously. Each year group had a pastoral care team, who Shaima reported had ‘a massive job’ in supporting students’ wellbeing. The EAL team at Seaview also played a highly pastoral role for newcomer students. They attended pre-admissions meetings with parents and had detailed insight into the backgrounds of newcomer students. George noted,

In a way, a big part of the EAL team is pastoral support. Because a kid, especially a newcomer, when they have a problem, it’s likely to be held inside for a long time... Maybe it’s something practical, they’ve not got the machinery to access the homework online...we find ways around it, and if we can, we’re going to try and shortcut it. There’s no food, and they’re hungry. But some migrants, they have NRPF – no recourse to public funds – that can mean no access to free school meals. So unless it’s identified, unless people are talking about it, the school doesn’t know that and doesn’t see the implications of it...if we can tell them about the support available, we can provide some of that pastoral support. [interview]

Bradbrook School provided a huge amount of social support to students and their families. Amy linked families with support from local community organisations, legal support, and London Renters Union. She also helped families with housing issues such as temporary homelessness. Hamza had started a food bank at the school several years previously:

I was having many meetings with parents where they informed us, you know, ‘We’re being made homeless...’. And it’s reasons like that that we felt so helpless, we thought, what can we do to help these people, and we thought of a food bank. It doesn’t directly solve the problem of, you know, getting them housing or anything like that, but it just does a little bit to show that we care about our students and their families, and make us a better place in the community. [FG]

Ana described the school as ‘a bit of a lifeline’ for many families. In our interview, she talked about how the school had helped the family of Tyler, the Caribbean student with behavioural issues: ‘His mum came into school, um...and the school was really good actually,

doing so many things, like they sorted out free meals for her. They sorted out loads of different things, like trying to help her with her arrears and things...'. She added that, for Tyler and his older brother, 'The school is really the only kind of stability that those kids have had'. The school was a source of safety and structure for many Bradbrook students:

It's Friday hometime. Sarah, the principal, tells me that tensions are running high because it's half term next week. At lunchtime the supervisor, Gail, mentioned that there's always a marked change in atmosphere leading up to the holidays. Many boys will be on their own all week. She said that some kids get very anxious and that this manifests in aggression and fights – 'There's nothing for them at home'. I see quite a few boys hanging around the playground after the bell rings. [fieldnotes]

Bradbrook teachers addressed the effects of poverty and deprivation in their everyday interactions with young people. In the staffroom at lunchtime, I heard a teacher confide in another teacher: 'I'm worried about Jamal. He's been coming in hours late, not wearing the right shoes...'. One day after breaktime three teachers sat down with a student in an empty classroom to discuss their concerns about the amount of junk food he had been eating.

Teachers also dealt with student hunger:

Karla comes into the staffroom complaining that one of her students only gets one meal a day. She asks Gail to make some toast for him and takes it away for him to eat it in the library. When Karla comes back, she says that he is 'much better' now. Another teacher comes in and asks, incredulously, 'So we're feeding them toast now?'. [fieldnotes]

Bradbrook School supported many local families. However, Kate noted,

One issue is kind of getting some of them to agree to be helped, because there's a level of pride in the, you know...for instance, one of the students, who we knew there were problems with and spoke to, and then he was like, 'My mum will go mad at me kind of letting you know that there are problems', and stuff like that. [interview]

Ana also observed that although most White British families saw the school as a community hub, from a cultural perspective relatively few migrant families would consider a school's role to include social support. Faduma, Abshir's mother, told me that some migrant families she knew feared that letting the school know about issues at home would automatically result in their children being taken into foster care: 'They are scared because they're saying, "They wanna took your kids"'. These fears may have stemmed from or been compounded

by the UK's 'hostile environment': Dexter et al. (2016) report migrant families with NRPF being afraid to go to public actors such as the police for fear that their children would be taken away by the authorities.

Bradbrook teachers described taking young people on school trips and noted that this expanded their cultural capital. Ana recounted taking students on a school trip into central London: 'One time I took the kids on a trip, and we got off at Green Park station, and one of the boys said, "I didn't know London could be this nice!", and they were like, "Wowww!". Because they just don't get out of their immediate area'. Aaron, the local community worker, had taken young people in the area on similar trips. He described how these trips gave students important life skills and expanded their horizons: 'Some would love to go beyond [the borough]. And some are very, very happy just staying here. But unless you are exposed to those other opportunities, you never know'. At the same time, however, the findings reveal the severely limiting effects of national education policies on young people's ability to pursue such opportunities. In state-funded education in the UK, when students reach GCSE level the schools themselves receive a 'grade' based on the exam results of students who hold 'Key Stage 2' data from primary school.²³ This grade is published in national league tables and has implications for school budgets, including teaching salaries. Ana explained that at Bradbrook School, this grading system encouraged teachers to focus on the academic achievement of students who had been in the UK since primary school, and to ignore students who had arrived from Year 7 onwards:

If you've got a class, for example, my Year 10 Set 5 [the lowest set], where like only like three or four of them have Key Stage 2 results, like only those three or four students actually count towards the data and the progress scores for the school. So that means that you've got like...like however many kids, like 25 or something, who don't actually count towards any data. So it's like actually, what you're encouraging is for teachers to not pay attention to those kids and to completely ignore them and just focus on the ones who actually do have prior data and make sure that they get the grades. [interview]

²³ 'Key Stage 2' refers to the four years of schooling in maintained schools from Year 3 to Year 6, when students are between 7 and 11 years old.

In the context of precarity, the lack of prioritisation for newcomers in national education policy failed to provide them with viable long-term alternatives to gang involvement.

Hussein was actively involved in 'postcode' gangs in East London. According to Nadir, when a student became involved in gangs, 'their aims would shift': 'Initially, they want to kind of do well in education, but then the priority becomes to like...just get through it'. Hussein, however, was an exception: although involved in gangs, he still appeared to place a high value on education. He told me, 'There's a lot of stuff to do if you use your head. There's a lot of stuff in college. You can learn work in college...'. Discussing Hussein's situation, Ana pointed to the tension between the belonging offered by the school and that offered by gangs:

I don't know what percent the gang thing is more of an element of survival. And actually, when he's given the kind of space within a class, where it's like he's safe, he chooses to go for the more, like, studious persona. I wonder, like, whether he actually wants to really be involved with that gang stuff at all or whether he sees it as like a kind of a necessity, of like 'I need to have some kind of family, I need to have some kind of network and community to make me feel safe...on the streets'. [interview]

At Seaview, the EAL team emphasised the role of the school in providing safety and stability to unaccompanied asylum-seeking students. Studies also highlight the key role of schools in providing predictability for UASC (Chase, 2013; Pastoor, 2015; Ott and O'Higgins, 2019; Jarlby et al., 2021). For students like Hussein, school provided important structure in the absence of family and community support. Yet the invisibility of newcomers in national reporting mechanisms exposes the limitations of formal educational structures in providing long-term alternatives to the equally compelling world of gang violence.

Bradbrook teachers described themselves as being increasingly involved in different areas of their students' lives:

R2: *We're having to be health workers, and fight for health, you know, dieticians, and everything like that-*

R1: *Psychologists, parents, police officers, security-*

R3: *Social workers-*

R2: *Yeah, security guard... [FG]*

Kate [R2] added, 'It's quite suffocating, I find. It's like, you never feel like you can go home and think, right, we did that, that's sorted'. Hamza [R3] agreed, 'It's an unforgiving job'. He pointed out in a later interview that a large number of teachers were now leaving the profession, noting,

We're literally on the frontline fighting this battle where the government and the politicians and even a lot of the parents are literally hiding in the background. And it goes back to why so many teachers are unhappy in the profession as well, you know, overworked, underpaid, things like that... Ultimately, it's to the detriment of the child. If we are distracted doing these things, then it affects how we teach. [interview]

In contrast to teachers at Bradbrook, Seaview teachers described putting boundaries around their role in supporting their students' wellbeing: 'There can be tons and tons of stuff going on that we are not aware of and then...you know, we're on the outskirts of that. And so you can't really get involved, even as a tutor, because that's how it has to be. So you don't...you can't deal with everything,' said Lucy. James highlighted that some students might need specialised mental health support: 'We've got a lot of staff who are involved in supporting the kids who find school difficult. And I think that's really good, but there are quite a lot of kids who probably do need counselling – professionals'. Meanwhile, Bradbrook teachers highlighted the need for counselling training:

R3: It's sometimes difficult for us to have these conversations because we feel like, how do you approach it, you know. I might break down myself in front of the child, do you get it?

R2: We're not counsellors. We. Are. Not. Counsellors.

R3: Yeah, yeah that's exactly what the problem is.

R1: I think we should get training, though. If we're expected to have these roles, then we should be trained as counsellors or have some kind of counselling experience because otherwise we're just expected to do some kind of miracle... [agreement]

R3: We're probably not doing it right, to be honest.

R1: No, we have no idea if we're doing it right. [FG]

Bradbrook School provided trauma support through a London-based charity to several students, including those from migrant and refugee backgrounds. In contrast, Seaview School did not provide targeted trauma support to newcomers. George described the case of Abbas, a refugee from the Middle East who ‘wasn’t fitting into school very well’:

This boy had had huge traumas. We knew this. But they were still there. And he needed help and support. We weren’t giving it to him officially through the school welfare support mechanisms, and I don’t think he was getting it in other places... And in his attempts to identify and make friends, he was actually sharing something of himself. Now, it was unfortunate that he only seemed to be able to do that in this group. [interview]

Abbas had shown his peers photographs of his home country on his phone and gone on to show them to George too: ‘And then he showed me and says, “This is my school”. And there’s a bomb site, and like half a building... And he flicks on and says, “And here’s my best friend”. And there’s a photograph of a mass grave...’. George continued,

It was very important for this [Middle Eastern] boy to make some connections. And by showing his photos and his trauma, he soon got a bit of ‘cred’ in that little group. And like it or not, he palled up with two other guys. Two other chaps who also were not well-integrated with the host groups and were also very vulnerable... So these three boys then became such a strong bond... The bonding and the strength between those three was, you know, impenetrable. They were seen by all the other kids, the host kids, as a trio. You didn’t mess with them. [interview]

Abbas’ peer relationships may have been influenced by trauma: studies find that trauma exposure can increase the risk of aggressive behaviour (Begic and Jokic-Begic, 2002; Ellis et al., 2015) and engender dichotomous, ‘black and white’ thinking (Luyten et al., 2020; Ford and Courtois, 2021). This points to the importance of integrating trauma support into pastoral support for the newcomers who require it (Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018; McMullen et al., 2020).

6.2.4. Recognising migration

School-based interventions can provide young newcomers with safe spaces for recognition or ‘self-definition’ (Wilson, 2017:614). One of the aims of the PIER programme at Seaview was to promote recognition of the experiences of migrants and refugees. PIER sessions used stories and animations to portray the experiences of migrants and refugees. During one

session, students watched 'Dear Habib', a short animation created by PositiveNegatives in which 'Habib', a UASC from Afghanistan, tells his story about coming to the UK. Habib's elderly White British neighbour never speaks to him, but when Habib sees that he is in need, he goes to help him, and they form a friendship. Students had to watch the animation three times – the first two times without sound. I asked them to write down their thoughts and feelings on mood-boards after watching the animation for the second time.

Amaya, a Middle Eastern student, puts up her hand and suggests that the reason for no sound is to convey that Habib couldn't understand anything when he came to England. She says that it was the same for her when she came to the UK several years ago. [fieldnotes]

When we watched the animation a third time, this time with sound, I heard one of the boys, Saman, say to his friend, 'That's my language'. Like Amaya and Saman, other newcomers identified with the experiences of migration and displacement presented in the PIER activities. Commenting on young people's engagement with PIER, George noted, 'When I was listening to the kids and their engagement and their empathy, a lot of those who were scoring high were the EAL kids, some of them who, if they didn't have the experience themselves, they knew stories of how difficult it was'. Lila, who was from Central Asia, said: 'I'm not a refugee, but I did move here because of how corrupt my country was, so...it was also very hard, so it also kind of was quite accurate'. George observed that although Aaden, a British student with parents from Northeast Africa, didn't usually contribute much in 'normal lessons' and was 'quite reticent in earlier sessions', he had 'watched him get into it more and more' as the sessions progressed:

I felt that he certainly identified with a lot of the issues that were coming up in the materials...at home, in the home language, he has been hearing the story of [Northeast Africa] and he knows that the older people have probably had a lot of those similar experiences as new migrants. And so I felt his responses and his eagerness to share something and join in with it was probably more because of that topic area, and that was why he appeared switched on like [other students with family or personal histories of migration]. [interview]

Annie, an African European student, showed a keen interest in all the activities in spite of her lack of English. Alex told me that when Annie had arrived at Seaview 'she was very shy. Very, very, very tearful'. George said that he was 'impressed with her responses, because

probably it touched on things that she's heard about...people coming up through North Africa and joining the migrant trail'. Shaima also voiced her surprise, however, at the lack of engagement from some newcomers:

There's a girl from [the Middle East], she wears the hijab and she's very, very quiet. And she was just- I was very surprised at how little she engaged, because I'd say her story is definitely a very interesting one. But again, you know, it's about how much you want to share and how much you want to share with a whole class. [FG]

Shaima noted that younger students at Seaview tended to be 'a little bit more cautious and a lot more reticent' than older students who might be more 'able to express themselves about where they're from and how they felt coming here'. These contextual and personal factors highlight the complex, contingent, and non-linear nature of 'recognition' processes.

George commented that for White British students during PIER, 'there was a lot of new learning for the kids, you know, hearing the facts and dispelling some of the myths'. This was confirmed by a White British student [R4] during a focus group:

R2: We also looked at like, some refugees' stories, like how they got here.

R4: Yeah, that was really interesting, looking at different people's stories. Especially in the animations, they really helped you to understand what they went through. [FG]

Another White British student commented, 'Learning what it's like, for me who's lived in England all my life, to learn about somebody who's come from- had to leave their country and come to another country to flee, that would have been quite hard to understand before, without the PIER sessions'. However, the strong focus in the PIER programme on the 'recognition' of migrants and refugees may initially have had an exclusionary effect for White British young people. During the first PIER session, I introduced myself and mentioned my own experiences of migration as a teenager – Shaima commented, 'I think that was really, really good because it just opens the kids' eyes up that it's not about colour'. I then asked the class teachers and students to briefly introduce themselves too. I noticed that many of the White British students used minimising terms ('just' and 'only') to introduce themselves: 'I'm just from Hove' and 'I'm only from Sussex'. The class teacher also picked up on this use of language. When I raised this during the focus group with the EAL

team, George compared the situation to a 'circle time' he had coordinated in an ethnically diverse school in northern England:

Kids would sit around and were encouraged to talk about their origins, their home life, things like that, and going around the circle we got to the local Bradford white boy who says, 'Oh, I haven't got anything, Sir'. He said, 'Yeah, I'm not special'. You know, the white, middle-class teachers were going in with an agenda of, 'Let's celebrate our diversity' and 'Be proud', and all that. But for the kids who were not, you know, really- yeah, they were fine, they were local, born and brought up on the estate. They couldn't remember when their street was all white, you know, they were just the minority, and they didn't think that circle time was really about them. [FG]

These findings suggest that the singular focus on the 'recognition' of migrants and refugees in the PIER programme may have cemented rather than bridged differences between Seaview students. Analogously, Freire (1970:141) contends that in 'community development' projects, dividing regions or areas into 'local communities' without emphasising their part of a broader totality can intensify alienation.

The findings from Bradbrook indicate that 'recognition' of experiences of migration and displacement may be misplaced altogether. During the RWS quantitative evaluation, Martim, the Portuguese Angolan student, raised his hand to ask, 'What does migration mean again, Miss?'. As he completed the question on 'migration status' on the questionnaire, Kingsley (an African European newcomer) scoffed to his friend, 'I'm not a migrant! Do I look like a migrant?!'. Like many of his peers, Kingsley saw the term 'migrant' as a bad word and saw no connection between this term and his own lived experiences of migration. During the school day Bradbrook students would regularly engage in conversations with each other and their teachers about their experiences of migration and settlement. This meant that many students saw the Classroom Drama workshop's focus on experiences of migration and settlement as unnecessary and 'unexciting':

R7: *We talked about like, journeys. And like-*

R6: *Countries and journeys.*

R7: *Yeah.*

R3: *Yeah, like one of the questions was, one of the questions, you had to answer how you came here. Well, we all know how we came here!*

R6: *Yeah, there's nothing...nothing exciting. Cos we were meant to do a drama play on how we came to another country. But there's no excitement in this play. Like, we just took the plane, came here, done, it's over, simple. [FG]*

One of the drama therapists noted this lack of interest in the theme of migration:

It felt more like it was just usual issues that come up with any group of adolescents, rather than specifically to groups who had parents who were migrants or maybe had migrated – although, a bit of that came up, but it didn't feel like they wanted to focus on it a lot of the time. [FG]

As the ethnographic research at Bradbrook revealed, most young people viewed migration as a commonplace, even 'banal' aspect of life (Sandercock, 2003; Berg and Sigona, 2013; Wessendorf, 2014b). By making migration into an experience that needed to be 'worked out', the Classroom Drama workshop created a narrative reminiscent of multiculturalism's celebration of 'the exotica of difference' (Hall, 1991:55).

Watters (2008:126) observes that special programmes for migrant youth are often 'influenced by pervasive discourses on the problems of refugee children', including the assumption that all refugee children either suffer from or are at strong risk of developing social and emotional problems. The Classroom Drama manual explicitly states that the workshop is not 'a psychotherapeutic intervention'. However, the word 'therapy' still crept into conversations among Bradbrook students about the intervention. The Classroom Drama workshop was described as Classroom Drama 'therapy' on the RWS website and consequently the class teacher and the drama therapists began to use the expression. I heard a student mock his peer in the corridor one day at lunchtime, 'Are you going to drama therapy? Ha, you need therapy!'. Teachers observed that stigma towards mental health services was already prevalent among migrant families at Bradbrook, an issue which is commonly described in the migration literature (Ellis et al., 2010, 2015). Teachers discussed this stigma during a focus group:

R1: *A lot of them I think, there is still a stigma attached to that, of 'I'm not seeing a therapist'...a lot of the kids are like, 'I don't want drama therapy'. We're like, 'Well,*

it's just a drama workshop, it isn't really therapy, we're not trying to get you to say your secrets', but I think there's kind of a wariness-

R2: But with parents as well, you know the ones we talked about trying to refer to see FCS [Family and Children's Services], it was like, 'Well, that would be like putting a label on him, like he's not normal'. We were kind of trying to say, 'Well, you know actually, the behaviour isn't normal, there's something not right' – 'Well, you're saying there's something wrong with him, and I'm not having that'. [FG]

The RWS project's focus on refugee 'wellbeing' may have further contributed to stigma. When I explained to Bradbrook students that the questionnaires were to find out more about their wellbeing, one student asked with a furrowed brow, 'So you're asking us because we've got problems?'. These instances have implications for the use in youth projects of the term 'intervention', which may compound feelings of vulnerability by inferring the existence of a difficult situation in need of remedy.

This section examined the extent to which Bradbrook and Seaview schools and the RWS project were able to support young people while still leaving open the possibility for their encounter. It showed how the type and amount of EAL support shaped peer relationships in different ways: small amounts of support combined with immersion at Bradbrook to encourage language groupings, while high levels of support at Seaview intersected with a lack of opportunities for encounter with non-EAL students. The findings from both schools indicate that cultural recognition must be accompanied by opportunities for encounter or risk compounding differences. They also highlight the failings of the current curriculum to expose young people to diverse cultural perspectives. The two schools provided high levels of pastoral support for young people in the context of economic deprivation and an NRPF policy for some migrant families; the findings from Seaview show the importance of supplementing this pastoral support with trauma support where necessary. Although schools can expand young people's cultural horizons through initiatives such as school trips, the invisibility of newcomers in data reporting mechanisms limits the range of alternatives to gang involvement that schools are able to offer. Teachers described playing multiple roles in supporting their students' wellbeing and highlighted the need for a dedicated school counsellor and/or counselling training. The influence of trauma on some young people's peer relationships points to the need for trauma support, including for UASC and other

young people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds. By failing to balance the recognition of migrants and refugees with a broader narrative of integration, the PIER intervention may have alienated White British students. Bradbrook students rejected being labelled as ‘migrant’ by the RWS project and saw the focus of the Classroom Drama workshop on migration as irrelevant; meanwhile the use of the term ‘therapy’ may have contributed towards stigma.

