

‘He's a cracking wee geezer from Pakistan’: Lay accounts of refugee integration failure and success in Scotland

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## Abstract

Previous research on the integration of asylum seekers and refugees has aimed to develop conceptual frameworks for understanding integration or to measure the extent to which people are integrated. However, this research tends to pay insufficient attention to the rhetorical functions of integration discourse. The current study addresses this gap through a discursive analysis of 'lay' accounts of asylum seeker and refugee integration in Glasgow, Scotland. The analysis highlights that accounts of integration 'failure' may support 'two-way' conceptions of integration while still blaming asylum seekers for any lack of integration. Furthermore, accounts of integration 'success' may reinforce assimilationist policies or otherwise function to reinforce the view that adult asylum seekers generally do not integrate. The analysis highlights the importance of attending to the rhetorical functions of integration discourse in order to understand how particular policies and practices are supported or criticised at the community level at which integration takes place.

final author version

## Introduction

Integration is a complex concept with a variety of different definitions, and yet is an important and well-used term in relation to policies and practices related to the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in host societies (Ager & Strang, 2008). Much of the research into the notion of integration has explored the views and experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, practitioners, and sometimes those of local members of the host society, in order to develop elaborated conceptual frameworks for understanding integration or measuring the extent of asylum seekers' and refugees' integration (e.g., Castles, Korac, Vasta & Vertovec, 2002; Ager & Strang, 2004b; Mulvey, 2013). Some other research explores the attitudes that members of the public hold towards refugees and asylum seekers (e.g., Lewis, 2005, 2006). However, this research has tended to neglect the extent to which people's notions of integration function rhetorically to justify, criticise or legitimise particular notions of integration in relation to asylum seekers and refugees. The present article addresses this gap through an analysis of local Scottish people's accounts of integration, demonstrating the ways in which they constitute integration in specific ways to legitimise or criticise certain types of behaviour, moving beyond simply characterising these views in terms of their positivity or hostility.

A range of research has looked at conceptions on integration as well as the extent to which asylum seekers and refugees are or are not integrated. For instance, Castles et al. (2002) undertook a detailed survey of research on the integration of immigrants and refugees on behalf of the Home Office in order to guide policy and practice. They suggested that discussions on integration involve asking questions regarding what happens when refugees come to the new society, the extent to which they can access work, education and employment, the relationships they build up with members of different ethnic groups, their level of participation in society and any barriers against participation (Castles et al., pp. 11-12). They highlighted that, while popular views suggest that integration is a one-way process, in the sense the newcomers must adapt to the host society, expert opinion suggests that integration is a two-way process, in that the host society must also adapt to meet the needs of migrants.

This work was taken further by Ager and Strang (2004a), who developed the 'indicators for integration', based on conceptual research around this notion as well as

empirical and stakeholder engagement work involving asylum seekers, refugees and relevant practitioners. The framework they developed involves ten 'domains' in four categories:

Means and markers: Employment; Housing; Education; Health.

Social connections: Social bonds; Social bridges; Social links.

Facilitators: Language & cultural knowledge; Safety & stability.

Foundation: Rights and citizenship.

Strang and Ager (2010) have subsequently described this as a 'mid-level theory' that has a conceptual structure and provides some guidance in relation to policy and practice. Mulvey (2013) applied the framework to a longitudinal study of asylum seeker and refugee integration in Scotland, highlighting its utility for the evaluation of policy and practice.

However, the various conceptions of integration suggest that they can be used to support a wide range of agendas. For instance, in relation to integration, Castles et al. (2002, p. 13) stated that it is important to ask: "integration into what"? Are we referring to integration into an existing ethnic minority, a local community, a social group, or British society? In this regard, Mulvey (2013) showed that refugees and asylum seekers tended to experience integration at a local level (i.e. neighbourhood or city), rather than integration with 'Britain' or 'British values' as argued by the UK Government; although this may well vary across different contexts. This illustrates that what actually constitutes the nature, processes and location of integration is still up for debate.