6.3. Promoting dialogue

Buber (1947) contends that it is the primary role of the teacher to engage students in the practice of dialogue. This section examines how teachers and the RWS interventions did so in different areas, exploring the extent to which they were able to promote critical discussion on social issues of relevance to young people and to create the environment of trust and safety which Buber highlights as key for dialogue.

6.3.1. Teaching practices

Gay (2013) and Schachner et al. (2018) highlight the impact of educators’ identities, attitudes, and beliefs on intercultural teaching practices. The findings from Seaview and Bradbrook show how teachers’ backgrounds and experiences influenced how they engaged in dialogue with students in relation to migration and other issues. The majority of teachers at Seaview came from the UK and were White British. However, most of the EAL team had personal histories of migration. Alex had moved to the UK from Eastern Europe several years earlier. However, she also drew on her experiences of going to school in Eastern Europe to empathise with the experiences of White British ‘hosts’:

I try to put myself in their shoes. And I remember, you know, when I was in [Eastern Europe] and, you know, I had my own group of friends and then there is someone else coming, you know, and someone who- who you don’t know very well. Sometimes I think it was easier to make friends with a new person. But sometimes I just, I remember I didn’t have the...I couldn’t be bothered to find out more about that person. [interview]

Aarush described his teachers as being ‘very welcoming’ when he arrived at Seaview. Carlos, a Brazilian newcomer, said that he felt ‘very well settled, and the teachers have been great. Very patient’. Margret, a Nordic newcomer, said that when she arrived at Seaview,

‘Teachers would introduce me to people, because to be honest I didn't wanna speak to people’. She added that teachers had helped her in making ‘that first step’ out of her ‘comfort zone’. Some newcomers to Seaview were able to speak to teachers in their own languages. George talked about an African European student, Dami, who had recently started at Seaview and was struggling to integrate. She had spoken to a teacher from the same European country in the native language, telling him, ‘I am very unhappy here’.

In contrast to Seaview, Bradbrook teachers spoke a diverse range of languages and often spoke to each other in their mother tongues.²⁴ Teachers and students often spoke to each other in their own languages; Karla described ‘practising her German’ with newcomer students from Germany. Migration was a common topic of conversation among teachers and students at Bradbrook. A large proportion of teachers had either personal or family histories of migration or displacement. Hamza, who had Pakistani parents and grew up in England, said that he had only been to Pakistan twice, ‘and the last time was when I was 11. I didn’t really enjoy it to be honest. Here is home’. Nadir said that Ana had encouraged him to talk about his experiences of moving from Bangladesh to the UK, noting, ‘I think because the teachers are so open-minded and because the teachers themselves are so diverse...that makes it a lot easier to open up about things like that’. I observed students joking with Ana about Brexit:

Several students arrive to class at the same time. They are discussing Brexit animatedly. One of them jokingly asks Ana, ‘Where are you gonna go, Miss?’. Ana’s parents are from Southern Europe. I don’t hear her response. [fieldnotes]

Several Bradbrook teachers had been refugees or asylum seekers. Yonas had travelled from Northeast Africa to London as a UASC in his teens. He was placed with a foster family and then in a children’s home. Abdi was also from Northeast Africa and had lived in Central Europe before coming to the UK as a teenager. He would reference his own refugee background in conversations with students:

²⁴ Between them Bradbrook staff spoke many languages, including Zulu, Galician, Yoruba, Wolof, Spanish, Greek, Twi, Hindi, Turkish, Sylheti, Ga, Somali, Bengali, Edo, Serer, Russian, Arabic, Romanian, French Creole, Punjabi, Lithuanian, Hausa, Gujarati, Fanti, Ewe, Croatian, Bulgarian, and Amharic.

They're not sure of the difference and they think, like, you're cussing them if you say...but I tell them straight, 'I used to be a refugee. There's nothing wrong with being a refugee. You're just like anybody else. Just the circumstances that you're in doesn't mean that I'm lesser than you are or you're better than me'. Yeah. But all of these kids are migrants and refugees! [interview]

Other Bradbrook teachers said that they wanted to challenge migration-related stereotypes through dialogue with their students. Hamza said, 'So a lot of the things that the boys talk about or the first thing they talk about is what they hear in the media...when they actually talk facts it is very, very different to them. You know, it kind of wakes them up a little bit and makes them realise, "Oh, it's not exactly what I thought it would be"'. He added that teachers at Bradbrook addressed the casual use of words such as 'immigrant' and 'refugee' among students: 'We teach them the factual sense of those words and then they actually realise, oh, it's not really a joke...'. Hamza described teaching a class on displacement:

I was showing a documentary on Syrians crossing the sea to get to Greece. And, uh, one of them, Zain, started giggling, saying, 'Haha, oh they're going to swim', or you know, he didn't realise. But once he saw the documentary...he saw that, you know, it wasn't a joke. And he actually went home and his dad said that he'd had a difficult journey to come to the UK as well. So when he kind of understood that, he came and apologised. [interview]

However, Kate also described the difficulties of encouraging dialogue on these issues:

I go into Kate's room after school to ask her about the teacher meeting. She has a PowerPoint up of a Daily Mail article about migrants 'raping and stealing' from British people. I say it must have sparked lots of discussion. She says, 'No, it didn't at all...they don't care...they don't seem to get that it's actually about them'. [fieldnotes]

Beyond migration, I observed Bradbrook teachers approaching ethnic differences among students from a critical angle:

I'm sitting in Ana's classroom after break. She has a free period and is marking essays. There was a fight between two Romanian students and a Bulgarian boy in the playground at breaktime and Ana has told them to come and see her. They arrive and give both sides of the story. Ana comments, 'Making generalisations about people is disgusting, saying that all Romanians are like something'. She encourages them to apologise to each other. [fieldnotes]

Some Bradbrook teachers voiced concerns in relation to ‘zero tolerance’ policies towards violence amongst young people. Amy talked about a Bedoon student, Saalim, who had been expelled several months previously for bringing a knife into school:

There’s kind of zero tolerance...and that was really unfortunate because...it was kind of like, I think he had been threatened or he had problems with boys, and so he was reacting in a way he probably would have reacted at home. Very, very limited English. And I don’t think he’d been to school before either. [interview]

Cassidy (2005:41) suggests that zero tolerance policies ‘fail to recognize individual differences and the context in which behaviour occurs’. In contrast, ‘teachers recognize that children come from various cultures and backgrounds, with different parental and community influences’ (ibid.). This cultural sensitivity was evident in teaching practices at Bradbrook, which often involved humour. After the topic of theft was raised during Ana’s lesson one day, a Middle Eastern student said that it would be a good idea to chop off someone’s hand for stealing. Ana responded, ‘So if I stole your pencil right now, would you chop off my hand?’. He laughed in response, ‘Come on, Miss...’. During a focus group, Manu, a British Bengali student, reflected on the role of humour in the teaching relation: ‘Like, if you have like a joke with teachers, and the teachers will take a joke, and you will take a joke, then that’s like a good relationship, cos you understand when’s the boundaries and you understand what’s the joke. That’s what makes you a good teacher’. Similarly, Nadir said that he learned best ‘in lessons where I can, you know, open up to the teacher and the teacher is open with me. I have...I’ve had teachers in the school who are like academically brilliant, like very, very good. But I know I couldn’t, like, have a joke with them...they wouldn’t be the people I turned to’. Hassan, who had South Asian parents and had grown up in the local area, said that he would often get involved in students’ ‘banter’ in relation to food and nationality:

Um, I mean, the kids like to banter with each other about their...cultural identities and I get involved in that [laughs]. And so, you know, you may say to a Bengali kid, or they may say to each other about fish because they like eating fish and etcetera. It’s all kind of...it doesn’t cause divides, I think, it just helps them just...just joke about each other. [interview]

In contrast, Amy, who was White British and from rural southern England, said that she would reprimand students for calling each other words like 'fish': 'And you know, you hear it, you say, "That's not appropriate, you know, blah blah blah"'. Abdi described how his experiences of growing up in the local borough had shaped his view of this type of humour among students:

Some of my mates would make fun of a Jamaican boy and say, like, 'Ah, like, you guys aren't even good at football, like, would you guys...what kind of cup do you have, a coconut cup?'. Little silly things but not...not stuff that would hurt someone. So when I see the kids do it now, I don't take it, I don't take it that seriously. Like I'm not gonna be like, 'Oh, it's gonna be a safeguarding concern', unless I know the kid's like, saying some really hurtful things to somebody else. Um, but when it's just like what we used to do to each other, that never hurt me, that never hurt any of the other boys. [interview]

As Abdi mentioned, football was a regular topic of conversation among students and teachers in the classroom and the corridors at Bradbrook. However, Yonas felt that students sometimes used talking about football 'as an excuse to really engage in a conversation'. He felt that although intercultural engagement 'definitely plays a big part in students actually making progress', this was 'very hard to put into numbers to justify to Ofsted'. Other Bradbrook teachers highlighted concerns about misogynistic insults among students, which they frequently encountered. Sitting in the pastoral office one day, I observed Tessa dealing with the aftermath of a fight between two students that had happened at breaktime:

Tessa goes away and comes back with Tom, a White English student, and Jay, a Black student with an accent that I can't place. She asks them to tell her what happened: apparently Tom called Jay's mum a prostitute and Jay responded that he would 'F his sister'. Tessa shakes her head in disbelief. 'Why are you talking like this? I can't believe that this language comes out of your mouth. Do you speak like this at home, Tom? I know you don't'. Tom looks sheepish. [fieldnotes]

Bradbrook teachers sometimes discussed religious issues with students outside the classroom. I observed Ana speaking to two Muslim students after school one day:

It's non-uniform day and two British Asian students, Halim and Akram, have stayed behind after school to chat to Ana. They're discussing what other students had been wearing that day, including the Muslim dress. Halim says that he used to wear full Muslim dress to the mosque but stopped wearing it after being verbally abused on his way home. Akram adds, 'Yeah, and why do people always think Muslims are

terrorists, Miss?! If you go into central London, yeah, and you're walking down the street wearing your thobe and carrying a sports bag...people are gonna think you're a bomber'. He says this lightly and everyone laughs, but there is weight in his words too. Ana shakes her head, sighing, 'That's so crazy'. [fieldnotes]

Halim and Akram's experiences of Islamophobia in other parts of the borough and in central London echo Wessendorf's (2020:213) finding that although young people in her research in East London rarely experienced racism in their local settings, they felt 'very differently' in less ethnically diverse parts of the borough. Karla described a recent trip into central London where she had encouraged students to reflect on their religious identities in the wider societal context: 'When we went on the trip I said, "Oh, that Nando's is most likely not halal". And I had to say to them, "We are actually, as Muslims, a minority. Because here we might be the majority in [the borough], but somewhere else we are actually a minority". So that for them was like "Really...?"'.

In spite of the individual efforts of teachers like Ana and Karla to engage young people in dialogue on religious issues, Kate felt that Bradbrook needed to dedicate more time and space to critical discussion about religious current affairs, such as the recent terrorist attacks in New Zealand and Holland:

We have done nothing about New Zealand – there's been no silence, no forum for people to talk about it. We've got kids who were ringing family members in Holland yesterday because they got text messages and their phone was taken off them, for receiving a text message for that.²⁵ Again, I think it's that PR bit – we treat it as if we're living in a bubble, because I think we're frightened to open up...a can of worms with stuff, because we don't know how we're gonna be able to deal with it. And that's not right, because if you don't let kids talk about what's going on in the world, they'll find somewhere else to talk about it, and I think we need to be more responsive to things that are happening in the world. [FG]

Yonas also reflected,

I think we are looking for an easy way out. No, stop and ask that student or your group of Eastern Europeans, ask the Bangladeshi, you know, what religion they are. You know, do they know what it really means to them to go to the mosque, for

²⁵ Kate referred to far-right terrorist attacks at two Christchurch mosques (15th March 2019) and a tram shooting carried out by an Islamic extremist in Utrecht (18th March 2019). The teacher focus group was conducted on 19th March 2019.

example, whereas you know...they hear about a terrorist on the news and straight away, you know, they just think, 'All Muslims are like that'. [interview]

Other Bradbrook teachers reported that the national curriculum provided them with very little room for critical engagement on issues of socioeconomic inequality:

R2: I also – educationally, I kind of want them to look at the world and be critical of it, so I don't want them to just accept, well this is how it is. I want them to kind of like be able to say, actually we want a better world than what this is, and that is what education is about. I don't want them to inherit something that we've left that's awful, and just then, make it worse. Which sounds a bit liberal, but...

R1: I remember particularly after Grenfell, a lot of the kids really wanted to talk about it²⁶

R2: But we didn't have any forum for kids to talk about it. It was like, lessons go on as normal, the GCSEs go on as normal, the curriculum goes on as normal. [FG]

Barriers to dialogue on gang issues were a particular concern:

R2: We have none of the resources that we had when we were having to deal with it before. And also, I feel it's been pushed under the carpet...we're all talking about it in our little corners, but nobody's talking about it officially, together. And that's a real danger. It's almost like, well let's pretend it's not happening, because if we just talk about it in that corner and that corner, it's not real. And yes, it is real.

R1: That's kind of the problem, though, in a way, with PR, isn't it, because the world's gone a little bit kind of PR crazy, you have to worry about the image of the school, which is something that you shouldn't really need to worry about. You should be worrying about the education of the students within it, but you have to worry about like, how is this message being, you know, put across? And if you're going to do work on gangs, 'Well why are you doing that, do you have a problem with gangs, or what is it that's going on with this school that isn't going on in other schools?'. I think that's kind of a shame, that we have to be worried about how things are going to be perceived.

R3: Yeah, it's like taboo, isn't it? [FG]

According to Kate, 'It's a case of, literally, it's between us and gangs...it's either quick money or ten years of hard work. Kids nowadays are only gonna choose one option, unfortunately.

²⁶ The teacher referred to the Grenfell Tower fire in West London on 14th June 2017, which has been described as 'undeniably caused by systematic contempt for the lives of poor people' and 'perhaps the ultimate and most gruesome tribute to austerity yet seen' (Akala, 2018:20).

That's the difficult part. I feel like we're really fighting a losing battle at the moment'. Hamza said that although he encouraged students to work hard for eventual financial success, this narrative was always pitted against the short-term gains presented by gangs:

I'm telling these students, 'Work hard for six, seven years, get A-levels, get a degree, then you can get a good career, you know, comfortable days off, et cetera, et cetera'. These gangs are saying, 'You do this one thing for me, I'm going to give you a hundred pounds', at the age of 13, 14. That's a massive pull. It's something that we can't fight with. And we're trying, but it's very, very difficult. You know, on one hand, you're being offered hundreds of pounds now. Or, seven years of hard work, and then money. [interview]

Bradbrook teachers would sometimes directly discuss gang violence with students. I observed several students chatting to Ana in her classroom at lunchtime:

The boys are leaning against their desks and Ana is sitting on her table. Conversation turns to different parts of town and where they feel comfortable. They talk about 'postcode wars'. They ask Ana, 'What postcode are you in, Miss?'. She tells them. 'Oh, you're involved then, Miss,' they joke. [fieldnotes]

Sharon said that she had warned students about carrying knives:

When we had extended registration about stabbing, and we told the Year 7s, I said you know, 'I know two boys that are in prison for murder, who didn't actually murder anyone, they were just there – be careful what you get wrapped up in, who your friends are, and all this' – and you know, they were absolutely shocked. It's worth saying, isn't it? [FG]

Hamza told me about a fight between two students in the school several weeks previously. One of the students had an issue with another student who was in a rival gang. Hamza had intervened:

We tried to stop him. We restrained him. I personally restrained him, kept him in a room for approximately three hours, where two and a half of those hours he was trying to storm out. And then the police came. Even while the police were here – CID [Criminal Investigation Department], undercover gangs unit – even once they were here, he was still trying to storm out the room because of how strongly he felt about this boy who's in a rival gang. And that was three hours where literally I was absolutely, you know, my body was killing because imagine having to restrain someone for two, two and a half hours. [interview]

Hamza described feeling helpless at his inability to 'do a good enough job' to keep young people out of gangs: 'It's not that I blame myself, but it still makes you feel unhappy. It's like the system isn't it, so it's not like my fault, but I still feel like I'm not doing a good enough job... There's not much we can do because if the child is involved, we can't do anything. The only thing we can do is educate them'. Similarly, when I asked Rohan in our interview if he felt that there were any interventions that could make a difference, he responded with a firm 'No'. He continued, 'Nothing that as a school we offer, nothing that we can offer as a school for individuals in a gang. We offer them sports after school. But...the association and the thrill is too much. Can't keep them out'.

Shady and Larson (2010:89) note that in Buber's concept of dialogue, students 'must feel that they are taken seriously if trust is to develop, thereby making risk-taking and deep learning possible'. However, the findings from both schools reveal the corrosive impact of target-oriented education on trust between teachers and students:

Sophie and I are chatting. I haven't seen her for a while. 'Are you still enjoying the teaching?' I ask. She laughs in response – 'God, no!'. She says she feels like she's failing the kids. She talks about a time a few years ago when a student was upset about a family issue and came to her, which she sorted out. She says she doesn't feel students would trust her with the same issues now. She doesn't have a proper relationship with them now, she says wearily – 'There's no time, it's just making sure they hit their targets'. [fieldnotes]

Teachers at Seaview also commented on the impact of national education policies on their ability to create a classroom environment of safety, which 'allows students to feel secure enough to take risks, honestly express their views, and explore their knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors' (Holley and Steiner, 2005:50).²⁷ Although James felt that students needed to feel 'safe and respected' in the classroom, he noted that 'it does take a lot of skill, creating that. And I'm not sure that I do that in my lessons generally always. I mean, I try and do it, but I don't know if I model it and make it the *absolute* priority. You know, because it's sometimes quite content-driven...'. He added that he didn't 'really have a chance' to listen to students about 'the stuff they've got going on...it is quite pressurised timewise'. Lucy

²⁷ Importantly, this idea of 'safety' is distinct from the concept of the 'safe space', which in eliminating risk also minimises the potential for encounter (hooks, 1989; Wilson, 2017).

described the specific impact of time pressures on teachers' ability to engage in dialogue with newcomers:

It's just when they want to talk about other things, or...any issue does come up with anything, there isn't the time in the school day to deal with any of that. Like I know in my class who is EAL and maybe has refugee status, and that's purely from having conversations and stuff, and I don't have time to talk to them about that unless they come to me at lunchtime or after school or anything like that. So, yeah, they probably feel quite misunderstood... [FG]

James said that large class sizes presented a further challenge:

I suppose it's kind of, best you can do is try and be calm, you know, try and be sort of centred and things, and listening, and sort of respecting the child. But it is not easy when you've got 30 kids or whatever... I think there can be...kids can find classes, not dangerous, but unsafe sometimes. So it would be really, really good to work on that. But that's a massive project, you know. [FG]

The buy-in of teachers to the PIER intervention was strongly influenced by the focus of the 'neoliberal' education paradigm on 'performance' and 'accountability' (Wolbert and Schinkel, 2021:439). Prior to the intervention, I held an after-school meeting with teachers whose classes would be participating in the programme:

Josie is slightly late to the meeting because she was dealing with a student issue. I haven't met her in person before, but she sent the EAL team an email last week (I was cc'd) to ask them how PIER will be accounted for in the spring results on pupil progress, 'given that pupils will be missing 25% of lessons'. At the meeting Josie reiterates that missing lessons will definitely impact student progress. She says that she wants to be sure that senior staff are aware of this, because drops in student attainment are usually framed as a reflection of the teacher and how they are doing. [fieldnotes]

Lucy pointed to an increasing focus in national education policy 'on getting progress and outcomes from children rather than building up their wellbeing'. For her, education was 'about developing relationships' with students, yet she felt that teachers' ability to do so was being impeded by national policies: 'We don't have that much freedom in the classroom. We're really just being told what to do at the moment'. George described the impact of neoliberal education on teacher-student relationships, observing that he was 'coming across more pupils than usual who are almost just looking for conflict. And it then

becomes a “them and us” thing with the teacher and the pupil. Not always, but often’. He continued, ‘I think also that that is one of the very issues which is suppressing kids, it’s grinding them down. It’s wearing them to the point where their ears start to close’. Seaview students described these effects during a focus group:

R4: Sometimes I really don’t understand, like I’ve looked at it, but I really don’t understand what the teacher’s kind of talking about, and I ask, and he gets really angry, they get really angry-

R1: Yeah, cos they think you haven’t been listening-

R4: Yeah, they think that you’re just being lazy. So then I basically just don’t ask them anything. [FG]

Students at Bradbrook complained about a similar dynamic in the student-teacher relationship. Martim said that he didn’t feel respected by his teachers:

The way they do like, ‘I’m the teacher, you’re the child, listen to me, you have to listen to me and I’ll boss you around’. Even if you ask a question which might even help the teacher themselves, ‘No I can’t hear, go back to your seat, go do your work’ – they’re abusing their power when they say they are the...and you can’t learn from that. [FG]

Some Bradbrook students felt that their teachers had ‘stereotypicalising’ views of them which they found hard to change. A British Bengali student complained that ‘if someone is naughty the first days, and the teacher...she won’t pick on that student that was previously like...and the teacher is not understanding that people can change’. At Seaview, teachers described the effects of this relation on their own wellbeing. Aisha said, ‘Every day I just come to my tutor time and I just know they’re just going to hate me, and I just feel miserable every day’. George noted that the focus on outcomes was also impacting students’ peer relationships: ‘We’re all racing to the endpoint. And it does strike me that the kids aren’t saying much. They’re not able to say much to one another unless it’s, “What are you watching on your phone under the desk?”’, he laughed wryly.

6.3.2. School-based interventions

The Classroom Drama workshop at Bradbrook aimed to encourage ‘positive inter-ethnic relationships’. Accordingly, the intervention evaluation asked young people questions such

as ‘How many friends do you have that are British?’, ‘How many friends do you have that are from your country of origin?’, and ‘How many friends do you have that are not from your country of origin and not from the UK?’. In response to the latter question, I observed several Bradbrook students writing down excessive numbers such as ‘1000000000’. The intervention specifically provided a theatrical space for young people to express ‘personal accounts of hope and distress related to migration and minority positions’. However, the drama therapists noted that the concept of a ‘minority’ lacked meaning in the local context:

R2: In a place like [the borough], where actually the majority is a ‘minority’, they get it. They get that the person...

R1: They’ve already made that kind of transition, haven’t they? You know, they’ve already, they’ve grown up in it... [FG]

The drama therapists added that the ‘superdiversity’ of the borough meant that many students already had intercultural capabilities:

R2: I think that the space is really important, really important for expressing adolescent issues which aren’t always processed. But I don’t think the focus being around creating empathy between people from different cultures was particularly...

R1: I think what happened a little bit, because [the borough] is super-diverse or whatever it’s called, they actually have a lot of solidarity and empathy with each other because they understand these issues. [FG]

Instead, the drama therapists reported that the issues that emerged organically during the sessions were generally in relation to socioeconomic inequalities:

R2: There was just a lot of general boys’ stuff, like violence, gangs, death...they were interested in themes that had happened in the news...so I think that that needs to be a bit better reflected, especially if you’re going to work with the Year 9s. The Year 8s are still a bit early for some of the darker themes, but the Year 9s are really in it.

R1: Year 8, I found, was more around friendships, maybe losing friends, bullying at school, things not to do. Whereas Year 9 it was street stuff – it was knives, it was gangs, it was threats of...one kid, he said sometimes he gets scared when he’s walking home, it’s around them all the time. And I think that was a real threat. [FG]

During a focus group, some students said that they had tried to make the workshop more interesting for themselves by ‘creating funny stuff’ and bringing in ‘the fun element’.

Jaideep, a Bengali student, said that ‘when the lesson’s boring, we can all work together, you know, we can create something that’s fun and engaging, cos of our community’. As Jaideep intimated, Bradbrook students often behaved disruptively during the workshop sessions, making it difficult for the drama therapists to maintain order and cohesiveness. Class sizes also influenced the ability of the drama therapists to create a sense of safety for Bradbrook students:

R2: Trying to do the intervention with 20-plus kids, however much time you have, is going to absolutely exhaust you.

R1: In those big groups...I could never gauge where they were at... I was kind of all over the place. [FG]

One of the drama therapists later mentioned the challenge of including students with SEN, describing a student with Asperger Syndrome who was ‘always sitting out’. She also noted the influence of behavioural issues on the atmosphere during the sessions: ‘They were just looking at each other, there was attitude in the room, there were so many things going on. There was a little bit of anxiety, like “Someone’s gonna do something...”’. The class teacher took a ‘hands-off’ role during the sessions but intervened when behaviour become too disruptive. The drama therapists observed that the teacher’s failure to be ‘onboard’ during the sessions had a negative effect on student engagement, but pointed to the pressures of the current education system in influencing teachers’ buy-in:

There’s so much pressure. They’re probably feeling the whole time, ‘I need to get through the curriculum’- and then you have these people turn up going, ‘Don’t worry about the curriculum! Let’s throw it out of the window to do creative work’. That’s what I could see at the school. So we have to bear in mind teachers and their stress levels. [FG]

Like the Classroom Drama workshop, the PIER programme at Seaview aimed to encourage young people’s ‘integration’. However, it differed from Classroom Drama in its explicit aim to challenge migration-related stereotypes. One PIER activity involved presenting students with various facts and figures about migration to, and seeking asylum in, the UK:

We talk about how much asylum seekers have to live on – I ask the class how much they think they get per week. Responses vary from £75 to several hundreds of pounds. They’re all shocked when I say it’s £36 per week. Harry, who’s White British,

puts his hand up and says, 'They're actually quite lucky to be given money and a home, because there are lots of homeless people from here who don't get that'. I say yes, that's one way of looking at it. [fieldnotes]

The PIER session on 'Jack and Rani' modelled encounter between students from different migration backgrounds. Young people watched clips from the Channel 4 documentary 'Educating Greater Manchester', in which Rani, a Year 8 student from Syria, arrives at a school in Salford in Northern England. Jack, a White British student, welcomes Rani to school, and the documentary follows their blossoming friendship. The aim of showing this video was to address prejudice among young people through 'extended contact': the extended contact hypothesis states that knowledge of friendship between the 'in-group' and the 'out-group' may reduce prejudices towards the 'out-group' (Wright et al., 1997; Cameron et al., 2006; Christ et al., 2014; Hewstone and Hughes, 2015). George reflected on the positive impact of the session on White British students:

Perhaps because it was exactly the level those kids were, they were their age when that was filmed – they were Year 8 kids, they've been in school for a year and a half, they've got their peer groups, their buddies, they've got their little circles. And it was seeing Jack who welcomed the new one...I think it engaged a lot of kids. Maybe they were thinking, 'Hmm, you know, we've got kids like Rani arriving, and we've got kids around the edge, and who speaks to them?'. [FG]

Shaima added, 'I think it was really, really good. And I found the students' engagement in that really actually quite surprising...that session definitely got the message home didn't it, really very effectively'. During the focus groups, British students said that PIER had changed the way they related to newcomers:

R3: It changed it quite a lot, because you think if they've just come here, they're from another country, then you know that they've probably gone through quite a lot to get here...

R1: Yeah, just like, instead of like, well I wouldn't say judging, but instead of like, not going near them, or cos they're new, it's just like, I'd put myself in their shoes and see what it's like for them to be new. And try to make them feel welcome and stuff. [FG]

However, the EAL team suggested that 'getting the real people in the room' might have been even more effective than the use of video media. George felt that it would be useful for an older student with a migration background to speak to students about their

experiences, given that ‘they are aware of those issues, and they’ve found themselves a bit – they know what it’s like trying to make a friend when you don’t speak the language, things like that’.

The PIER intervention also aimed to encourage young people from both migrant and host backgrounds to reflect on their diverse and multiple identities. Studies of social psychology find that emphasising the multidimensional and complex nature of identity can be a strategy for humanisation (Crisp et al., 2001; Albarello and Rubini, 2012; Prati et al., 2016). The need to equip young people with the tools for dialogue about their differences was highlighted by a White British student from Brighton during a focus group: ‘It’s good if you have similarities but if you don’t, it’s quite hard to talk because like, you don’t really have much in common...’. George also noted,

We need to give the kids the language to talk about the differences, or at least to be able to recognise differences...they’re going to be entering a world where they’re going to need plural identities and some of their identities are going to have to mix with others, which are going to be quite different from theirs. [FG]

In the ‘Someone like me’ activity from the British Red Cross, students were put into groups and given sets of cards. Each card contained a different descriptor, such as ‘I enjoy food – I’ll eat almost anything!’ or ‘Sometimes I worry about what other people think about me’. Students discussed which person they most or least identified with and why. At the end of the session, it was revealed that the cards described just one person, an Eritrean refugee called Abraham who now lives in the UK. In another activity called ‘Similarities and differences’, students faced each other in two lines and stepped forward when I called out a descriptor that they identified with. Descriptors ranged from ‘have brown hair’ and ‘like strawberry ice cream’ to ‘struggle in school sometimes’ and ‘have ever felt left out’. Students then discussed how they had felt during the activity, such as whether they had been surprised when their peers stepped forward for any descriptors. Shaima commented,

I think the exercises where they were standing and having to step forward were really good, really, really good, and I think that would be- building on that kind of thing might be interesting because they’re physically having to actually commit to being ‘like’ somebody or ‘unlike’ somebody. [FG]

However, during one focus group, a White British student said that the process of stepping forward might have been intimidating for some students: ‘Um, maybe some questions, when we stepped forward, some people might not want to answer them. They were quite personal’. This highlights the vulnerability inherent in processes of dialogue and points to the importance of a sense of ‘safety’. As with the Classroom Drama workshop, Shaima noted that SEN sometimes influenced student engagement in PIER:

I see Shaima in the staffroom and we chat about the ‘Dear Habib’ session earlier. I mention that David’s behaviour changed as soon as Jakub left the room during the session. She says, matter-of-factly, ‘Jakub can’t read. So when the words came on the screen at the start of the video, he switched off immediately’. She says that David supports him a lot. [fieldnotes]

Shaima also observed that ‘teacher engagement did have a huge impact on the students engaging, because- I don’t know, having that class teacher with the group and getting them being- just being interested, and asking the students questions, really, really had an impact on the whole class’. Like the teacher at Bradbrook, one Seaview teacher engaged very minimally with the PIER sessions: “‘Yeah, welcome, come and get on with it” – she had her own agenda and she hardly looked up more than twice in a session, did she?’ noted George. As George inferred, this teacher had spent the PIER sessions marking and lesson planning. Other teachers were much more involved during the sessions. During a focus group students said that they appreciated their teachers’ involvement in the intervention:

R3: It was kind of more interesting because you see like their opinion on things as well, depending on like how they grew up, or like what they’ve been told.

R4: Yeah, cos you found out more about the teacher. And as you said, it was interesting to find out what their views on it were. [FG]

George suggested that teachers might be best placed to deliver PIER in future due to their position of trust with students: ‘if this is a project that’s going to be valuable, it’s going to be valuable if you get enough regular teachers tuned up with the information and feeling confident that they could delve into those areas, knowing their kids better than we have done, really’. George’s suggestion resonates with studies which indicate that teachers may be ideal facilitators of social and emotional interventions because they are involved with students for prolonged periods of time and may therefore have the strongest impact on

student functioning (Diekstra, 2008; Feinstein et al., 2009). However, Shaima sounded a note of caution, pointing out that implementing school-based interventions like PIER would also require more time and effort from teachers who were already struggling under the pressures of the UK's education system.

This section examined teaching practices in promoting dialogue with students, considering how these were influenced by teachers' own backgrounds and experiences, 'zero tolerance' policies, and the national curriculum. It highlighted how teachers' ability to secure young people's trust and ensure a sense of safety in the classroom was limited by a pervasive focus in national policy on performance and accountability. The section also considered the relational outcomes of the two RWS interventions, showing how young people engaged with the 'inter-ethnic' paradigm and reiterating the importance of conditions of safety and trust for dialogue.

6.4. Conclusion

This chapter examined the extent to which the policies and practices of the two schools and the RWS project provided support for encounter and promoted dialogue. The first section showed how a lack of language support at Bradbrook and the absence of trauma support at Seaview contributed to peer divisions. The findings also point to the failure of the national curriculum to encourage recognition for students' diverse cultural identities and indicate the negative impact of newcomers' lack of recognition in the league table system. However, the findings also reveal how support and recognition in the areas of language, migration experiences, culture, and wellbeing can 'other' young people. The second section considered how teaching and intervention practices promoted dialogue with young people. It showed how teaching practices were influenced by teachers' own backgrounds and experiences. The section also highlighted the impact of national and school-level policies on their ability to promote dialogical engagement on complex social issues and to create an environment of safety and trust. Furthermore, the findings reveal the complex and divergent effects of the RWS interventions on young people's peer relationships, showing how they responded in different ways to the project's aims to enhance their 'inter-ethnic'

relationships. The next chapter uses Buber's relational model to discuss these research findings.

7. Discussion

7.1. Introduction

The present chapter discusses the empirical material presented in the previous two chapters, revisiting the research findings through the lens of humour and memories. Drawing on Buber's relational model of the 'I-It' and 'I-Thou' relation, the chapter highlights the role of humour and the influence of memories in peer relationships, secondary education, and psychosocial support. The chapter outlines how young people and teachers engaged with societal discourses and the policies of the RWS project by using humour in different ways. It then examines how societal, familial, and personal memories influenced structures of reception, shaped the adjustment of newcomers, and impacted encounter. The chapter also considers how teachers drew on their personal memories to challenge stereotypes among students.

7.2. Humour

The corridors and playgrounds of both Bradbrook and Seaview schools were often filled with laughter. Walker and Goodson (1977:212) suggest that humour is complex because 'it resides not only in the logic and content of what is said, but in the performance of the teller, in the relationship between the teller and the audience, and in the immediate context of the instance'. Similarly, Nilsen (1994:930) argues that in considering the outcomes of humour, at least four characteristics must be examined: the subject, the tone, the intent, and the situation. At Bradbrook and Seaview schools, differences of migration status, race and ethnicity, language, religion, and economic status were frequently the subject of different forms of humour. This section examines how young people and teachers interacted with each other and with the RWS project by drawing on humour as a convivial resource, as a tool for dialogue, and as a means of marking and reinforcing societal divisions.

7.2.1. Conviviality

The findings from both schools indicate that humour about difference can be a resource for conviviality. Bradbrook students used the label 'freshie' to joke with newcomers about their newness. Teachers noted that the regularity of new arrivals to Bradbrook meant that students had high levels of empathy for each other's experiences of migration. In this

context, the playful and light-hearted use of the word ‘freshie’ appeared to signal the intent to include newcomers in school life. Newcomers responded to this term with laughter. Wise (2016:491) emphasises that humour as convivial sociality is enabled ‘only when certain conditions are met. That the banter is reciprocal and symmetrical, that participants understand and have evolved together the rules of the joking relationship’. Similarly, Winkler Reid (2015:40) highlights the importance of laughter in evidencing the reciprocity of ‘convivial’ humour about racial and ethnic differences. Previous research has suggested that second- and third-generation immigrant youth in East London use the term ‘freshie’ as an insult to exclude newcomers (Back and Sinha, 2018; Wessendorf, 2020). However, the argument for a ludic, inclusive understanding of the use of ‘freshie’ among young men at Bradbrook School is strengthened by studies which find that boys are particularly likely to use humour to discuss their problems, and that the use of humour for these purposes can increase feelings of closeness (Rose et al., 2016). Humour among Bradbrook students about ‘freshies’ could be seen as a way of addressing the ‘problem’ of newness and encouraging inclusion in a situation marked by understanding for each other’s experiences of migration. As Winkler Reid (2015:41) suggests of her research findings in an ethnically and racially diverse London school, the ‘classifying’ language of ethnic and racial humour does not automatically lead to depersonalisation and reification, but depends on ‘whether it is interwoven in other practices that manifest distance or closeness’. To note the potentially inclusive use of the term ‘freshie’ at Bradbrook does not, however, negate the existence of xenophobia from White British people and long-established ethnic minorities towards newcomers – this dynamic and its rootedness in societal memories is explored in Section 7.3.1.

Students at Bradbrook School had diverse ethnicities, languages, and religions. This ‘commonplace diversity’ (Wessendorf, 2014b) engendered a sense of ease with diversity and also facilitated ‘prosaic negotiations’ with difference (Amin, 2002; Back and Sinha, 2018; Berg et al., 2019). Bradbrook students often used food-based language to laugh and joke with each other about their ethnic differences, playfully exchanging words like ‘fish and chips’, ‘paella’, ‘fish’, and ‘curry’. Nadir and several teachers noted that students used these terms as material for ‘banter’ and ‘to wind each other up’. Hassan, a British Asian teacher who had grown up in the local borough, proposed that rather than ‘causing divides’, this

humour helped Bradbrook students to ‘just joke about each other’. Nadir explained that convivial humour about ethnic differences depended on an implicit understanding of the rules of the joking relationship: ‘as long as they know that it’s a joke, as long as they know they’re not being...they’re not being left out of the group, or they’re not being bullied’. Like the use of the term ‘freshie’, convivial humour among Bradbrook students about their ethnic differences critically depended on mutual trust and respect. This supports Buber’s (1937:33) contention that a ‘particular It, by entering the relational event, *may* become a Thou’, indicating the conditions which make it possible.²⁸ At Seaview, newcomer and ethnic minority students sometimes used ethnic humour amongst themselves as a source of conviviality: the joking comment of Mona, whose parents were from North Africa, that she would switch from English to Arabic ‘just to annoy Faith!’ captures ‘the art of making fun without raising anger’ (Bourdieu, 1984:183) – Faith laughed loudly in response and the two were close friends. In the context of mutual respect, the act of switching languages had a convivial rather than exclusionary effect. This reciprocity reaffirms Buber’s (1937) insistence on the mutuality of the I-Thou relation and highlights convivial humour as ‘a *negotiated* form of social consensus’ (Wise, 2016:486).

At Bradbrook, ethnic and racial humour played a role in teaching practices. Studies have found that humour in the classroom can increase social bonding between teacher and student and facilitate a positive social and emotional learning environment (Kher et al., 1999; Hackathorn et al., 2011; Tsukawaki et al., 2020). Manu highlighted the importance of humour in the teacher-student relationship, observing that to be ‘a good teacher’, ‘you understand when’s the boundaries and you understand what’s the joke’. Hassan (a teacher) said that he would personally ‘get involved’ in food-based banter about where young people were from, demonstrating an implicit understanding of the boundaries of the ‘joking frame’ (Wise, 2016:487). While other studies have explored how young people in multi-ethnic schools draw on their ethnic and racial differences as sources of convivial humour (Winkler Reid, 2015), this research paves new ground in showing how teachers engage with this type of humour. Abdi compared the use of ethnic humour among Bradbrook students to the

²⁸ Mocking humour from non-Roma Romanians towards Bogdan, who was Roma, highlights how humour can also be the source of I-It division between ethnic groups. This relationship is further examined in Section 7.3.2.

jokes he had made with his own friends when growing up in superdiverse East London. Conversely, Amy, a White British teacher who had grown up in a less ethnically diverse area, admonished young people for joking about their ethnic differences. Amy seemed reluctant to engage young people on matters related to race and ethnicity; like teachers in Taylor et al.'s (2021:8) research in British schools, she may have had concerns about 'getting it "wrong" especially on matters related to race'. Gay (2010:145) confirms that some teachers avoid discussions of racial or ethnic difference out of fear of being 'accused of being racist or of saying the wrong thing'.

At Seaview, George (a member of the EAL team) described using slapstick humour to 'joke [EAL students] along', indicating the role of humour in downplaying the authority inherent in the teaching position and in creating 'an atmosphere of participation, sharing, and playful learning' (Buskist et al., 2002:29). At the same time, however, encouraging conviviality among EAL students without promoting wider opportunities for encounter at Seaview may have perpetuated 'tolerance' for the other, with violent consequences in the presence of racism at the school level. In recognition that exclusive I-Thou relations can have damaging effects on the 'out-group', DeLue (2006:117) suggests that 'tolerance must be buttressed by mutual respect'. He argues that while Buber conceptualises the I-Thou as a natural and spontaneous relationship that cannot be mediated by institutions or practices, ethical 'third terms' must be introduced in order to conjoin individual and community (ibid.:121). DeLue (ibid.:129) proposes that both Buberian 'immediacy' and the Kantian notion of 'moral duty' are necessary in order to build dialogical communities. This resonates with Yonas and Hamza's suggestion that although it was important to celebrate cultural differences, Bradbrook also needed to emphasise young people's shared studenthood and common humanity in order to encourage school cohesion. Similarly, teachers in Taylor et al.'s (2021:30) research pointed to the role of 'school ethos' in contributing to a sense of community at school.