The way in which the concept of integration is defined has important implications, not simply in terms of research but also in relation to policy and the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. For instance, Mulvey (2010) has argued that the UK Government's emphasis on 'community cohesion' positions asylum seekers as being a potential threat to this cohesion as well as portraying integration as being their responsibility. Similarly, McPherson (2010) has criticised the way in which integration discourse tends to position migrants as being 'the problem' and instead highlighted the way that refugees may create their own accounts of integration that are ethical rather than instrumental. It is therefore important to explore notions of integration not simply to create a common definition that is suitable for measurement, but rather to understand how such conceptions function to justify and criticise certain integration practices.

Along these lines, Dixon and Durrheim (2000; Durrheim & Dixon, 2005) have drawn on developments in discourse analysis within psychology (e.g., Edwards & Potter, 1992) to argue that research on intercultural contact needs to pay more attention to the functions of

rhetoric. They suggested that it is important to investigate the way in which people discursively construct notions related to integration as this has implications for how such contact is experienced and understood, and that constructions constitute actions, in the sense that they can be used for the purpose of social functions, such as blaming, justifying and excluding. It is these rhetorical aspects of notions of integration that have tended to be neglected.

Recently, some research has begun to investigate the discursive aspects in relation to integration. For instance, Bowskill, Lyons and Coyle (2007) analysed debates in the media regarding faith schools and demonstrated that the notion of integration could be used flexibly so as to support a range of practices, either supportive or critical of faith schools. They also noted that integration tended to be treated as being inherently positive and yet can be used in ways synonymous with assimilation. For this reason, Farrugia (2009) argued that it is important to be critical of the uses of integration.

A discursive approach moves beyond simplistic measurements of public attitudes in terms of positivity or hostility, and instead shifts to a more critical reading of such views, including an exploration of the subtle ways in which accounts of integration may reinforce or undermine certain policies and practices, with implications for the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. As illustrated by Mulvey (2013), integration occurs at a community level, so examining these community level views is crucial. Historically, the UK public perception of asylum seekers has been characterised by ambivalence or outright hostility (Kushner, 2006). More recent research has confirmed that public attitudes in the UK towards asylum seekers and refugees are generally negative and often hostile (Lewis, 2005), while suggesting they may be more positive in Scotland compared with England, although these positive attitudes are only targeted towards those who are seen as 'genuine' and otherwise hostile views still exist, particularly in Glasgow (Lewis, 2006). Australian research by McKay, Thomas and Kneebone (2012) suggests that these views are linked to people's accounts of integration, as hostility towards asylum seekers and refugees is associated with the perception that they are unwilling to integrate into the host society.

Taking a discursive approach to public views of asylum seekers and refugees allows these to be treated not simply as a reflection of people's attitudes, but rather as accounts that justify or criticise certain types of behaviour. This provides a more sophisticated understanding of the issue and helps explain the apparent ambivalence in people's expressed views regarding asylum seekers and refugees. That is, expressing positive views towards

'genuine' refugees and those who are willing to integrate portrays the speaker as supportive of those in need yet still allows them to regulate those coming in to the country and police behaviour that is deemed as not aligned with the local culture.

For instance, Pearce and Stockdale (2009) analysed the views of 20 members of the general UK public and found they held a mixture of positive and negative representations of asylum seekers, which was often polarised – that is, they either felt asylum seekers were usually 'bogus' or that they usually were genuine. Negative portrayals, as found in other research (e.g., Lynn & Lea, 2003; Malloch & Stanley, 2005), associated asylum seekers with seeking a better economic situation, being lazy or criminal; positive constructions suggested they were resourceful and might make a positive contribution to the UK through their work or in terms of cultural diversity. Leudar, Hayes, Nekvapil and Baker (2008) undertook similar research, focusing on the rhetorical functions of expressed views on asylum seekers and refugees, also finding that locals' accounts may be hostile towards asylum seekers and portray them as 'bogus' or coming to the host society to claim resources, while positive views may emphasise their legitimacy. It is important to consider how these accounts may be action oriented within the interaction to justify certain responses to asylum seekers (e.g., tighter immigration controls or more generous support to asylum seekers) and manage the speaker's self-presentation. In this case, the negative and positive views work together to suggest that asylum seekers and refugees may have a legitimate place if they are genuinely fleeing persecution, work hard, obey the law, bring valued skills and contribute to the local cultural scene. Expressing views in these ways allows some speakers to express generally negative views while avoiding being labelled as racist (Goodman & Burke, 2010).