The findings from Bradbrook show how young people used 'in-group' conviviality as a mode of resistance to the interethnic paradigm of the RWS project. Bradbrook students responded to the aim of the Classroom Drama workshop to enhance their 'inter-ethnic relationships' by playfully asserting the strength of their already existent social networks:

‘when the lesson’s boring, we can all work together, you know, we can create something that’s fun and engaging, cos of our community’. Drawing on Cohen (1985), Back (1996:29) suggests that ‘community’ can be ‘a discursive construct that is utilized as an ideological resource’. In this instance, the term ‘community’ was used to claim solidarity and cohesion in response to the project’s categorising and compartmentalising narrative. In equating the notion of ‘community’ to ‘working together’ and ‘creating something that’s fun’, Bradbrook students evoked ideas of community as ‘a verb’ (Jackson, 2020:3). Conviviality studies have highlighted community as ‘a practical negotiation of “being together”’ (Noble, 2009:59) and as ‘ongoing social relations in action, rather than a thing to be possessed, lacked or lost’ (Rogaly, 2016:657). Similarly, Buber (1947:37) describes ‘community’ as the site of the I-Thou encounter, of ‘the being no longer side by side but *with* one another of a multitude of persons... Community is where community happens’. In the absence of trust in the aims of the Classroom Drama workshop, young people’s playful construction of ‘community’ disrupted the flow of the workshop and affected the drama therapists’ ability to maintain order, recalling the divisive effects of the ‘in-group’ conviviality of the EAL space at Seaview.

7.2.2. Dialogue

Bradbrook students used humour as a dialogical tool to problematise experiences of prejudice and racism in the wider London context. Mohamed, a Somali student, said that attending an ethnically diverse school made it possible to ‘break down’ stereotypes. Although Bradbrook students reported few experiences of racism or discrimination within the local borough, many had directly experienced, or were aware of, Islamophobia in other less diverse parts of London. Islamophobia may have been influenced by a lack of social contact with the religious ‘other’, and by Islamophobic narratives in the British media (Field, 2007; Fekete, 2009). The superdiversity of the school provided a safe space, defined by mutual trust and respect, for young people to problematise and destabilise these media narratives through the use of ‘ironic humour’ (Wise, 2016). Playful quips such as ‘Are you a member of Al-Shabaab?’ were delivered and received light-heartedly, allowing Bradbrook students to recognise the power of dominant media narratives while also undermining them. Butler (1997:101) suggests that the ‘possibility of decontextualizing and recontextualizing [racist] terms through radical acts of public misappropriation constitutes the basis of an ironic hopefulness that the conventional relation between word and wound

might become tenuous and even broken over time'. By 'decontextualising and recontextualizing' I-It stereotypes in the superdiverse school setting, young people were able to subvert them through the ironic and 'hopeful' humour of the I-Thou relation.

Winkler Reid (2015:40) emphasises that the use of ironic humour 'turns on a delicate line between significance and subversion'. She suggests that 'face-to-face interactions' enabled young people in her research in multi-ethnic London schools to 'police these boundaries', highlighting the importance of laughter in 'validating the subversion of meaning' (ibid.). This policing was evident at Bradbrook: Oscar's peers 'called him out' when he laughingly mocked another student's Muslim clothing, and Waleed problematised Vasile's reductionist comments about 'black peoples' and 'white guys'. Another student was challenged by his peers after suggesting that some people might be more inclined towards violence because of where they were from. At other times, however, there appeared to be little policing of the boundaries between ironic and 'real' racism. Kingsley, for example, drew attention to the 'racism' of mocking comments such as 'big nose, big lips'. These instances of 'laughing at' (Rosengren, 2010) were tacitly accepted by other young people, perhaps because of confusion as to what 'racism' actually constituted. Several students were hesitant to ask me where I was from, wondering if it would be rude to do so, and Ana (a teacher) pointed out that young people were often reluctant to refer to race, which she attributed to the desire to be 'politically correct'. Buber (1947:124) highlights the importance of spontaneity in dialogue: 'Only in his whole being, in all his spontaneity can the educator truly affect the whole being of his pupil'. Yet Nilsen (1994:929) suggests that 'in these days of political correctness, when speakers are so fearful of making a mistake that they run every witticism through internal censors, spontaneity disappears'. Ana added that paradoxically, young people's reluctance to engage on issues of race was often accompanied by remarks such as 'Oh, you're a Somalian pirate!', which students failed to identify as, in her words, 'actually quite racist'.

Bradbrook teachers drew on humour to encourage dialogue with students about their multiple differences. Studies have found that humour has positive effects on learning processes, including increased student involvement, self-motivation and retention, and improved problem solving (McKeachie and Svinicki, 2006; Shibinski and Martin, 2010;

Hackathorn et al., 2011). After a Middle Eastern student at Bradbrook described cutting off people's hands as a legitimate form of punishment, Ana spontaneously used tongue-in-cheek humour to encourage the young person to reflect on his cultural assumptions. The student laughed in response: 'Come on, Miss...'. This instance recalls Buber's (1947) insistence on the spontaneous and reciprocal nature of the I-Thou relation. Shibinski and Martin (2010) also highlight the role of spontaneity in teachers' use of humour to enhance the classroom climate. The mutuality of the dialogical encounter between Ana and her student points to the importance of openness and presence on behalf of teacher and student: Friedman (1947:xvi) suggests that the 'otherness' of the other is 'comprehended only when I open myself to him in the present and in the concrete situation'. The importance of mutual vulnerability was confirmed by Nadir, who equated 'having a joke' with his teachers to being able to 'open up to the teacher and the teacher is open with me'. However, the findings from both schools expose the impact of education policy on dialogical teaching practices, revealing how teachers' capacity for spontaneity and 'presence' was severely restricted by the pressures of the curriculum.

Teachers at both schools noted that the target-oriented education model was impacting the quality of their relationships with students. Many young people confirmed that their relationships with teachers were strongly hierarchical – 'and you can't learn from that,' argued Martim. In this I-It or 'banking' mode of education, teaching becomes 'an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor' (Freire, 1970:72). Wolbert and Schinkel (2021:439-440) suggest that such a paradigm is 'inhospitable to the interruptions of wonder and doubt and the unpredictability they would bring to education'. Large class sizes also had a significant impact on teachers' ability to create a classroom environment of safety and respect: studies confirm that smaller class sizes have positive effects on student learning (Summers and Wolfe, 1977; Krueger, 1999).²⁹ Teachers at both schools highlighted a lack of curricular resources to engage students in dialogue on complex social issues, which intersected with 'PR concerns' around addressing gang involvement at Bradbrook. Yonas also observed that intercultural skills were 'very hard

²⁹ Krueger (1999) suggests that smaller class sizes have larger positive effects on learning for minority students and students on free school meals. This supports similar findings by Summers and Wolfe (1977).

to put into numbers to justify to Ofsted', capturing the 'unknowability' of encounter (Wilson, 2017:612). Buber (1937:32) describes the I-Thou relation as 'unreliable, for it takes on a continually new appearance; you cannot hold it to its word', while Schinkel (2020:481) suggests that 'wonder hints at a fundamental, irresolvable not-knowing'. As Yonas intimated, the 'unknowability' of encounter is at odds with the positivist and 'evidence-based' model of neoliberal education that is dominant in western Europe today (Wolbert and Schinkel, 2021:440).

The focus in current education models on 'evidence' is reflected in the tendency of social projects to demand 'knowability', often as a result of the need to demonstrate evidence of success to policymakers and funders (Wilson, 2017:613). Wilson (ibid.) points out that this demand for knowability in social projects is at odds with the 'very essence of encounter – the surprising and the unforeseen; difference in all its fullness'. Yet the findings from Bradbrook School also highlight young people's agency in their use of tongue-in-cheek humour to respond to the RWS project's 'knowledge' of their friendships. Measurements on the questionnaires included questions such as, 'How many friends do you have that are not from your country of origin and not from the UK?'. Some Bradbrook students responded with hyperbolic numbers ('1000000000'). In this case, young people drew on the ridiculous and the absurd to resist and subvert the project's attempts to capture their relationships in an interethnic paradigm. Their use of the ludicrous also evidences their awareness of friendship as lying 'outside of institutional codes' (Harris, 2016:513) – Buber (1937:32) emphasises that the I-Thou relation 'cannot be surveyed, and if you wish to make it capable of survey you lose it'. These findings show how social projects which demand knowability can fail to recognise the rich complexity of young people's friendships and the sophisticated ways in which they already navigate multiple differences at the everyday level. At the same time, the findings underscore young people's significant capacity to unsettle dominant forms of knowledge by 'doing things' (Brubaker, 2002:169) with the categories that are imposed on them.

7.2.3. Divisions

Divisive 'laughing at' (Rosengren, 2010) humour also played a role in young people's peer relationships. Bradbrook students used misogynistic language to ritually mock, threaten,

and deride each other. Kehily and Nayak (1997) draw attention to the role of humour in reproducing heterosexual masculinities among boys at school in the West Midlands. Like the young men in Kehily and Nayak's research, Bradbrook students mobilised 'a sexist discourse of power against other males through a verbal attack on their mothers' (ibid.:73). This had a strongly divisive effect and was often the catalyst for physical altercations. Kehily and Nayak (ibid.) note that the potency of 'mother insults' is 'exacerbated when males are located as moral guardians of the sexual reputations of mothers, girlfriends and sisters'; this was particularly true for Eastern European young men at Bradbrook, including young Albanians, for whom Marjeta explained the 'protection' of mothers and sisters was a key part of their identities. Studies have linked unhealthy relational attitudes among children and adolescents, including acceptance of sexual aggression towards women, to exposure to pornographic content online (Ybarra et al., 2011; Rothman and Adhia, 2015; Martellozzo et al., 2016). A recent rapid review conducted by Ofsted (2021) in British schools and colleges also links prevalent peer-on-peer sexual harassment to widespread access to pornography. Research has highlighted the dehumanising effects of online pornographic content (Neufeld, 2020; Zhou et al., 2021); Levinas (1985) suggests that mediated representations of the other eliminate 'presence', increasing our 'knowledge' of the other but removing the ethical responsibility that comes with the face-to-face encounter. Bradbrook is a boys' school: in the same way that media discourse may have compounded Islamophobia in less ethnically diverse parts of London, online representations may have exacerbated the dehumanising effects of a lack of 'face-to-face' contact between Bradbrook boys and young women.

Beyond misogynistic humour, mocking comments among Bradbrook students were sometimes related to socioeconomic circumstances. Eric made fun of another student for living in multi-occupancy housing, jeering, 'You brush your teeth and get dressed in school, man, that's so weird! You're supposed to do that at home'. This derisive humour was potentially indicative of stigma among Bradbrook students towards living in multi-occupancy housing. The haste with which one student reminded me that it was 'confidential' that he lived with his cousins may also reflect his fear of being stigmatised. Barrett et al. (2012) confirm that stigma is a significant psychosocial impact of living in multi-occupancy housing. The use of 'laughing at' humour towards Billy, a White British student who was a young carer, also reinforces the findings of studies which point to the

psychosocial impact of early caregiving (Shifren and Kachorek, 2003; Chikhradze et al., 2017; Dharampal and Ani, 2020; Robison et al., 2020). Imran, a Bengali student, used Billy's tiredness as material for performative humour, mimicking Billy's demeanour through exaggerated, zombie-like movements. Although Billy joined his peers in laughing at Imran's performance, there was a clear power dynamic, and the context was not marked by mutual understanding. Imran appeared to be unaware of Billy's status as a young carer and may have simply wanted to get an affirming laugh from his peers. Imran came from a single-parent family and spent long periods of time on his own; he may have hoped that laughing at Billy would distract from his own socioeconomic background becoming the source of humorous attention. The divisive impact of precarity at Bradbrook corroborates research which finds that socioeconomic inequality is a significant source of intergroup tension in settings of ethnic diversity (Portes and Vickstrom, 2011; Owen, 2013).

At Seaview School, economic status had a similarly divisive impact on young people's peer relationships; for example, Alfie, who received free school meals and had been assigned a social worker, described 'a billion eyes looking at you, judging you!'. Seaview students also frequently drew discursive boundaries of belonging through 'laughing at' humour based on ethnic, language, and religious differences. Although ethnic minority students were over-represented at Seaview compared to local demographics, the school still had a clear 'majority' and 'minority' student group. Plenty and Jonsson (2017:1276) suggest that in less ethnically diverse schools in Europe, immigrant or ethnic minority students who discernibly deviate from the group norm in appearance or behaviour may be perceived as not 'fitting in'. This was evident at Seaview. George said that students would 'giggle' at each other's accents, noting that EAL students were strongly aware of the distinction between 'laughing with' and 'laughing at'. Aarush, who was a newcomer from South Asia, described his peers laughing at and mocking his accent, and 'saying stuff about [South Asia] as well'. Intersecting ethnolinguistic and religious differences were also the basis for 'laughing at' humour: Ali and Ahmad, who were both of Middle Eastern origin, reported that other students had been making fun of Ahmad's accent in the playground and 'saying stuff which you know like is offensive to Muslims'. There were other examples of Islamophobic 'laughing at', including mockery from Margret and her peers towards Kasia for wearing a headscarf. This interaction highlights the importance of an intersectional perspective, which complicates ascriptions of

a collective 'newcomer' identity: although Margret was a newcomer like Kasia, their different religious backgrounds were a key source of division.

In spite of ethnic and religious divisions, the findings from Seaview also reveal the hopeful effects of habitual intercultural encounter (Wise, 2005). Mona explained that although she had been 'isolated a bit' when she started wearing her headscarf to school, 'now people just accept me for who I am'. Faith said that her peers had asked questions such as 'How is your hair like that?' when she first took her braids out, adding, 'I think people like, understand better now'. Allport (1954) hypothesises that if people have the opportunity to communicate with others over a sustained period of time, they may be better able to understand and appreciate different perspectives. Similarly, conviviality studies highlight the role of habitual contact and everyday encounters in leading to social transformation (Gilroy, 2004; Valentine, 2008; Rzepnikowska, 2020). It has been emphasised, however, that social contact on its own does not lead to social transformation. Allport's social contact hypothesis is contingent on individuals having equal status and common goals. Amin (2002:969) also points out that habitual contact can 'entrench group animosities and identities, through repetitions of gender, class, race, and ethnic practices'. Although contact in schools can reproduce and compound societal divisions (*ibid.*), the act of regularly attending school can also encourage equal status and the common goal of receiving an education. Attending Seaview may have helped students to negotiate cultural norms through everyday encounters, with the effect of gradually challenging and even transgressing ethnic and religious divides.

While the PIER programme at Seaview helped young people to challenge stereotypes around migration, the findings point to the stigmatising effects of the Classroom Drama workshop. During the RWS evaluation, Kingsley used derisive humour to reject the 'migrant' category imposed on him by the project, scoffing, 'I'm not a migrant!'. Bakewell (2008:451) highlights the irrelevancy of policy categories to the lived experiences of migrants and refugees, noting that for many, 'such bureaucratic categories may have little day to day salience'. The categorising language of the RWS project may have contributed to, rather than helped to address, widespread stigma towards migration-related terms among Bradbrook students. This problematises the language that is often used in social projects

with migrants and refugees. Zetter (1991:59) suggests that labelling is ‘an inescapable part of public policy making and its language: a non-labelled way out cannot exist’, but also notes that the use of labels in public policy approaches towards refugees can create stereotyped identities and alienating distinctions. The ‘I-It’ structure of language is unavoidable and necessary – yet Friedman (1976:21) complains that it ‘seems to be our human fate that again and again the structure goes over from something that is life-promoting to something that gets in the way of life’. The label of ‘therapy’ in the Classroom Drama workshop resulted in mocking humour between students: ‘Ha, you need therapy!’. Findings from other studies highlight the alienating nature of medicalised language in youth programmes, particularly in relation to migrants and refugees (Summerfield, 1995, 2004; Ellis et al., 2010). In associating young people with the concept of the ‘therapy’, the Classroom Drama workshop shaped them as implicitly vulnerable, medicalised subjects requiring ‘expert’ knowledge and support (Conrad, 1992; Summerfield, 1999; Watters, 2001; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012). These *stigmatising* effects are likely to have counteracted the *destigmatising* benefits of conducting psychosocial support interventions in school settings.

This section examined the diverse role of humour in conviviality and dialogue, and in marking and reinforcing societal divisions. The co-existence of convivial ‘joking with’ and alienating ‘laughing at’ humour at both schools corroborates studies which show that convivial practices are in interplay with structures of power, discrimination, and inequality (Gilroy, 2006; Back and Sinha, 2016; Wise and Noble, 2016; Wessendorf, 2020). However, the findings also point to the hopeful bridges that may be built in everyday encounters and habitual social contact in the context of mutual trust and respect. The section highlighted teachers’ agency in using humour to build trust and promote dialogue with students but underscored the challenges – large class sizes and a dearth of curricular resources – in the context of a policy culture of ‘knowability’. It also discussed how the RWS project imposed various forms of knowledge on young people, showing how they responded to this knowledge through the use of convivial and tongue-in-cheek humour, as well as in stigmatising ‘laughing at’ relations towards each other.

7.3. Memories

Societal, familial, and personal memories influenced peer relationships at both schools. Morrice (2018:661) suggests that ‘cemented histories’ and ‘particular biographical understandings’ shape feelings, attitudes, and degrees of openness and closedness to others. Memory is a ‘story’ told about the past (Sontag, 2003:67): as a form of representation, it can be used to distance and objectify. However, memory can also be ‘an ethical act’, with ‘ethical value in and of itself’ (ibid.:91). This section examines how memories influenced attitudes among ‘hosts’, shaped newcomers’ adjustment, and impacted opportunities for peer encounters. It also discusses how teachers drew on their memories to challenge stereotypes and encourage dialogue on complex social issues, highlighting the detrimental impact of national education policy on their ability to be vulnerable with students.

7.3.1. Influencing reception

Familial and societal memories influenced the politics of reception at both schools. At Seaview, Harry, who was White British, contrasted state support for asylum seekers in the UK with what he perceived to be a lack of support for homeless people ‘from here’. His argument that asylum seekers were ‘actually quite lucky to be given money and a home’ resonates with the anti-immigrant rhetoric of populist politics and media narratives in the UK, which centre on memories of the ‘purity’ of national identity (Valluvan and Kalra, 2019). In East London, Emily described how many White British people in the local borough perceived newcomers as ‘taking over’. These territorial narratives may have been influenced by precarity; Fenton (2012) links ‘resentful nationalism’ in the UK to declining class situations. At Bradbrook, Robbie was torn between his father’s reified ‘I-It’ memories of East London ‘as the home of white Englishness’ (James, 2014:1) and his own experiences of attending a superdiverse school, which provided the opportunity for intercultural ‘I-Thou’ encounter. This feeling of being caught between two worlds may have led to Robbie’s behavioural problems in the classroom. Bourdieu uses the concept of the *habitus clivé* or ‘cleft habitus’ to describe the psychosocial impact of spending time in conflicting social

fields.³⁰ According to Bourdieu (1999:511), a person experiences ‘cleft habitus’ when changes in their ‘conditions of existence’ cause the habitus to become ‘divided against itself, and doomed to a kind of double perception of self, to successive allegiances and multiple identities’. Robbie’s situation indicates a ‘destabilised habitus, torn by contradiction and internal division’ (Bourdieu, 2000:160). This insight adds to the migration literature by illustrating how intergenerational tensions may arise in White British or ‘host’ families when there is conflict between parents’ ethnonational identities and their children’s lived experiences in superdiverse contexts; Watters (2011) notes that previous migration research has mostly focused on the experiences of migrant families in this regard.

Berg and Sigona (2013:352) assert that urban spaces have ‘histories (and memories) of migration, as well as of minorities’ struggles for rights and recognition’. Yonas contrasted his memories of making the effort to learn English and to integrate into a distinct ‘English community’ with the tendency of more recently arrived ethnic minorities to stay ‘in their own little pocket of cultures’. This echoes Wessendorf’s (2020) finding that long-established ethnic minorities in East London perceive Eastern European newcomers as not speaking enough English and not wanting to mix; they position these perceptions against their own histories of immigration and openness to mix. At Bradbrook, Nadir described how long-established ethnic minorities in the borough situated the arrival of newcomers against their memories of struggling to ‘build all of this up’. The idea of resource competition recalls the anthropological concept of ‘the image of the limited good’ (Foster, 1965:304), which dictates that

all the desired things in life such as land, wealth, health, friendship and love...exist in finite quality and are always in short supply, but in addition there is no way directly...to increase the available quantities... it follows that an individual or a family can improve a position only at the expense of others. (ibid.)