This study seeks to build on previous research on integration and public attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees through applying discourse analysis. Paying closer attention to the rhetorical and action oriented features of host society members' accounts of asylum seeker and refugee integration should help to understand how such views function as well as provide further insight into the way that integration is understood and experienced at the local level.

## **Method**

### *Context*

This paper draws on data from a wider study on asylum seekers and integration in Scotland which consisted of a total of 45 interviews with asylum seekers, refugees, people who work in organisations that support asylum seekers, and general members of the local population in Glasgow in 2010-2011. Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland and the local authority with the highest number of asylum seekers in the UK (Home Office, 2010). Asylum seekers have been accommodated in Glasgow since the introduction of Immigration and Asylum Act in 1999, which resulted in asylum applicants in the UK being ‘dispersed’ to a number of designated local authorities around the country. It is worth noting that asylum and immigration policy is determined by the Westminster Parliament at the UK level; however, other important policies relating to asylum seekers’ experiences in Scotland are devolved to the Scottish Parliament (e.g., health, education). By 2002 there were approximately 5000 asylum seekers accommodated in Glasgow under this system, although this fell to approximately 2400 in 2011, in line with UK trends (COSLA 2011). Although dispersal was officially introduced in order to ‘spread the burden’ of accommodating and supporting asylum seekers, who were previously concentrated in the South East of England, the tendency to house asylum seekers in deprived areas has exacerbated social exclusion and put them at increased risk of being victims of racism and violence (Griffiths, Sigona & Zetter, 2006; O’Nions, 2010; Squire, 2009). In Glasgow, asylum seekers were housed in void housing stock, often scheduled for demolition, in some of the most deprived areas of the city, and there were concerns that members of the local community may have viewed them as receiving ‘preferential treatment’ (Barclay, Bowes, Ferguson, Sim & Valenti, 2003). Hostility towards asylum seekers was most evident with regard to the murder of a Turkish asylum seeker in August 2001, which attracted a great deal of media attention (Coole, 2002). However, there were also a number of campaigns by local people in support of asylum seekers, including work done by the Glasgow Campaign to Welcome Refugees, the ‘Glasgow Girls’ (a group of schoolgirls who actively engaged with politicians and the media) and other grassroots campaigns against the detention and deportation of asylum seekers (Farrier, 2012).

### *Data*

The present study focuses on the interview data from 13 people who live in the local communities in which asylum seekers tend to be housed (see Authors, a, for a similar analysis in relation to those who work in organisations that support asylum seekers and

refugees). The interviewees were recruited through community organisations that work with general members of the public in addition to asylum seekers and refugees, as well as two organisations that provide more general services to members of the local community. This group was chosen because they have direct experience of integration in the sense that they are likely to have contact with asylum seekers and refugees and therefore their discourse should be closely related to such experience.

The participants were resident in four areas of the city that have housed asylum seekers (one regularly commuted to a fifth area). All interviewees were white Scottish (ten women and three men) and had been living in the local areas for between three and forty-three years (approximately 21 years on average); see appendix 1 for the demographic breakdown. The interviews were semi-structured and focused on the participant's contact with asylum seekers and refugees, their knowledge regarding asylum seekers' contact with other members of the local community, their views on the difference made by the presence of asylum seekers in the local area and general views towards asylum seekers. The interviews were digitally audio recorded and were between 10 and 70 minutes in length. Participants received £10 in cash for taking part.

Interviews were transcribed using an abbreviated form of Jeffersonian notation (Jefferson, 2004; see appendix 2 for key to transcription symbols). These were read through several times and all passages that related to integration (i.e., those that used the words 'integrate' or 'integration' or otherwise described situations that relate to these notions) were selected for close analysis. Fine-grained analysis was conducted using discourse analysis (Authors, b; Potter & Wetherell, 1987). This approach pays careful attention to the way that accounts actively construct reality and function to fulfil a range of social actions, such as blaming, justifying or criticising. Here the focus was on identifying patterns within the data in the ways in which participants constructed integration, and successes and failures of integration. Attention focused also on the rhetorical design of participants' descriptions and the actions that they accomplished, in particular how these constructions functioned to attribute responsibility for failure and to account for success. The extracts produced below exemplify the different forms of discursive constructions found across the 13 interviews.