Watters (2008:118) applies the concept of the ‘limited good’ to competition over English language resources in the British education system, suggesting that in the context of limited funding, ‘it is not hard to see how the image of the “limited good” can arise and result in a

³⁰ Bourdieu (1986b) defines ‘habitus’ as the set of dispositions – ways of being, seeing, acting, and thinking – that flow from primary socialisation as well as organising social behaviour, conditioning everyday practices.

competitive orientation'. The image of the limited good was central in the memories of Bradbrook families who had struggled to 'build all of this up', engendering a 'competitive orientation' (ibid.) towards newcomers in the context of precarity. These societal memories played out in a discourse of 'us versus them' among Bradbrook students. Newcomers were often referred to by other more established migrants as 'the Italians' or 'the Romanians' and there were several instances of targeted bullying: 'Go in your country, go in Italy, don't come in London, is our country, don't come'. This bullying sometimes involved racism, such as the comment made to Giorgio, 'Go back to Italy, you white something-something'.

Although Italian Bengali and Romanian students often responded to categorising discourses by retreating into ethnic memory-making through shared religious, language, and behavioural practices, there were some notable exceptions. Daniel subverted the stereotype of the 'bad Romanian' by making 'English friends' and embracing a studious persona, while Vasile, who was Moldovan, tried to speak English to his Romanian peers. Saaleha also described choosing not to start wearing the hijab in London in spite of pressure from her Italian Bengali peers. Watters (2011:326) suggests that contrary to a preoccupation with 'loss' in migration studies, migration can involve 'a sense of liberation from cultural and familial ties'. In these instances, superdiversity provided young people with the opportunity of 'forgetting' rather than adhering to ethnolinguistic or ethnoreligious norms. Wessendorf (2014b:59) confirms that 'commonplace diversity' facilitates 'a great sense of freedom to be whoever and however you want to be'. However, the findings also indicate that particular tools and capacities are necessary in order to 'forget': Ana described a Romanian student who wanted to spend time with non-Romanians but struggled to break out of this group because he was not yet fluent in English. Furthermore, Saaleha's wistful comment that although feeling 'a citizen of the world' she also didn't 'really belong anywhere' points to the psychosocial cost of a wholly cosmopolitan orientation. This has implications for studies of superdiversity and mobility which, in emphasising agency, choice, and fluidity in the context of migration, also risk downplaying the ontological significance of group bonds such as national identities (Alexander, 2002; Wimmer and Schiller, 2002).

Sontag (2003:91) posits that images can provide 'an invitation to pay attention, to reflect, to learn'. Images of the past in the form of memories influenced caring practices towards

newcomers at both schools. At Seaview, the EAL team often asked students with experiences of migration or displacement to support newcomers, noting that most White British students could not empathise with their experiences. However, some White British students also drew on their memories of being new to school in order to welcome newcomers from overseas, underscoring their capacity to empathise with the other. Bradbrook students built on their own experiences of migration to include newcomers, modelling caring practices on their memories of being welcomed to the school. Abshir, for example, remembered being helped by a Tanzanian student when he first arrived at Bradbrook, and demonstrated high levels of empathy for newcomers during our interview. This resonates with Borsch et al.'s (2020) finding that young migrants and refugees in Danish schools sometimes based their care for newcomers on memories of classmates attempting to make them feel comfortable. At the same time, some Bradbrook students deliberately resisted memories of exclusion in order to care for newcomers: Mahmud, for example, was an Italian Bengali student who had been bullied when he arrived at Bradbrook and now described welcoming newcomers. This shows how memories may be the catalyst for practices of inclusion even when they are based on a strongly contrasting experience and therefore cannot be a source of 'empathy' *per se*. Buber (1947:115) emphasises that the I-Thou is a process of 'inclusion' rather than of 'empathy': while 'empathy' is the attempt to project or 'transpose' oneself onto the other, 'inclusion' captures 'the complete presence of the reality in which one participates'. These findings in relation to memory and 'inclusion' present a hopeful picture, suggesting that even when experiences diverge to the extent that they are a 'chasm that empathy – "suffering with" – cannot hope to cross' (Ignatieff, 1998:11), other forms of 'bridging' connection may still lead to cross-cultural inclusion and solidarity.

7.3.2. Shaping adjustment

Van Manen (2016:110) suggests that the popularity of digital technologies such as mobile phones and social networking sites among young people reflects their desire for 'the feeling of belonging'. Newcomers at both schools often maintained transnational forms of belonging with family and friends through digital technologies, sustaining memories of the home country in the process. At Seaview, Abbas used his phone to show photos of his home country in the Middle East to his peers, while at Bradbrook, Abshir commented on his need

to maintain connections in Northeast Africa: 'You've got to keep up the same talking level before it gets all awkward and stuff'. At the local level, the findings show that the degree of belonging newcomers experienced in their new setting shaped their use of digital technology to maintain transnational memories. In the presence of superdiversity, which can engender a sense of 'fitting in' (Wessendorf, 2014b:58), many Bradbrook students appeared to find belonging both in transnational communication and in face-to-face contact with their peers. Transnational communication may even have helped Bradbrook students to build connections in the local context: Strang and Ager (2010) suggest that engagement with the 'home' culture can have empowering effects, and highlight the psychosocial importance of group 'bonds' as a means to 'bridging' relations. Empirical research confirms that transnational relationships may help young migrants to overcome adjustment challenges in the host society (Elias and Lemish, 2009; Rowan et al., 2021).

At Seaview there was a more clearly defined White British majority. Ethnically 'different' newcomers may have felt less likely to 'fit in' (Plenty and Jonsson, 2017), potentially pushing them towards using transnational communication as a dominant form of belonging. For example, Romanian newcomers maintained virtual friendships 'which is definitely not the same as real ones', while Hala used her phone to communicate with her friends in the Middle East '24/7' and said that she didn't feel 'that close' to her peers at Seaview. It is possible that transnational communication may have compounded a lack of belonging in the host context. Brekke (2008) argues that transnational communication can decelerate processes of integration in the host society by making young people less motivated to find friends and make new connections. Komito (2011:1083) also suggests that social media usage can slow down processes of integration by encouraging migrants to constantly 'monitor' life in their home countries. Hala's use of technology to sustain memories of the homeland 'as low-level background, or ambient, presence' (ibid.) may have limited her opportunities to create new memories through the face-to-face encounter with her peers at Seaview. Beavers (1993:7) highlights the impact of extensive digital communication on ability to encounter the other, noting that 'having reduced all Others to representations, we face no one, or should I say that we do not know how to face someone'. Perhaps in recognition of this risk, Aarush's father limited Aarush's communication with his peers in

South Asia; how parents manage their children's peer relationships in the context of migration and diversity is clearly significant (Vincent et al., 2017).

Intergenerational memories of racial and ethnic discrimination influenced the peer relationships of Bradbrook students. Faduma, Abshir's mother, drew on her own experiences of racism to advise Abshir on how he should respond to potential racism; Faduma believed that everyone should be treated the same, regardless of their religion, gender, race, or class. Bogdan's family, who were Roma, took a more preventive approach in response to their memories of ethnic discrimination. They delayed Bogdan's start at Bradbrook for a year, making him 'afraid' to go to school: Cristian, a local Roma support worker, explained that many Roma families feared that experiences of ethnic discrimination in Romania would be repeated in the UK. After Bogdan began attending Bradbrook, his Romanian peers transposed societal memories of discriminating against the Roma in Romania onto the school setting by excluding Bogdan from their group. However, the sense of freedom engendered by the superdiverse context also allowed Bogdan, who was naturally gregarious, to challenge this ethnic stereotyping through face-to-face encounters characterised by spontaneity and presence. Bogdan did not 'forget' his Roma identity but maintained it through the visible marker of his ear piercing. While maintaining his Roma identity, Bogdan's ongoing intercultural engagement at Bradbrook destabilised cultural memories of discrimination. His active agency in negotiating ethnic memories through peer relationships at Bradbrook points to the inherently fluid and narrative nature of memory: 'The past is not waiting for us back there to recoup our identities against. It is always retold, rediscovered, reinvented' (Hall, 1991:58).

James (2016) and Watters (2011) note that migration studies often portray young migrants as diverging from their parents' cultural practices. However, Watters (ibid.) argues that a more complex view is necessary, pointing to empirical evidence that young migrants often have a strong engagement with their parents' cultures. The findings from Bradbrook illustrate the diversity of migrant family practices, indicating how young people negotiate their families' memories of the homeland through language practices. Some families aimed to preserve memories of their home countries by speaking their heritage language at home. Others relied on their children to translate for them, a process which Saaleha described as

both empowering and ‘exhausting’. Research confirms that ‘language brokering’ can be enriching and can increase prosocial behaviour in adolescents (Orellana, 2001; Aumann and Titzmann, 2020; Crafter and Iqbal, 2020), but can also increase anxiety, depression, and stress in young people (Kosner et al., 2014; Rainey et al., 2014). Some parents, such as Reina, strongly encouraged their children to speak English rather than the home language with their peers, while also acknowledging their agency: ‘You can’t take away from him the right to speak to other students in Spanish. This is difficult’. At the same time, the findings show that young people also used their language differences as a source of conviviality. Kalam greeted Emmanuel by saying ‘Salaam alaikum’, even though Emmanuel was not of Arabic or Muslim background – he noted that ‘it’s still nice to say it anyway!’. Another student made a clumsy attempt at Spanish (‘Yo hablo española’) to connect with a Spanish-speaking student. As with their use of ethnic humour, young people’s decontextualization of these terms had the effect of disrupting language norms and bringing them together in moments of closeness and encounter. At Seaview, Lewis’ offer to use his foreign language skills in order to welcome Spanish newcomers may have had a similar bridging function.

7.3.3. Impacting encounter

Socioeconomic deprivation influenced a complex dialectics of remembering and forgetting among Bradbrook and Seaview students. A number of Bradbrook students were involved in gangs within the local borough. Gang membership is linked to joblessness and intergenerational disadvantage (McLean and Holligan, 2018), economic inequality (Grimshaw and Ford, 2018), and a lack of community support (LaFree, 2019). Several studies also link gang involvement to ongoing neighbourhood violence and previous experiences of trauma. Ellis et al. (2015) find that trauma exposure is a critical risk factor for violence in young Somali refugees in North America and add that the presence of neighbourhood violence such as gangs adds to this risk. Quinn et al. (2017) also suggest that frequent and ongoing exposure to neighbourhood violence, and personal and familial trauma, can lead young people to normalise violence. In this context, gangs offer protection and social support (ibid.). Neighbourhood violence and trauma are likely to have influenced Hussein’s gang involvement. Hussein was a UASC who struggled to recall his life in the Middle East. Altered memory function is a symptom of PTSD (Bremner, 2006), and studies confirm that UASC are particularly likely to have experienced traumatic stress (Bean et al., 2007; Vervliet

et al., 2014; Fazel and Betancourt, 2018). Hussein was stabbed before becoming involved in gangs and noted that ‘that’s why I’m listening to them and therefore I respect them, show them respect’. Ana suggested that Hussein’s involvement in gangs might stem from the feeling that he needed ‘to have some kind of family’, ‘to have some kind of network and community’ to make him ‘feel safe’ – protection and social support from gangs may be particularly meaningful for UASC, who are less likely to have social and family ties (Chase, 2013). The findings show that gangs in East London drew on memories of intergroup violence to communicate threats and promises of revenge towards members of rival postcode gangs over social media. The widespread use of social media by these gangs is likely to have added to the dehumanising effects of ‘postcode’ language, with studies linking digital technology use to declining levels of empathy among young people (Konrath et al., 2011; Lapidot-Leffler and Barak, 2012; Turkle, 2015).

Gang violence also impacted the peer relations of non-gang members outside school. The presence of gangs on the street meant that many parents tried to keep their sons at home. In the absence of spaces for physical contact outside school, online gaming helped young people who had online access to maintain their peer relationships. Kowert et al. (2014:2) contend that ‘online games provide a playful, shared activity’, which ‘helps to facilitate the development and maintenance of social relationships, as well as further socially accommodate its users’. Steinkuehler and Williams (2006) find that participation in virtual ‘third places’ such as multiplayer online games can expose the player to a diversity of worldviews but also note that these virtual relationships do not usually provide deep emotional support. Rose (2017:24) suggests that online spaces should not be replaced by opportunities for face-to-face encounter, positing that a prevalence of ‘faceless contacts’ in online communication may contribute to ‘a further inability to engage empathetically with others — and, indeed, to a devaluation of human contact in general’. Conversely, the research findings reveal the deeply transformative effects of face-to-face encounter and ‘human contact’ in the context of neighbourhood violence. Rohini and her daughter described how their Pakistani neighbours provided their family with care and support after their son had been mugged by a gang outside their home. This instance of neighbourliness highlights convivial encounter as a form of ‘reparative humanism’ (Gilroy, 2018:30) that is capable of unsettling memories of neighbourhood violence, which the Pakistani neighbours

highlighted as an everyday phenomenon. Buber (1937:57) posits that the I-Thou encounter ‘stirs, rejuvenates, and transforms the stable structures of history’. Here marginality becomes a site ‘for the production of a counter hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives’, offering ‘the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds’ (hooks, 1989:iv).

Buber (1937) underscores the contingency of I-Thou encounters on mutual vulnerability, while hooks (1989:19) cautions that the site of ‘radical openness’ is ‘not a “safe” place. One is always at risk’. At Bradbrook, high levels of mobility among young people appeared to limit their willingness to make themselves vulnerable to the risks of encounter. Bradbrook students were mobile for different migration-related reasons: some had temporary visas, while others were subject to the UK’s asylum dispersal scheme, which studies identify as deeply unsettling and exclusionary (Bloch and Schuster, 2005; Schuster, 2005; Phillimore and Goodson, 2006). Wessendorf (2016:21) finds that in a superdiverse London borough, shared experiences of ‘temporariness’ created ‘a certain openness towards others of the same fate’. While this was true for Bradbrook students, temporariness also appeared to limit the strength of connections they were able to make. As Tessa commented, ‘People here are constantly on the move. So kids think, “What’s the point in making friends?”’. Ahmed was an African European newcomer who often spoke of his imminent return to Northern Europe and did not appear to have made many friends at Bradbrook. Notably, Ahmed spent a lot of time speaking to his friends in Northern Europe over social media, maintaining ongoing memories of Northern Europe in doing so. It was only after it transpired that Ahmed would not be moving back to Northern Europe that he appeared to settle and consequently made good friends with Vasile, another newcomer. Other Bradbrook students were mobile due to temporary homelessness; Gladwell and Chetwynd (2018) highlight that unstable accommodation and poverty prevent young refugees and asylum seekers from remaining and thriving in education.

At both schools, the effects of poverty were evident in young people’s social and emotional problems in the classroom; teachers noted that young people would ‘act out stuff that’s from home or from instability at home’. In this way Bradbrook and Seaview students

transposed everyday memories of the home onto their peer relationships at school. This 'acting out' was often met by distancing, with young people labelling each other as 'troublemakers', 'weird', and 'mischievous'. However, the findings also reveal how interpersonal moments of friendship could transcend I-It memories of the home in the context of socioeconomic inequality. Camilo accompanied Ryan to report domestic abuse to their teachers after school; his quiet presence while Ryan recounted details of the abuse indicated a huge level of mutual respect, captured in the teacher Diana's words, 'Thank you for being such a good friend'. This interaction adds to understandings of friendship as involving 'a mutual sense of humanness and equality and relationships of social support' (Harris, 2016:502). Ryan and Camilo's friendship had the power to fleetingly transgress memories of domestic abuse, highlighting marginalisation 'as much more than a site of deprivation' but 'also the site of radical possibility, a space of resistance' (hooks, 1989:iv). In using language to label this encounter as 'friendship', Diana returned the I-Thou relation to the I-It, an outcome which Buber (1937:33) considers inevitable: 'The particular Thou, after the relational event has run its course, is bound to become an It'. However, drawing on Levinas, Vollebergh (2016) suggests that even 'culturalist and racist' social cohesion policies can encourage the expression of neighbourliness and the 'face-to-face' encounter in multi-ethnic contexts. In the same way, Diana's words may have had the effect of legitimising and reinforcing the ethical nature of the interaction.

7.3.4. Challenging stereotypes

Memories emerged as a tool to challenge stereotypes among young people. At Bradbrook, migration experiences were a common source of unity: one student commented, 'we all know how we came here!'. The 'banality' of migration at Bradbrook meant that the focus of the Classroom Drama workshop on experiences of migration was misplaced. In spite of their shared experiences, however, migration-related stereotypes persisted among Bradbrook students. While they were well-versed in each other's experiences of migration, they saw no connection between these experiences and the labels of 'migrant' and 'refugee', captured in Kingsley's indignant comment, 'I'm not a migrant!'. Hamza noted that Bradbrook students tended to 'throw around' words like 'immigrant' and 'refugee' and did not understand 'the full extent of those words'. Amy drew attention to the role of the media, suggesting that 'those things got filtered down and get diluted and just cherry picked out'. Similarly, at

Seaview George noted that White British students often had a simplistic understanding of the experiences of refugees and would label newcomers as ‘migrants’ or ‘immigrants’, picking ‘up on the media speak and the sort of...accusative language that many people hold’. Teaching and intervention practices aimed to challenge these stereotypes.

At Bradbrook, Kate described her disappointment when her students failed to engage with a lesson on media representations of migrants and refugees, observing that ‘they don’t seem to get that it’s actually *about* them’. Kate’s use of image to challenge stereotypes around these terms may have provided insufficient ‘context’ for young people to connect them to their own experiences (Hall, 1976).³¹ Commenting on the ‘Jack and Rani’ video during the PIER programme at Seaview, George suggested that it might have been more effective to ‘get the real people in the room’, such as older students who were willing to share their memories of migration or displacement. At Bradbrook, Hamza said that a documentary on refugee sea crossings had prompted one of his students, Zain, to reassess his simplistic views of displacement. Yet it was only after Zain’s father shared his memories of his difficult journey to the UK that Zain’s attitudes were transformed, indicated by his later apology to Hamza for having laughed during the documentary. In the face-to-face encounter, memories or ‘knowledge’ of migration and displacement are embodied in the person of the other. The I-Thou relation therefore makes it possible to recognise the I-It identities of the other – such as ‘migrant’ or ‘refugee’ – while also confirming their unique personhood: ‘There is nothing from which I would have to turn my eyes away in order to see, and no knowledge that I would have to forget. Rather is everything, picture and movement, species and type, law and number, indivisibly united in this event’ (Buber, 1937:7). The location of the I-Thou relation outside ‘the structure of knowledge’ (ibid.:40) negates the possibility of stereotyping or reifying identities. Rather, Lewis (1961:56) suggests that the face of the other ‘incessantly triumphs’ over our ‘mere idea’ of them.

Friedman (1947:xviii) asserts that ‘education of character takes place through the encounter with the image of man that the teacher brings before the pupil in the material he presents

³¹ It may even have had the opposite effect of cementing stereotypes about the undeserving migrant or refugee – studies confirm the dehumanising effects of media reporting on migration (Esses et al., 2013; Dempster and Hargrave, 2017; Lecheler et al., 2019).

and in the way he stands behind this material'. Bradbrook and Seaview teachers promoted dialogue by drawing on their memories to bring particular 'images' before their students. After the PIER programme, Seaview students said that it had been helpful to hear teachers' perspectives, recognising that these perspectives had been influenced by teachers' own backgrounds and experiences. At Bradbrook, Abdi mobilised his experiences of displacement to embody and humanise the term 'refugee' for his students: 'I tell them straight, "I used to be a refugee. There's nothing wrong with being a refugee. You're just like anybody else..."'. On a field trip into central London, Karla told her students that 'we are actually, as Muslims, a minority'. By aligning herself with her students, Karla helped them to reflect on their positions in and with society (Freire, 1970). She noted their surprise, highlighting the 'defamiliarizing' role of 'wonder' in education (Schinkel, 2020:487). hooks (1994:21) suggests that by bringing narratives of their experiences into the classroom, teachers eliminate the possibility of functioning 'as all-knowing, silent interrogators'. At the same time, the findings indicate how dialogical practices can emerge in the *absence* of particular memories. As a non-Muslim, Ana had never experienced Islamophobia. Yet her open attitude and willingness to listen appeared to give Akram and Halim the confidence to share their experiences of Islamophobia and to reflect on their roles 'in the world and with the world' (Freire, 1970:62). The power of this dialogical encounter reinforces the distinction between 'empathy' and 'inclusion' (Buber, 1947): the exchange was not shaped by commonality but rather by the mutual vulnerability of Ana and the two students.³²

Although the findings confirm the fundamental importance of vulnerability for dialogical practices (hooks, 1994; Wolbert and Schinkel, 2021), they also show how the ability of teachers to be vulnerable was limited by multiple pressures. While Seaview teachers drew boundaries around the student issues they could 'deal with', Bradbrook teachers described playing multiple roles, characterising the effects as 'suffocating' and 'unforgiving'. hooks (1994:16) suggests that 'the objectification of the teacher within bourgeois educational structures...promotes and supports compartmentalization'. The 'compartmentalization' of the teaching role in the neoliberal paradigm and the destructive consequences evokes

³² The triadic form of this exchange challenges Buber's dyadic conceptualisation of the I-Thou relation; Lewis (1995 in Ford, 2008:273) argues that 'two best friends, or one's parents, or one's wife and daughter, at times are very distinctly neither Thou nor They but "You two"'.

Bourdieu's (2000:160) notion of the cleft habitus, which 'generates suffering'. Among the multiple roles of Bradbrook teachers, those of 'security guard' and 'police officer' present the antithesis of the vulnerability of the I-Thou relation. The damaging impact of the objectifying I-It relation on one's sense of self was captured in Hamza's description of his body as 'killing' during his attempt to prevent two rival gang members from fighting on school grounds. Hamza felt that, in spite of his efforts, he was 'still not doing a good enough job'. Meanwhile Sophie described feeling like she was 'failing' her students. Buber (1937:57) confirms that within the I-It framework, it is 'considered folly to imagine any freedom; there is only a choice; between resolute, and hopeless rebellious, slavery'. Similarly, Lorde (1984:2) emphasises that 'the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house'. Morgan and Guilherme (2013:144) suggest that 'opportunities for I-Thou relations to arise must be provided, otherwise there can be only the objectification of the Other'. Yet these findings highlight how the sanctity of the I-Thou relation between teacher and student has been eroded to a degree that vulnerability becomes impossible, leaving them with no choice but to draw on the I-It relation, or the 'master's tools', in their teaching practices.

This section has examined the role of memories in influencing the politics of reception, shaping the adjustment of newcomers, and impacting opportunities for encounter. It also explored the role of memories in challenging stereotypes through teaching and intervention practices, indicating how teachers' ability to engage in the vulnerability of the I-Thou relation is impacted by the pressures of the teaching role. The section pointed to the ethical potential of memory, highlighting that even where 'empathy' is impossible, alternative forms of 'inclusion' offer the possibility of building on difference. It also considered the multivalent ways in which technology intersects with memories to produce complex relational outcomes – while technology may foster connections, it cannot replace the creative and transformative function of the face-to-face encounter.

7.4. Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research findings in relation to Buber's I-It and I-Thou framework, demonstrating the continued relevance of Buber's model to debates around 'integration' and 'conviviality' in migration studies. The chapter considered the role of humour and

memories in young people's peer relationships and in teaching and intervention practices at Bradbrook and Seaview, highlighting the multiple and complex outcomes of these forms of representation for young people's peer relationships. The following chapter will conclude the thesis by considering the implications of the findings for theory, research, and practice.

8. Conclusions

8.1. Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research findings, examining the role of humour and the influence of memory in peer relationships and teaching and intervention practices. The current chapter concludes the thesis by addressing the implications of the research findings for theory, research, and practice. The first section considers the significance of the findings for understandings of encounter and integration, suggesting that these insights have implications for the theoretical frameworks we use in research. The second section explores the implications of the findings for research on the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees. Finally, the chapter makes specific recommendations for practice in relation to political policies, public health approaches, secondary education, and psychosocial support.

8.2. Implications for theory

In being open to the differences that ‘made a difference’ (Berg et al., 2019) in the peer relationships of Bradbrook and Seaview students, the thesis makes a radical departure from dominant ethnonational frameworks in migration studies. The comparative ethnographic research at Bradbrook and Seaview schools reveals how young people related to each other along multiple forms of ‘I-It’ difference, including migration status, race and ethnicity, language, religion, and economic status. While recognising the significance of migration status in young people’s peer relationships, the thesis shows how migration status intersected with multiple other differences to produce diverse and contingent forms of identification. This complex view of how young migrants and their peers interact in ‘multiple social fields’ (Wimmer and Schiller, 2002:233) confounds crude stereotypes and helps to move migration scholarship beyond ‘a reified and essentialised concept of community and into the study of migrants and non-migrants within open social fields of differential power’ (ibid.). The intersectional perspective highlights the deeply political nature of young people’s peer relationships, responding to calls for migration studies to move beyond depoliticised and ‘cultural’ understandings of superdiversity (Berg and Sigona, 2013; Vickers et al., 2013; Meissner and Vertovec, 2015; Grzymala-Kazłowska and Phillimore, 2018; Foner et al., 2019; Aptekar, 2019).

Schiller and Çağlar (2016:17) highlight that migration studies have a strong ‘communitarian bias’. In the normative ‘I-It’ framework, ‘reality is always apparently structured by divisions between two mutually exclusive and jointly exhaustive groups, the victims and the oppressors’ (Mohanty, 1988:68). Using Buber’s relational model to frame the research findings helps to counteract this communitarian bias by recognising how the I-It relation is in interplay with moments of ‘I-Thou’ encounter. The findings confirm that young people’s relationships cannot always be captured in a ‘liberal dominant/object’ framework – rather, ‘radical sociabilities and horizons persist’ (James, 2015:22). The thesis builds on the conceptual strengths of notions of ‘integration’ and ‘conviviality’ but rejects the orthodoxies of both concepts by staying open to ‘surprise’ (Bennett, 2001). The thesis draws parallels, for example, between the concepts of ‘bonding’ and ‘bridging’ capital and Buber’s I-It and I-Thou relation. The presence of mutual trust and respect in moments of I-Thou encounter among Bradbrook and Seaview students unsettles traditionally functionalist understandings of social ‘bridges’ and also challenges the view that bridging relations necessarily involve ‘thin’ trust (Putnam, 2000:466). Using the ‘I-Thou’ concept also helps to disrupt assumptions of the centrality of ethnonational or ethnonational difference in migration contexts by orienting our attention towards the relation itself and highlighting its basis in mutual personhood. This directly responds to calls for new ways of speaking about sociabilities as a ‘mutual sense of being human’ (Schiller and Çağlar, 2016:19) beyond ethnoreligious ‘idioms of community’ (ibid.:18).

The thesis highlights links between I-It ‘difference’ and I-Thou ‘encounter’. In doing so it answers Ager and Strang’s (2008) call for local, longitudinal studies which illuminate the relationship between social bonds and bridges and identify causal pathways to connection. It also adds to theoretical understandings of how intercultural encounter builds on differences rather than erasing or subjugating them (Amin, 2002; Gilroy, 2004; Heil, 2014). The findings show that the representational politics of the I-It relation were always in interplay with the I-Thou encounter, revealing how young people used humour and memories to reproduce societal differences as well as to build on these differences as sources of convivial humour and ethical ‘inclusion’. Unexpectedly, some of the research findings pose a challenge to dominant theorisations of ‘encounter’. Although Buber (1937) conceptualises the I-Thou as a momentary and fleeting relation, the findings also show how

ongoing convivial solidarities and ‘cultures’ emerged from *habitual* contact with difference at Bradbrook and Seaview. Conviviality studies have highlighted the role of habitual contact and everyday encounters in leading to social transformation (Gilroy, 2004; Valentine, 2008; Rzepnikowska, 2020). Indeed, Amin (2002:976) contends that intercultural encounter cannot be ‘effective and lasting’ without being ‘inculcated as a habit of practice (not just copresence) in mixed sites of everyday contact’. Yet Wilson (2017:613) suggests that the habitual nature of this contact means that it cannot be described as ‘encounter’, arguing that ‘it is important to approach encounters as very specific “genres” of contact’. She adds that Allport (1954) rarely used the term ‘encounter’ when discussing his social contact hypothesis. Future studies could further explore the relationship between social contact and more fleeting forms of ‘encounter’, building on this research by clarifying ‘how, and under what conditions, encounters might produce the familiarity, respect, or vitality that they are often said to promote’ (Wilson, 2017:608).

8.3. Implications for research

This section firstly discusses the implications of the findings for understandings of peer relationships in the context of migration, emphasising the benefits of comparative research and considering the role of family, gender, and technology. It also suggests that research can mirror the expansive cultural horizons presented by superdiversity when it includes diverse viewpoints and perspectives. The implications of the findings for future research on secondary education and psychosocial support are then considered, with specific attention given to how they can provide young people with the tools for encounter and promote dialogical practices.

8.3.1. Peer relationships

Studies of conviviality and multiculturalism have been largely limited to metropolitan contexts characterised by high levels of ‘superdiversity’ (Vertovec, 2007). This research helps to fill a gap in this literature by comparing young people’s sociabilities at urban Bradbrook with those at suburban Seaview. The ‘commonplace diversity’ (Wessendorf, 2014b) of Bradbrook School brought young people into regular contact with multiple forms of ethnic, racial, religious, and language difference, providing a basis for convivial humour about ethnic

differences. Bradbrook students experienced ethnic and religious discrimination outside the commonplace diversity of the local borough, which they subverted through the use of 'ironic humour' (Wise, 2016). Seaview School was less ethnically and religiously diverse than Bradbrook. This influenced the formation of groups among adolescents from diverse ethnic and religious minority backgrounds. These groups effectively functioned as 'pockets' of superdiversity at school and as micro-sites of convivial humour, challenging traditional understandings of convivial 'multiculture' as a solely metropolitan phenomenon (Neal and Walters, 2008). Students with ethnic and religious minority backgrounds experienced ethnic, religious, and language discrimination at the wider school level, indicating how conviviality can co-exist with discrimination and prejudice (Gilroy, 2006; Wessendorf, 2014b; Schiller and Çağlar, 2016). However, these students and their White British peers also developed intercultural solidarities through habitual contact.

Economic status was a key source of difference and encounter at both schools, influencing social and emotional behavioural problems among young people. At Bradbrook, precarity shaped divisive 'laughing at' relations and engendered gang involvement. However, the findings from Bradbrook also show how marginalisation was the site of radical resistance to the effects of inequality through friendship and neighbourliness. The significant role of socioeconomic differences in young people's peer relationships points to the need 'to fuse what are often seen as separate debates about prejudice and respect with questions of social-economic inequalities and power' (Valentine, 2008:334). It also suggests the need to expand ethnonational and ethnoreligious frameworks in studies of 'integration' and 'conviviality' in order to develop a more complex view of how socioeconomic status intersects with other differences in the peer relationships of young migrants and refugees. This could allow new understandings to emerge, particularly in relation to the intersection of daily stressors and trauma. The research at hand suggests that precarity combined with traumatic experiences and neighbourhood violence to foster the involvement of some UASC in gangs in East London. Studies increasingly highlight how maladaptive responses to traumatic events are compounded by daily stressors (Miller and Rasmussen, 2010, 2017; Silove, 2013; Ellis et al., 2015; Tay and Silove, 2016). Mixed methods research would be useful in order to clarify the link between trauma, neighbourhood violence, and daily

stressors in influencing gang membership among young migrants and refugees, and UASC in particular.

The research points to the significant influence of the family on how young people relate to each other. The findings show how the memories of White British parents and long-established ethnic minorities impacted how young people responded to newcomers. The link between xenophobic parental attitudes and precarity points to the need for further understanding of the socioeconomic dimensions of hosting practices, which some studies have recently begun to explore (see, for example, Wessendorf, 2020; Phillimore, 2021; Verkuyten, 2021). The findings also show how parents' language practices influenced their children. Some migrant parents encouraged their children to maintain memories of their countries of origin by speaking heritage languages, while others relied on their children to act as 'language brokers'. These divergent language practices support studies which emphasise the complexity of migrant families and the dynamism of their practices in multicultural contexts (Watters, 2011; Vincent et al., 2017; Montero-Sieburth et al., 2021). The thesis does not cover the psychosocial effects of language brokering in detail and this presents an important area for further research (Orellana, 2001; Rainey et al., 2014; Aumann and Titzmann, 2020; Crafter and Iqbal, 2020).

Although it was not analysed as a separate identity 'category', gender significantly shaped how young people related to each other, particularly in terms of masculinised gang culture and misogynistic attitudes among young men at Bradbrook School. The intersectional influence of gender and technology on gang involvement (through social media) and on misogynistic attitudes (through online pornography) may be relevant areas for further research. The findings indicate that digital technologies such as online video games could be a protective factor for young men's involvement in gang violence and may have created a social environment for the development and maintenance of peer relationships. Meanwhile the use of digital technologies for transnational communication at both Bradbrook and Seaview schools had diverse effects on local forms of connection. The findings suggest that in moulding feelings of 'fitting in', the ethnic diversity of each school influenced the degree to which young people relied on transnational communication for a sense of identity and belonging. Future research could continue to explore the complex role of technology in

shaping multiple and contradictory forms of local and transnational belonging for young migrants and their peers (Georgiou, 2017).

The research shows that attending a multicultural school exposed young people to multiple cultural perspectives, with superdiversity at school or sub-school level providing the basis for convivial encounter across difference. Similarly, by synthesising a diverse range of viewpoints from interview and focus group data, the thesis expands the ‘fusion of horizons’ (Gadamer, 1975) presented by academic studies of migration, potentially leading to new forms of understanding. Sime and Fox (2015:377) note that migration research is ‘only beginning to give a voice to migrant children’, while Hossain et al. (2007) emphasise that the experiences of young migrants and refugees have historically been underrepresented in migration studies. Asaf (2017) also highlights a lack of female perspectives in the refugee literature. Although the voices of young women were captured in the focus group data from Seaview school, interview data with this demographic is lacking in this research – Bradbrook was an all-boys school, and it was not possible to conduct student interviews at Seaview due to the pandemic. Future studies of migration could aim to capture the perspectives of female migrant and refugee youth, building on recent research with unaccompanied young women in England by Larkin (2019) and Wharton (2020).

8.3.2. Secondary education

Comparative research provided the opportunity to compare and contrast the relational effects of support and dialogue. The findings show that by addressing young people’s language, cultural, and pastoral needs, the schools helped to equip them with the tools for encounter. However, they also reveal how support and recognition could have ‘othering’ effects. Studies of education and psychosocial support have previously indicated how cultural recognition and mental health support can reify the identities of migrant and refugee youth (Watters, 2008; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017). This research breaks new ground by demonstrating how, at Seaview School, the provision of EAL support without wider opportunities for ‘encounter’ had a segregating effect on peer relationships. On the other hand, the findings from Bradbrook School highlight the impact of too little EAL support on newcomers’ ability to encounter their peers. This expands the current literature on the impact of too little EAL support on newcomers’ educational attainment to show how

this lack of support also influences their peer relationships. Furthermore, the findings show how the invisibility of newcomers in 'Progress 8' reporting mechanisms actively detracted from their educational inclusion (McIntyre and Hall, 2018), with implications for their long-term trajectories. This signals the need for further research on the lived impact of national policies on the educational inclusion of newcomers.

Bradbrook and Seaview teachers often drew on their own memories to promote dialogue with young people. They also used humour to build relational connections with their students. Although research in multi-ethnic schools has previously explored how young people in schools use their ethnic and racial differences as sources of convivial humour (Winkler Reid, 2015), this is the first research to have identified how teachers critically engage with this type of humour. The influence of a culture of 'political correctness' on teachers' attitudes towards ethnic and racial humour may be a particularly fruitful area for further investigation (Nilsen, 1994; Taylor et al., 2021). By demonstrating the effects of national policies on teachers' ability to engage in dialogue, the study makes a significant contribution to research on the interplay between education policies and teaching practices in multicultural secondary schools. The study also reveals the highly affective dimensions of the teaching role in the context of multicultural education and precarity. In light of the large numbers of teachers leaving the profession in the UK (Tapper, 2018; Teacher Workload Advisory Group, 2018), the emotional landscape of teaching practice presents an important area for further research.

8.3.3. Psychosocial support

The focus of the RWS programmes on 'recognising' experiences of migration and displacement had strongly differential effects that were contingent on the local context. In superdiverse East London, where migration was commonplace, Bradbrook students used derisive humour to reject the labels of 'migrant' and 'refugee' imposed on them by the RWS project. By showing how young people responded to these labels, the research highlights the distance between policy categories and young people's lived experiences. Mocking 'laughing at' among Bradbrook students in relation to the use of the term 'therapy' points to the stigmatising effects of project discourses which invoke notions of vulnerability. This has implications for the dominant use of the term 'intervention' in discourses of education and

psychosocial support; future research could usefully consider the impact of interventionist language on how young people see themselves and each other in the context of migration and displacement.

In the less ethnically diverse context of Seaview School, young migrants and refugees responded more positively to the attempts of the RWS project to increase recognition of their experiences of migration and displacement. However, the findings also suggest that exclusive recognition of the experiences of migrants and refugees had alienating effects on White British young people, indicating the importance of accompanying 'recognition' with overarching narratives of 'inclusion'. This research helps to fill a significant gap in knowledge on young people's perceptions of psychosocial support projects in western contexts. Future ethnographic studies could continue to highlight young people's agency in contexts of migration and displacement by examining what they 'do' (Brubaker, 2002:169) with the categories that are imposed on them by policies and programmes. Such studies could provide a further challenge to 'adultist discourses' which represent migrant children (and their peers) as 'passive, needy and different' (White et al., 2011:1159).

The research also exposes the relational effects of the RWS project's aim to encourage 'integration'. At Bradbrook School, the use of an interethnic paradigm was at odds with the complex and subtle ways in which young people already negotiated their multiple differences on an everyday basis. The findings reveal how young people contested interethnic framings of their peer relationships through tongue-in-cheek responses to the RWS questionnaires, and through emphasis on their already existing forms of 'community' in response to the content of the Classroom Drama workshop. Meanwhile young people from both 'migrant' and 'host' backgrounds at Seaview School mainly expressed positive views on the PIER programme's effects on their interethnic peer relationships. The focus group setting may, however, have influenced what they felt comfortable to say in front of their peers; Adler et al. (2019) note that social pressure in adolescent focus groups can bias results. Young people may have been more candid in one-to-one interviews than in focus groups.

8.4. Implications for practice

The previous section explored the implications of the findings for research in relation to peer relationships, secondary education, and psychosocial support. This section turns to the practical application of the research findings in the areas of political policies at the national and international levels, public health approaches, and the policies and practices of secondary education and psychosocial support.

8.4.1. Political policies

The research findings reveal the ontological importance of 'I-It' social identities, which 'make it possible for groups, large and small, to do things together' (Appiah, 2018:xvi). However, they also show how meaningful social contact with the other through the I-Thou relation unsettles and destabilises group boundaries and thus prevents identities from becoming static and reified. As Bhabha (1994:2) contends, 'It is in the emergence of the interstices – the overlap and displacement of domains of difference – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of *nationness*, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated'. Similarly, Wilson (2017:606) proposes that moments of 'being-together, co-presence, dialogue, and intermingling' can, under the right conditions, 'play a significant role in the development of democratic values'. These arguments highlight the importance of dialogical political discourses that can foster broadly encompassing and inclusive understandings of society and the nation. Amin (2002:974) points to the need for a political structure of multicultural society which can 'strike a balance between cultural autonomy and social solidarity'. Parekh's (2000) national framework of multiculturalism, for instance, has its basis in 'political' community and resonates with arguments for constitutional patriotism and civic nationalism (Kymlicka, 1995; Abraham, 2008; Lammy, 2020).

Ignatieff (1998:7) suggests that replacing ethnonational approaches with 'civic' nationalism requires national institutions to encourage the formation of 'civic identities strong enough to counteract their ethnic allegiances'. Ignatieff (ibid.:27) adds that 'as purveyor of the nation's identity', the media has a key role to play. In the UK, the media currently perpetuates understandings of 'Britishness' along ethnoreligious lines. At Bradbrook and

Seaview, this media narrative resulted in stereotypes of ‘migrants’, ‘refugees’, and ‘asylum seekers’ among young people, and likely influenced the Islamophobia experienced by some young Muslims in the research. The findings from both schools indicate the need for ethical media reporting which recognises the increasing complexity and diversity of the UK’s population (Amin, 2002). The effects of polarised media reporting on public attitudes could be offset through an active local politics of ‘open and critical debate’ (ibid.:973). This could involve discussions around what ‘Britishness’ means to different people (ETHNOS, 2006; Rattansi, 2012), and engaging the public in debate about their views and concerns in relation to immigration (Rutter and Carter, 2018). The impact of divisions beyond ethnicity and religion in the peer relationships of Bradbrook and Seaview students also calls for political approaches which are alive to the multidimensional ways in which citizens relate to each other, and which consequently address social issues of real relevance in their efforts to promote ‘integration’ (GLA, 2018; Ndofo-Tah et al., 2019). In particular, the prevailing influence of precarity on the social lives of Bradbrook and Seaview students points to the critical need to address this insecurity at political and economic levels.