## **Analysis**

The analysis section is divided into two sub-sections. The first explores the way participants gave accounts of asylum seekers and refugees who were portrayed as not integrating (integration 'failure') and the second sub-section involves an analysis of accounts of 'successful' integration. The analyses highlight how such accounts reinforce particular notions of integration.

*Accounts of integration 'failure'*

This section explores accounts where integration is deemed to be failing and asylum seekers or refugees are portrayed as being responsible for the alleged lack of integration. The first extract in this section is in response to a question about the level of contact that asylum seekers and refugees have with local people in the area. The interviewee discusses social events organised by local people and compares these with events organised by the local Integration Network (see Lewis, 2010, for further details on similar events).

*Extract 1: Local 9, female, living in Area B 16-30 years*

- 1 L9 °I don't think they inte↑grate° (0.6) the kids do  
 2 INT okay=  
 3 L9 =but I don't think the:e (0.5) adults integrate so much (1.5) em (1.9) because  
 4 just seem to stay in their own wee kinda (.) like groups  
 5 INT mm-hmm  
 6 (1.2)  
 7 L9 em (0.7) but that's what I find anyway, just ks- kinda (0.7) stick to their own  
 8 wee groups  
 9 (2.0)  
 10 INT [mm]  
 11 L9 [coz] we've had dances down here and I mean it's open to anybody and (.) ya  
 12 know (0.8) we've (held) fund-raising dances but they never come  
 13 INT oh [okay]  
 14 L9 [I don't] know if it's the fact that (1.0) em (2.0) sound- hh it sounds bad  
 15 right enough (.) coz any time we've got dance we've got to charge like kind of  
 16 five pound or somethin' like that [for a ticket]  
 17 INT [mmm]  
 18 (0.6)  
 19 L9 it kind of covers the (0.6) you know the DJ and like kinda any food we put  
 20 on↑  
 21 INT yeah  
 22 L9 and (.) I think (1.9) any time integration's got em dances (.) they'll maybe  
 23 charge a pound for (0.6) a ticket for the adult and fifty pence, because they're

24 getting' fund- they're gettin' (.) the funding (.) to do that, which we don't

In this extract, we see the locus of responsibility for non-integration attributed to refugees themselves. L9 presents refugees in agentic terms as carrying out a range of actions which highlights their unwillingness to become part of the host community. Thus, at lines 1 and 3, refugees are described as not integrating, a description which presents failure to integrate as following on from what it is that refugees do or do not do. At line 5 and lines 7 to 8, the adults are presented as engaging in an alternative form of behaviour, in that they 'stick' to their own groups. This both supports L9's claim about refugees themselves not integrating and, at the same time, indicates that such a social strategy is best understood at the level of entire social groups rather than, for example, in terms of individual or idiosyncratic personal preference. At lines 11 to 12, L9 goes on to offer support for this claim by describing particular episodes of refugees not integrating, in that they fail to attend community dances. The failures of refugees to integrate in this specific social setting is emphasised both in terms of the extent to which such social events offer the potential for integration, 'it's open to anybody', and the extent of the failure amongst refugees, in that 'they never come'. Moreover, as a specific example of refugees' failure to integrate, the introduction of a dance that is 'open to anyone' is hearable as describing a social event that is essentially a setting in which people can be expected to join together for the purposes of communal enjoyment and socially cohesive activities.

The introduction of this specific example is also relevant for quite different reasons. In providing a description of how such social activities are organized, L9 is able to introduce the financial circumstances in which such events take place. This, in turn, allows for a comparison between financial resources that are available to local residents and those that are available to refugees. In principle, this makes available a relevant explanation for why refugees do not attend: tickets costs 'five pound or somethin', and this may be a price refugees cannot afford. However, this particular explanation is not pursued. Instead, a comparison is drawn between two different sets of requirements and entitlements. Local people have 'got' to charge 'five pound or something' (l. 16) in order that associated expenses such as entertainment costs and hospitality costs are met. Refugees, on the other hand, do not face the same obligations, in that their activities are financially supported through quite different means: 'they're gettin' (.) the funding (.) to do that' (l. 24). And this is a source of funding that L9 presents as being denied to local residents, in saying that 'they're

gettin' (.) the funding (.) to do that, which we don't' (l. 24). In this way, L9 presents an explanation for why refugees do not integrate that is grounded in a form of relative resource allocation: refugees do not integrate because they have access to resources that locals do not have. Of course, the ironic consequence of this is that refugees are portrayed as attending dances that are organised via the local integration network ('integration's got em dances', l. 22). And in other contexts, and for other purposes, this might be presented as a form of activity that is prototypical in its support for integration. Here, however, it is used as a means of establishing that such refugees are refusing to engage in integration and are, instead, 'sticking' with their own 'wee groups' (ll. 7-8). And what remains unexamined, as this claim unfolds, are the circumstances in which local residents apparently refrain from attending such dances, even at financial cost to themselves in that their 'own' dances cost substantially more.