The findings also have implications for how we should view the role of nations in international politics. They show how conviviality that was limited to the ‘in-group’ could have divisive and sometimes harmful effects on the ‘out-group’. Accordingly, national policies which only focus inward may have damaging consequences at the global level. In recognition of the potentially negative impact of an I-Thou relationship that is exclusive in practice, DeLue (2006) suggests the need to supplement Buber’s concept of direct immediacy with an overarching ethos of mutual respect. In political terms, this implies the need to reconcile tensions between local affiliations and global solidarities (Habermas, 1998; Appiah, 2006). In relation to international asylum, Porter (2006) points to the ethical imperative of a ‘politics of compassion’ – there are notable implications here for the UK’s currently ‘hostile’ environment towards newcomers. Appiah (2018:219) also underscores the critical importance of a cosmopolitan ethics in the context of climate change: ‘We live with 7 billion fellow humans on a small, warming planet. The cosmopolitan impulse that draws on our common humanity is no longer a luxury; it has become a necessity’. As the findings highlight at the micro level, membership of a ‘world community’ does not preclude

the significance of local identities but rather affirms ‘the sheer fact of being human; this is one’s “cosmopolitan existence”’ (Arendt, 1992:75).

8.4.2. Public health approaches

Socioeconomic inequalities strongly impacted opportunities for encounter between young migrants and their peers at Bradbrook and Seaview. This points to the important need for an urban politics which ‘addresses inequalities (real and perceived) as well as diversity’ (Valentine, 2008:334). Sime and Fox (2015) note that the influence of family migration on children’s relationships has received relatively little attention in migration studies. This research fills a gap in the literature by showing how high levels of mobility, linked to immigration status and poverty, influenced young people’s willingness to make themselves vulnerable through encounter. This signals the need for immigration reform, both in relation to British asylum policies of deportation, detention, and dispersal (Schuster, 2005), and to the externalisation of British border controls through selective visa requirements (FitzGerald, 2020). It also points to the importance of addressing issues of temporary homelessness.

In the presence of multiple I-It inequalities, DeLue (2006:130) emphasises the importance of community spaces, where ‘individuals learn to communicate across difference, and to create the prospects of accommodation among diverse groups’. Others have highlighted the transformative potential of ‘micro-publics’ (Amin, 2002) and ‘micro-spaces of conviviality’ (Wessendorf, 2016). The findings highlight how a lack of these spaces in the East London setting led some Bradbrook students to find belonging in gangs and forced others to stay at home to avoid neighbourhood violence. Increased funding for youth services is highly necessary in this context. Grimshaw and Ford (2018) also foreground the role of public health programmes in violence prevention, which involve preventive approaches including early years interventions, inclusive education, adolescent and family services, and community work. They point to the ‘promising impacts’ of specific programmes, including school-based interventions and schemes for ‘at risk’ youth (ibid.:15). The influence on gang involvement of poverty, traumatic experiences, and exposure to neighbourhood violence indicates the need for trauma-informed interventions which can account for the effects of poverty and ongoing exposure to violence (Quinn et al., 2017).

The findings show that the use of technology had a complex effect on young people's peer relationships. Its potential role in shaping misogynistic attitudes among young men via online pornography draws attention to the need for increased regulation of online spaces (Martellozzo et al., 2020). Some have argued that online technology could also be used to promote healthy peer relationships. For example, Fernández-Planells et al. (2021:2117) point to the potential effectiveness of social media in empowering 'the creative and agency capacities of members of youth street groups' and in constructing alternative spaces of belonging. Meanwhile the significant influence of family attitudes and practices on peer relationships at Bradbrook and Seaview highlights the need for public health interventions at the family level. Young people's roles as carers and 'language brokers' for family members, for example, had consequences for their peer relationships. Public health interventions for young carers could include recognition of their roles as carers and encourage inclusion in their parents' treatment plans (Dharampal and Ani, 2020). The potentially negative outcomes of language brokering for young people could be mitigated through increased English language support for newcomer parents in local community spaces (Ager and Strang, 2008; Tip et al., 2017; GLA, 2018; Rutter and Carter, 2018).

8.4.3. Secondary education

Schools are faced with the paradox of providing young people with appropriate levels of 'support' and 'challenge' (Barrett, 2010). The findings from Bradbrook School expose how too little EAL support for newcomers negatively affects their integration. The provision of pastoral support at the cost of EAL support at Bradbrook indicates the need for increased funding so that schools are not forced to make trade-offs between equally necessary forms of support in their spending decisions. Bradbrook teachers described the difficulties created by a lack of information about newcomers' educational backgrounds, confirming research which finds that teachers require more support in order to identify and diagnose SEN in newcomers (Gladwell and Chetwynd, 2018). On the other hand, the findings from Seaview School confirm the benefits of EAL support for young people's self-confidence (Candappa, 2000; Taylor and Sidhu, 2012; Bartlett et al., 2017; McMullen et al., 2020). However, they also demonstrate how EAL support can have segregating effects when it is not complemented by wider opportunities for encounter with non-EAL peers. Practically

speaking, such opportunities could include more integrated forms of EAL support in mainstream classes or involving non-EAL students in EAL sessions in some way. The findings from Seaview also suggest the need to support British newcomers who, although benefitting from speaking the English language, may struggle to adapt in other areas.

Bradbrook and Seaview schools both placed a strong focus on promoting cultural recognition. These approaches sometimes had reifying effects, indicating that schools should employ processual understandings of 'culture' (Bartlett et al., 2017). The thesis underscores the (unfulfilled) potential of the curriculum to provide an embedded form of recognition which can expose young people to diverse worldviews. There is an urgent need to expand the current national curriculum so that it is more representative of the cultural heterogeneity of the UK's population (Coles, 2013; Shah, 2013; Joseph-Salisbury, 2020). Some migrant families at Bradbrook were unaware or suspicious of the pastoral support provided by the school; Stewart et al. (2017) contend that social support for migrant families must be culturally sensitive and address communication, language and gender barriers. The key pastoral role of schools points to the continued importance of government funding through the Pupil Premium (Gorard et al., 2021). The detrimental effects of a lack of recognition for newcomers in national data reporting mechanisms also underscores the imperative need for reform to the 'Progress 8' system. A dedicated school counsellor and/or counselling training might help teachers to better manage young people's social and emotional problems. Trauma support may also be necessary for some young people, including those from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds.

The research demonstrated that an environment of trust and safety was crucial for 'dialogue' between teachers and students. Teachers constructed this environment through humour and also drew on their own experiences to challenge stereotypes. However, the findings expose the limiting effects of the neoliberal paradigm of education on teachers' capacity to promote dialogue. This points to the vital need to challenge the increasingly corporatist and managerial orientation of the national education system and to 'reclaim a language of and for education' (Biesta, 2004:54). The adverse effects of large class sizes on classroom safety indicate the importance of legislation that would limit class sizes, particularly in contexts of ethnic diversity and economic deprivation (Summers and Wolfe,

1977; Krueger, 1999). The research findings also raise questions around the ethics of ‘zero tolerance’ policies in relation to youth violence, suggesting that a more nuanced and case-by-case approach may be necessary (also see Cassidy, 2005).

The findings highlight the need for more curricular resources for dialogue in relation to religious extremism, economic inequality, and issues of race and ethnicity. The presence of misogynistic attitudes among young men at Bradbrook also indicates the need for dialogue on issues of sex and gender; Ofsted’s (2021) recent review of sexual harassment in schools recommends that school leaders include sexual harassment and violence in the RSHE curriculum. In spite of the impact of intercultural skills on young people’s ‘progress’ at school, the findings show that the difficulty of measuring these skills leads to their low prioritisation in the national curriculum. New methods of evaluating intercultural skills, which could include mixed methods approaches, should be explored. However, the root of many instances of youth conflict in structural inequalities, including poverty, racism, and the uncertainties created by the asylum system, also indicates the critical importance of parallel interventions at the political level.

8.4.4. Psychosocial support

The focus of the Classroom Drama workshop on experiences of migration had reifying effects on the complex identities of Bradbrook students. Amin (2002:969) argues that ‘any intervention needs to work through, and is only meaningful in, a situated social dynamic’. An ‘anthropology of everyday interaction in a given place’ (ibid.) may usefully inform decisions as to the appropriateness of specific projects in particular locations. As McGregor (2006:35) suggests, ‘to formulate and to implement an effective policy requires a good appreciation of the local realities that confront the human beings who are “the objects” of that policy’. Meanwhile the findings in relation to the PIER intervention show that recognition of migration experiences without an overarching emphasis on social cohesion can cement rather than reduce relational divides. Stokke and Lybæk (2018) point to the value of ‘critical multiculturalism’, which recognises the need to focus on certain inequalities and the positionality of perspectives, but does so with the aim of enhancing broader social cohesion.

At Bradbrook, young people's rejection of the 'migrant' label in the RWS evaluation indicates the need to carefully consider the terms that are used in psychosocial support projects. Haile et al. (2020:28) note that while labelling and categorisation have political weight and may be useful in their own right, labels also 'obscure the nuances and complexities of people moving between categories'. In consequence they recommend that individuals 'be able to decide when and how they want to be recognized under the refugee label, or decide not to be recognized under this label at all' (ibid.). Young people's rejection of the labels of 'therapy' and 'wellbeing' at Bradbrook also flags the stigmatising nature of these terms and suggests that psychosocial support programmes must be strongly embedded into school practices rather than marking young people out as 'vulnerable' or 'different'. At both schools, moments of I-Thou encounter across multiple forms of difference ultimately point to the importance of 'person-centred' approaches that see 'the person first, regardless of their current immigration status' (Williams, 2020:255).

At Seaview School, the PIER programme directly addressed stereotypes in relation to migration and displacement; the political nature of the discussions which emerged confirms the need for politically-informed approaches in psychosocial support (Summerfield, 1999; Watters, 2010). At Bradbrook, the interethnic paradigm of the Classroom Drama workshop failed to respond to the social and political issues of relevance to young people. This indicates the importance of ensuring that interventions are based on an understanding of the needs of migrant and refugee children in the context of the broader family, school, and community environment (Fazel and Betancourt, 2018). Kia-Keating and Ellis (2007) suggest that in developing school-based refugee mental health services, it may first be useful to understand how refugees experience belonging and connection in schools. Even after these contextual understandings have been gathered, it is vital to recognise that the 'unknowability' of encounter (Wilson, 2017:612) is part of its (ineffable) power. Rather than succumb to the temptation to institutionalise relationships through policy demands for knowability, interventions must stay open to the surprise of the ongoing, complex, and political nuances of young people's peer relationships.

The findings highlight the institutional factors influencing an environment of safety and trust during the Classroom Drama and PIER sessions, including class sizes, SEN, and the

involvement of teachers. As with secondary education, smaller class sizes are likely to be more conducive to a sense of safety and trust. In guidance on social and emotional learning programmes, Boyd-Macmillan and Marinis (2020:42) point to the potential need for various adjustments to programme materials, including for age, gender, disability, and SEN. At both schools, teachers' 'buy-in' to the interventions was strongly influenced by the neoliberal education model, which shaped a preoccupation with progress and outcomes. The findings from Seaview indicate that assurances from senior leadership would help to alleviate teachers' concerns about the impact of interventions on students' academic progress. It has been suggested that school-based interventions are most effective when led by teachers (Diekstra, 2008; Feinstein et al., 2009). Yet Bradley et al. (2018:259) emphasise that school-based interventions also require 'time, planning, and cognitive bandwidth that many overworked teachers and administrators simply cannot afford'. The research at hand suggests that given the pressures that teachers are under, it may be unrealistic and unfair to expect them to implement school-based interventions within the current paradigm of western education.

Finally, the degree to which psychosocial support interventions can on their own effect lasting change must be considered. Amin (2002:960) suggests that although programmes can play an important role in encouraging intercultural encounter, there is also a crucial need to address the structural inequalities 'that influence the ability of people to interact fruitfully as equals'. Similarly, Osher et al. (2016:666) contend that while social and emotional learning might help some individuals to better navigate the barriers created by structural inequality, 'it does not eliminate' those barriers. This indicates the need for political advocacy for social justice (Watters and Ingleby, 2004; Watters, 2008; Silove, 2013). The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) uses a pyramid model to depict the implementation of psychosocial support at consecutive levels of intervention (IASC, 2017). It demonstrates the primary importance of 'basic services and security' by placing them at the base of the pyramid. While the IASC pyramid is usually used in emergency or humanitarian settings, this model arguably has strong applicability in high-income countries which are characterised by significant inequality, such as the UK. The impact of socioeconomic status on the peer relationships of Bradbrook and Seaview students points to the unequivocal

need to make policymakers aware of the importance of safety and security for young people in the context of migration and displacement (Silove, 2013; Ager and Strang, 2008).

8.5. Conclusion

This chapter examined the implications of the research findings for theory, research, and practice. It reflected on the importance of theoretical approaches that are open to surprise and suggested that these approaches can engender new ways of seeing and understanding the world. The use of Buber's model in this thesis challenges prevailing orthodoxies in migration studies and rejects a binary politics of cosmopolitanism versus particularism while capturing the complexity and multidimensionality of young people's peer relationships. The research findings foreground the agency of young migrants and their peers in negotiating multiple social boundaries, which can be briefly but radically disrupted by moments of encounter. Secondary education and psychosocial support can enhance young people's capacity to engage in the vulnerability of encounter by providing different forms of support and recognition. This needs to be carefully managed to avoid entrenching differences. In the context of growing social fragmentation, the practice of 'dialogue' in secondary education and psychosocial support is increasingly important in order to help students challenge biases and stereotypes. Dialogue is limited, however, by the growing instrumentalism of the current education system and the tendency of psychosocial support programmes to institutionalise young people's peer relationships. Structural changes will be needed if Buber's ideal of dialogue is to flourish.

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Appendices

Information sheets and consent forms



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET [students and school staff]

STUDY TITLE

Exploring peer relationships in the context of migration and displacement

INVITATION PARAGRAPH

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is part of a larger EU-funded project on school-based interventions for adolescent wellbeing in the context of migration and displacement. This research is being conducted by Emma Soye, a PhD student at the University of Sussex. It aims to examine influences on the peer relationships of adolescents from diverse backgrounds in UK schools. This will involve spending time in the local school and wider community and conducting informal interviews with students, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders. The study will run for around six months.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

As a member of the local school or wider community, you are invited to speak to Emma about your experiences of being part of this community. This would include talking about your family background, where you have lived before, the relationships that are important to you here in this community or beyond, and things you like to do in your free time.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you are a student, choosing to take part or not to take part in the study will have no impact on your marks, assessments or future studies. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I TAKE PART?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will have an informal interview with Emma of around 30 minutes. Emma will audio-record the interview with your permission. The interview will take place in a quiet space. An interpreter may be present for the interview where it is considered necessary.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

The possible benefits of taking part include having the opportunity to share insights around your background and experiences. It is hoped that this research will help to further our understanding of influences on adolescent peer relationships and what we can do to ensure that these are healthy and fruitful.

WILL MY INFORMATION IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All information collected about you ('personal data') will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material through the use of codes or pseudonyms.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO TAKE PART?

If you want to take part in this study, please read and then sign the attached consent form.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY?

The results of the research may be used in Emma's PhD thesis for a doctorate in Social Work. The school will receive a copy of the thesis. It may also be used in any articles Emma publishes on this research. If you would like to obtain a copy of the thesis or any published articles, please contact Emma (e.soye@sussex.ac.uk). All personal data will be destroyed upon completion of Emma's degree.

WHO IS ORGANISING AND FUNDING THE RESEARCH?

Emma is conducting the research as a student at University of Sussex and the School of Education and Social Work. The research is funded by Horizon 2020 (Grant agreement ID: 754849).

WHO HAS APPROVED THIS STUDY?

The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC). The ethical review application number of the study is ER/ES457/3.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like any further information on the study, please contact Professor Charles Watters at the University of Sussex (c.watters@sussex.ac.uk). If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact Professor Watters in the first instance.

INSURANCE

The University of Sussex has insurance in place to cover its legal liabilities in respect of this study.

THANK YOU

Many thanks for taking time to read this information sheet.

DATE

18 January 2019



PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

STUDY TITLE

Exploring peer relationships in the context of migration and displacement

INVITATION PARAGRAPH

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not you would like your child to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is part of a larger EU-funded project on school-based interventions for adolescent wellbeing in the context of migration and displacement. This research is being conducted by Emma Soye, a PhD student at the University of Sussex. It aims to examine influences on the peer relationships of adolescents from diverse backgrounds in UK schools. This will involve spending time in the local school and wider community and conducting informal interviews with students, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders. The study will run for around six months.

WHY HAS MY CHILD BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

Your child has been invited to speak to Emma about their experiences of being part of this community. This would include talking about their family background, where they have lived before, the relationships that are important to them here in this community or beyond, and things they like to do in their free time.

DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO TAKE PART?

It is up to you to decide whether or not you would like your child to take part. Taking part or not in this study will have no impact on your child's marks, assessments or future studies. If you do decide that you would like your child to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. You are still free to withdraw your consent at any time and without giving a reason. Your child will also be asked to decide whether or not they would like to take part in this study.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO MY CHILD IF THEY TAKE PART?

If you decide that you would like your child to take part in this study, and if they also decide to take part in the study, they will have an informal interview with Emma of around 20-30 minutes. Emma will audio-record the interview with your and your child's permission. The interview will take place in a quiet space. An interpreter may be present for the interview where it is considered necessary.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

The possible benefits of taking part for your child include having the opportunity to share insights around their background and experiences. It is hoped that this research will help to further our understanding of influences on adolescent peer relationships and what we can do to ensure that these are healthy and fruitful.

WILL MY CHILD'S INFORMATION IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All information collected about your child ('personal data') will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material through the use of codes or pseudonyms.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT MY CHILD TO TAKE PART?

If you want your child to take part in this study, please read and sign the attached consent form. Please then return the signed consent form to your child's teacher in the envelope provided, making sure it is sealed. Please keep this information sheet for your records.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY?

The results of the research may be used in Emma's PhD thesis for a doctorate in Social Work. The school will receive a copy of the thesis. It may also be used in any articles Emma publishes on this research. If you would like to obtain a copy of the thesis or any published articles, please contact Emma (e.soye@sussex.ac.uk). All personal data will be destroyed upon completion of Emma's degree.

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INSURANCE

The University of Sussex has insurance in place to cover its legal liabilities in respect of this study.

THANK YOU

Many thanks for taking time to read this information sheet.

DATE

18 January 2019



PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET [local community workers]

STUDY TITLE

Exploring peer relationships in the context of migration and displacement

INVITATION PARAGRAPH

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

This study is part of a larger EU-funded project on school-based interventions for adolescent wellbeing in the context of migration and displacement. This research is being conducted by Emma Soye, a PhD student at the University of Sussex. It aims to examine influences on the peer relationships of adolescents from diverse backgrounds in UK schools. This will involve spending time in the local school and wider community and conducting informal interviews with students, teachers, parents, and other community stakeholders. The study will run for around six months.

WHY HAVE I BEEN INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are invited to speak to Emma about your experiences of working in the local community. This would involve discussing your perspectives on challenges and opportunities to social integration and cohesion in this area.

DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART?

It is completely up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time and without giving a reason.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME IF I TAKE PART?

If you decide to take part in this study, you will have an informal interview with Emma of around 20-30 minutes. Emma will audio-record the interview with your permission. The interview will take place in a quiet space.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?

The possible benefits of taking part include having the opportunity to share insights around your work in the community. It is hoped that this research will help to further our understanding of influences on adolescent peer relationships and what we can do to ensure that these are healthy and fruitful.

WILL MY INFORMATION IN THIS STUDY BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL?

All information collected about you ('personal data') will be kept strictly confidential (subject to legal limitations). Confidentiality, privacy and anonymity will be ensured in the collection, storage and publication of research material through the use of codes or pseudonyms.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I WANT TO TAKE PART?

If you want to take part in this study, please read and then sign the attached consent form.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY?

The results of the research may be used in Emma's PhD thesis for a doctorate in Social Work. The school will receive a copy of the thesis. It may also be used in any articles Emma publishes on this research. If you would like to obtain a copy of the thesis or any published articles, please contact Emma (e.soye@sussex.ac.uk). All personal data will be destroyed upon completion of Emma's degree.

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WHO HAS APPROVED THIS STUDY?

The research has been approved by the Social Sciences & Arts Cross-Schools Research Ethics Committee (C-REC). The ethical review application number of the study is ER/ES457/3.

CONTACT FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

If you would like any further information on the study, please contact Professor Charles Watters at the University of Sussex (c.watters@sussex.ac.uk). If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, please contact Professor Watters in the first instance.

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THANK YOU

Many thanks for taking time to read this information sheet.

DATE

18 January 2019



CONSENT FORM FOR PROJECT PARTICIPANTS DOING INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Title of Project: Exploring peer relationships in the context of migration and displacement

Name of Researcher and School: Emma Soye (School of Education & Social Work)

C-REC Ref no: ER/ES457/3

Please tick box

YES NO

I consent to being interviewed by the researcher, with the support of an interpreter where necessary.

☐ ☐

I agree to allowing the interview to be audio-recorded.

☐ ☐

I agree to making myself available for a further interview should it be required.

☐ ☐

I consent to the use of anonymised quotes in publications from the research.

☐ ☐

I understand that in exceptional circumstances e.g. where the health, welfare and safety of myself or others is compromised by information I might disclose, the researcher will be legally required to pass this information onto an appropriate individual or agency.

☐ ☐

I understand that any information I provide is confidential, and that no information that I disclose will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

☐ ☐

I have read the information sheet, had the opportunity to ask questions and I understand the principles, procedures and possible risks involved.

☐ ☐

I consent to the processing of my personal information and data for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016.

☐ ☐

I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way nor do I have to give reasons for this.

☐ ☐

I agree to take part in the above University of Sussex research project.

☐ ☐

Name:

Signature

Date:



CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS OF PROJECT PARTICIPANTS DOING INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEWS

Title of Project: Exploring peer relationships in the context of migration and displacement

Name of Researcher and School: Emma Soye (School of Education & Social Work)

C-REC Ref no: ER/ES457/3

Please tick box
YES NO

I consent to my child being interviewed by the researcher, with the support of an interpreter where necessary.

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I agree to allowing the interview to be audio-recorded.

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I agree to my child having a further interview with the researcher should it be required.

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I consent to the use of anonymised quotes in publications from the research.

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I understand that in exceptional circumstances e.g. where the health, welfare and safety of my child or others is compromised by information my child might disclose, the researcher will be legally required to pass this information onto an appropriate individual or agency.

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I understand that any information my child provides is confidential, and that no information that my child discloses will lead to the identification of any individual in the reports on the project, either by the researcher or by any other party.

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I have read the information sheet, had the opportunity to ask questions and I understand the principles, procedures and possible risks involved.

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I consent to the processing of my child's personal information and data for the purposes of this research study. I understand that such information will be treated as strictly confidential and handled in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2016.

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I understand that I can choose for my child not to participate in part or all of the project, and that I can withdraw my child at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way, nor do I have to give reasons for this.

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I agree for my child to take part in the above University of Sussex research project.

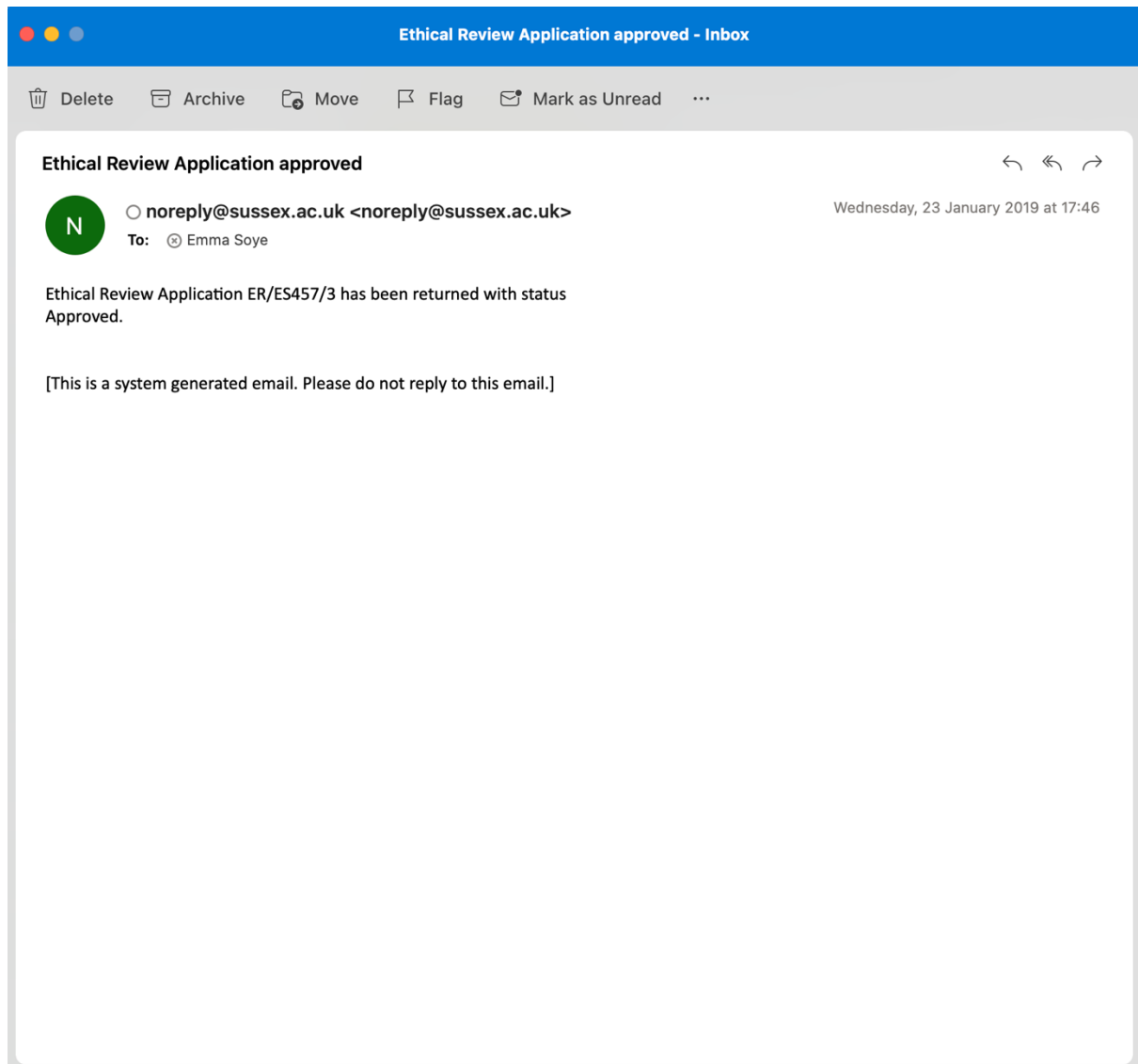
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Name: _____

Signature _____

Date: _____

Ethics approval



Semi-structured interview guides

Students

This guide is designed to elicit insights into the social experiences of students attending local schools. Language may be simplified to aid communication.

- Have you always lived here? If so, what was it like growing up here? If not, can you tell me a bit about where you lived before? Do you keep in touch with family and friends there? What was it like moving to the UK? Can you describe your experiences of starting at a new school(s) in this country?
- How do you feel about where you come from? What do you think about the UK?
- What do you think life is like for young people growing up in this area?
- Who are your closest friends at school? What are your common interests? What do you like to do together? Do you see each other outside school? If so, what do you do?
- Are you interested in learning more about where other students in the school come from? What particularly interests you?
- Do you think other students in the school are interested in knowing more about where you come from and what you like to do? Why do you think this?
- Where do you spend the most time when you're not with your family or caregivers? Who do you spend the most time with in these settings?
- Are you part of any groups or clubs in your free time? If so, what do you do there?
- What are your hopes for the future?

Parents

This guide is designed to elicit insights into the backgrounds and social experiences of parents of students attending local schools. Language may be simplified to aid communication.

- Have you always lived here? If so, what was it like growing up here? If not, can you tell me a bit about where you lived before? Do you keep in touch with family and friends there? What was it like moving to the UK?
- How do you feel about where you come from? What do you think about the UK? Is it a context where you feel comfortable to be yourself and live out your values?
- What do you think life is like for people living in this area?
- What opportunities are there in this area to spend time and engage with people from different backgrounds and cultures?
- Are you part of any regular community activities or events? Can you tell me more about these?
- Are you interested in learning more about where other people in this area come from? Do you feel that people in this area are interested in your culture? Why?
- Where do you spend the most time when you're not with your family? Who do you spend the most time with in these settings?
- What are your hopes for the future?
- What are your hopes for your child's future?

School staff

This guide is designed to elicit insights into the cultural backgrounds and social experiences of teachers and other school staff, as well as to gain their perspectives on social challenges and opportunities for young people in the school and community.

- Have you always lived in the UK? If so, what was it like growing up here? If not, can you tell me a bit about where you lived before? What was it like moving to the UK?
- Do you feel the UK is a context where you feel comfortable to be yourself and live out your values?
- What do you think life is like for people living in this area?
- What opportunities are there for students and parents living in this area to spend time and engage with people from different backgrounds and cultures?
- Can you describe peer relationships between students? What brings students together and what divisions do you see between students? Do you see any unlikely friendships?
- What are the main causes of isolation or loneliness among students?
- What is it like teaching students from different backgrounds and cultures? What are the main challenges? What are the positives?
- What are your hopes for your students' futures?

NGO staff

This guide is designed with the aim of eliciting perspectives from local NGO staff on challenges to and opportunities for social cohesion in the local area. The questions are open-ended in order to encourage a full and open discussion.

- What is your role in the community and which groups do you work with?
- What do you see as the biggest challenges to social cohesion in this community? What problems have you experienced in your own work in this area?
- What do you see as the biggest opportunities for social cohesion in this community?
- What changes do you believe need to happen to promote social cohesion in a) schools; b) the local community?

Focus group guides

Introduction for the researcher

Below you find two tables. The first table forms the guide by which to structure the RefugeesWellSchool T1 focus groups with adolescents, parents and teachers. The table is structured as follows:

1. In the first column we defined two topics to be addressed in the focus groups.
2. The second column presents you with the main questions to explore both topics with each target group.
3. The third column of the table contains suggestions for underlying themes to flexibly address when you feel corresponding content presents itself during your focus group conversations. These are there to guide more in-depth exploration of participants' answers across underlying dimensions, such as cultural meaning making, lived experiences of belonging vs. isolation/discrimination, characteristics related to the broader institutional context (f.e. access to services, migration policy, religious affiliation). They are not specifically tied to certain questions, but rather of possible relevance throughout the focus group, depending on the content that comes up.

The second table contains topics (column 1), main questions (column 2) by which to shape the focus groups with adolescents, parents and teachers at T2.

Focus group guide T1

Topic	Questions	Themes for in-depth exploration
Adolescents		
Suggestion for an introduction: 'In the (upcoming) intervention, you and your class group will be working around themes of migration and inter-ethnic relationships (<i>alternative: themes of migration and daily life in an ethnically diverse school environment</i>). Through implementing this intervention, we would like to explore if we can set up practices within the school context that promote well-being in students in this school and that support positive peer relationships. Our intervention focuses on supporting well-being and positive relationships between school peers, we are very interested to learn from you how you experience the processes that we are addressing in the intervention: how you are experiencing living together in a multi-ethnic society, how (some of) you are thinking and feeling about your history of migration, and how you understand well-being in your current life.' We are interested in positive as well as challenging experiences you might (have) encounter(ed).		

<p>Topic 1 - Well-being and belonging at school</p>	<p>(SUGGESTED) OPENING ACTIVITY:</p> <p>To open the floor for our discussion, we would like to invite you to write a tweet that tells us something about going to school, about your experiences in school (tweet = short text, limited to 280 characters or let's say 20 words).</p> <p>➔ Have the adolescents share their tweets with each other and encourage them to talk about what surprises them, what they recognize etc.</p> <p>➔ Adolescents who find it difficult to write, can search for an image to express their thoughts.</p> <p>QUESTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can you tell us about your experiences of going to school? 2. How do you feel at school? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what makes you feel good/well/happy? - what makes you feel bad/unwell/sad? - what, if anything, do you find difficult about attending school? - does your background of coming here from another country affect the way you experience school? Does it play a role in the way you understand the role of school in your life and future? Does it play a role in the way you feel you feel at school? 3. How would you describe your relationship(s) with friends/peers? 4. How would you describe your relationship(s) with your teacher(s)? 5. How do you see the role of your parents in your schooling? 	<p>VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING/EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why do you think it is important to go to school? - how do your previous experiences with schooling (f.e. in your home country) compare to/contrast with going to school here, in [COUNTRY]? - thoughts about the role of school, above and beyond academic training/education (f.e. life skills...) - do you feel supported in school? - do you think it is important that your school participates in a project like this one/an intervention aimed at increasing well-being? <p>CULTURAL NOTIONS OF WELL-BEING, CULTURAL IDIOMS OF DISTRESS...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do you think feeling well is understood differently in the school, as compared to other contexts in which you live? <p>PERCEPTION OF FRIENDSHIPS AND THE WAY FRIENDS/PEERS SHAPE SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE/WELL-BEING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what does it mean to be a (good) friend? - how would peers support each other? - what do friends talk about when they are together? - what do you (not) talk about with your friends? - what prevents you from making (more/closer) friends? <p>THE WAY TEACHERS SHAPE SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE/WELL-BEING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what does it mean to be a (good) teacher? - do you feel that teachers understand your circumstances? - do you approach your teacher for support? - do you feel supported by your teachers? - could teacher be more supportive? <p>THEMES OF BELONGING AND PERCEIVED/EXPERIENCED OTHERNESS/DISCRIMINATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - is school a place where you feel you belong? Are there specific times when belonging is more difficult? Times when belonging is supported, or strengthened?
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	6. What do you think can be changed in the way things are at this school, to better accommodate your needs (in class, among peers, in relation to your teacher, with regard to how you feel or to how you learn...)?	
Topic 2 – Well-being and belonging in the broader social context	<p>QUESTIONS:</p> <p>7. What do you enjoy doing outside school?</p> <p>8. How do you generally feel outside school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at home? - with friends? <p>9. Are there things you struggle with outside school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do you try to overcome these struggles? <p>10. How do you see your future?</p>	<p>WHAT SHAPES WELL-BEING OUTSIDE SCHOOL/AT HOME/WITH PARENTS/WITHIN THEIR CULTURAL COMMUNITY/WITH PEERS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how does your situation influence your well-being? - do you approach others for support? If so, who do you approach? - are there people who are difficult to approach? - what do you find supporting? - Could people/society be more supportive? How? <p>THEMES OF PERCEIVED/EXPERIENCED OTHERNESS/DISCRIMINATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do you feel you belong? Are there specific times when belonging is more difficult? Times when belonging is supported, or strengthened?
Topic	Questions	Themes for in-depth exploration
Parents		
Topic 1 - Well-being and the role of the school	<p>QUESTIONS:</p> <p>1. How would you say your child is doing/feeling (in school)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what makes your child feel good/well/happy (activities, people, places, situations...)? - what makes your child sad/unwell/unhappy (activities, people, places, situations...)? <p>2. What role do you feel the school plays in your child's well-being?</p>	<p>CULTURAL NOTIONS OF WELL-BEING, CULTURAL IDIOMS OF DISTRESS...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - how do you understand well-being? <p>VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF SCHOOLING/EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - why do you think it is important to go to school? - how do your previous experiences with schooling (f.e. in your home country) compare to/contrast with your child going to school here, in [COUNTRY]? - thoughts about the role of school, above and beyond academic training/education (f.e. life skills...) <p>PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOLING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - parents assisting with homework - parents encouraging friendships

	3. In what ways, if at all, do you get involved in your child(ren)'s education? 4. How do you relate to teachers in the school? 5. Do you think it is important that the school participates in a project like this one/an intervention aimed at increasing well-being?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - experienced challenges for parental involvement <p>THE WAY TEACHERS SHAPE SCHOOLING EXPERIENCE/WELL-BEING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do you feel that the teachers have an understanding of your family's circumstances? - if and how they feel teachers support their child(ren)?
Topic 2 – Well-being and the role of the broader social context	<p>QUESTIONS:</p> 6. How do you feel your situation impacts your child's well-being? 7. What experiences have impacted the way you see the future of your child? 8. What are your hopes for the intervention?	<p>GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF FAMILY'S CIRCUMSTANCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feeling of 'othering' and sense of belonging - how having a particular status might influence their well-being or that of their child(ren) <p>EXPECTATIONS FOR THE FUTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - feelings of hope - doubts/fears - their sense of opportunity and limitations for their child(ren)'s future <p>HOPES FOR THE INTERVENTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hope related to your child's well-being? - hope related to history of migration/life in exile? - hope related to the relationship with the school?
Topic	Questions	Themes for in-depth exploration
Teachers		
Topic 1 - Well-being and the role of the school	<p>QUESTIONS</p> 1. How would you describe the well-being of the students in your class? 2. What makes students in your class feel good/well/happy? 3. What makes students in your class feel bad/unwell/sad? 4. How do you relate to your students at school?	<p>WELL-BEING IN THE CLASSROOM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what activities/practices make for a positive classroom environment? - what makes a good teacher? - how do you feel you are able to support the students in your class? - do you sometimes feel you lack the skills to support them? When is that? <p>VIEWS ON THE ROLE OF SCHOOL WRT WELL-BEING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - role of school above and beyond academic training - support and care potential

	5. Can you tell us about how you perceive the role of school in adolescents' well-being?	
Topic 2 – Well-being and the role of the broader social context	<p>QUESTIONS</p> <p>6. What expectations do you have for your student's futures?</p> <p>7. How do you feel their specific situation impacts their well-being?</p> <p>8. What are your hopes for this intervention?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - for the adolescents - for yourself as a teacher 	<p>VIEWS ABOUT THE FUTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - hopes - perceived limitations and challenges <p>TEACHERS' UNDERSTANDING OF STUDENTS SITUATION</p>

Focus group guide T2

Topic	Questions
Adolescents	
Topic 1 - Outcome of the intervention	<p>QUESTIONS:</p> <p>1. Positive and negative experiences with the intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - what did the intervention mean to you? - what did the intervention do for you? <p>2. Compared to before the intervention started: Has the way you feel/think/interact changed, and if so, how:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at home? - with your teacher? - with peers? (fellow refugee/migrant, indigenous) - with others (the broader cultural context)?
Topic 2 - The intervention process	<p>H ASSESSMENT</p> <p>1. Weaknesses of the intervention</p>

	2. Challenges to its implementation 3. Barriers or threats to the success of the intervention 4. Strengths of the intervention 5. Successes of the intervention/implementation 6. Facilitators or enablers to success
Topic	Questions
Parents	
Topic 1 - Outcome of the intervention	QUESTIONS: 1. In what way/to what extent did you feel involved in the intervention the past weeks/months? - did your son/daughter talk about the intervention at home? - what did it mean to you that she/he did/did not talk about it? 2. How did you feel this intervention has impacted your son/daughter? 3. What did this intervention do for you/mean to you as a parent? 4. This intervention aimed at supporting peer relationships and well-being in multi-ethnic schools. How do you, as a parent, feel about the school offering such an intervention? 5. Did your son's/daughter's participation in the intervention impact family relations in some way? - parent-child relationship - siblings - extended family 6. Did the intervention impact family-school relations? - your views on the role school plays in your child's well-being? - the way you relate to your son/daughter's teacher? - the extent to which you are involved in your daughter's/son's education?
Topic	Questions
Teachers	

Topic 1 - Outcome of the intervention	<p>QUESTIONS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What did the intervention mean to you? 2. What did the intervention do for you? 3. Compared to before the intervention started: has the way you feel/think in relation to the students or the way you interact with them changed?
Topic 2 – The intervention process	<p>H ASSESSMENT</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Weaknesses of the intervention 2. Challenges to its implementation 3. Barriers or threats to the success of the intervention 4. Strengths of the intervention 5. Successes of the intervention/implementation 6. Facilitators or enablers to success