This account both circumscribes what refugees should do, even if this involves refraining from ostensibly integration-oriented activities, and omits from consideration the sorts of actions that local residents might carry out, such as engaging in those activities. The task set for refugees is that they should assimilate into locals' activities rather than engage in other forms of what might count as integration. Interwoven with this 'uni-directional' account of integration is an explanation that focuses on an unequal distribution of resources. Present circumstances in which refugees fail to integrate are explained in terms of resources refugees have that locals do not.

In the next extract, we see the interviewee pick up all of these themes. The extract follows a discussion in which the interviewee talked about issues asylum seekers had in terms of integration and some of the 'trouble' that occurred when asylum seekers were first dispersed to the area.

*Extract 2: Local 8, female, living in Area B >30 years*

- 1 INT so you said there was a bit of trouble, what sort of form did that take?
- 2 L8 (1.0) there was eh (1.9) I think (1.1) because it's quite socially deprived here
- 3 (.) people thought (.) that they were gettin' things (.) for nothing (.) that they
- 4 weren't gettin' and that kinda caused a lot of (.) they get this (0.7) they get
- 5 that, they get this free that free
- 6 INT right
- 7 L8 we've got to do this, we don't get this and it still does go on (.) quite a bit
- 8 INT mm
- 9 L8 (.) they don't realise >I don't know how many times< say they've organised a
- 10 bus trip (1.4) people don't realise that they're welcome to go as integration (.)

- 11 INT right  
 12 L8 they think integration means (0.8) just refugees  
 13 INT right okay  
 14 L8 and they're- it's oh their kids get it for nothing (.) how do our kids not get it?  
 15 (0.7) well they do  
 16 INT heh=  
 17 L8 =ya bring them down into integration (0.8) then they will get it I think it's the  
 18 word integration they don't get  
 19 INT ah okay  
 20 L8 integration just means (0.6) refugee↑  
 21 INT right  
 22 L8 to a lot of people round here  
 23 INT ah I see  
 24 L8 ↓so that's a bit o' a ↑shame but that's just the way it is  
 25 INT right=  
 26 L8 =and I think now that they've been accepted that they're here, coz they've been  
 27 here for a while now  
 28 INT mmm  
 29 L8 that (0.7) the asylum seekers and refugees should now (.) try mix

In this extract, L8 begins by describing a set of beliefs that local residents have about refugees and integration. On the one hand, resources are described as being unequally distributed between refugees and locals. On the other hand, locals are described as mistakenly viewing activities oriented towards integration as only involving actions on the part of refugees themselves. And indeed these beliefs, as described by L8, would appear to echo the claims set out by L9 in extract 1. Here, however, L8 presents the views she attributes to others as of somewhat problematic status. First, a candidate explanation is offered as to why locals may pay undue consideration to resource allocations, in that 'it's quite socially deprived here' (l. 2). Second, the views about such allocations that are being attributed are marked out as things that such people merely 'thought' (l. 3). Third, such thoughts are established as erroneous in that they contrast with a state of affairs that such people 'don't realise' (l. 9). She then explains that the source of this confusion comes from an understanding of the word 'integration' itself: 'they think integration means (0.8) just refugees' (l. 12). Such an account functions to buy the locals out of being culpable in not acting in the integrationist spirit. This is achieved through the references to the relative poverty in the local area, the impression that asylum seekers are receiving special privileges and locals' alleged lack of understanding regarding the true nature of integration. In this regard, portraying the source of the problem as a lack of knowledge or understanding makes the locals less blameworthy for their actions (Authors, c).

These two formulations of integration map on to one-way and two-way conceptualisations, so that the view attributed to locals implies that it is refugees who are responsible and active in terms of integration processes whereas the second view – which is presented as the correct view by the interviewee – is that both locals and refugees can and / or should be involved in integration. In part this works by reporting the speech of locals – ‘oh their kids get it for nothing (.) how do our kids not get it?’ (l. 14) – which allows the interviewee to then comment on the problems with this view (Buttny, 2003). By constructing the issue in this way, the antagonism that is presented as being held by local people is both criticised and to some extent excused by associating it with misunderstanding. Moreover, this construction implies that the allocation of resources solely to refugees may be problematic, and has an inbuilt notion of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (Lynn & Lea, 2003) – ‘their kids [...] our kids’ (l. 14) – but the problem is avoided as these activities are presented as being open to both refugees and to local people.

However, while the first part of this extract seems to suggest that responsibility for integration falls on both locals and refugees, the latter part of the extract suggests that it is refugees who are responsible for integration. This is done by drawing on the ‘false’ understanding of integration that is allegedly held by locals, and rather than making a case for how this should be challenged, the interviewee suggests that this is an unchangeable, if regrettable, fact of reality: ‘↓so that's a bit o' a ↑shame but that's just the way it is’ (l. 24). Presenting the situation in this way shifts the final responsibility back on to refugees (Tileaga, 2005). In particular this is done by drawing on a notion of the way time has created circumstances in which refugees may now become involved in the local community – ‘they’ve been here for a while now’ (ll. 26-27) – and so ending by stating that it is the refugees who should take action: ‘the asylum seekers and refugees should now (.) try mix’ (l. 29). This extract therefore presents a more complex view of integration than that found in the research by Bowskill et al. (2007), so that different notions of integration are juxtaposed, with the notion of two-way integration being presented as true, which both legitimises these types of integration activities and places some responsibility on local people for integration. However, this construction is then undermined, not by challenging its accuracy as such, but rather by suggesting the false view is the one that is held by local people and therefore difficult to change, so that responsibility for integration ultimately falls on refugees themselves.

*Accounts of integration 'success'*

The extracts in this sub-section illustrate alleged examples of integration 'success'; the analysis focuses on the types of integration that are legitimised and the way in which this is done. The first extract in this sub-section is from a section of the interview during which the two interviewees were talking about the work that the community had done to support the rights of asylum seekers.

*Extract 3: Locals 5 & 6, female, living in Area C 16-30 years*

- 1 L5 I must admit we have (.) a community as ((L6)) says of mixed mixed mixed  
2 people  
3 L6 yeah  
4 L5 but the kids (.) are the answer  
5 L6 aye  
6 L5 ya watch them and ya watch Scottish kids and all these other kids (0.8) playin'  
7 (0.7) oot there and it's wonderful  
8 INT mm-hmm  
9 L5 and the same with all these hh (.) as ((L6)) says hh they come runnin' and  
10 they're more Scottish than we are=  
11 L6 =I know=  
12 INT =right=  
13 L5 =heh they really are they're ((laughing)) (.) ((speaking in high pitch thick  
14 Scottish accent)) auntie ((L5)) (.) wait a minute ((laughing))  
15 INT hhh  
16 L6 ((thick Scottish accent)) geez a cuddle  
17 ((all laughing))  
18 L5 ((thick Scottish accent)) wait a minute  
19 ((thick Scottish accent)) I want show- (.) I want a cuddle  
20 L6 ((thick Scottish accent)) here I show you my bike was the uh (.) they're so and  
21 they're you've gotta laugh and it's the wee black faces

The way in which this extract begins implies that there is something problematic about the community in which the participants live. More specifically, stating 'I must admit' (l. 1) suggests that the statement that is to follow is in some way negative, in the sense that it would otherwise be concealed; this is reinforced by an 'answer' to this problem being offered in line 4. This is interesting, as the problematic nature of the community appears to relate to the extent to which it is made up of 'mixed mixed mixed people' (l. 1). Although the exact meaning of this is left unclear, the term 'mix' was used in extract 1 to refer to the coming together of asylum seekers and locals and appeared to be treated as positive and desirable. In

fact, Ager and Strang (2004a, p. 18) explicitly refer to the development of bridging social capital as ‘mixing’ and present it as a core aspect of integration.

L5 goes on to outline the solution to this vaguely defined problem by stating: ‘but the kids (.) are the answer’ (l. 4). This account is made more explicit by explaining that these ‘kids’ include both ‘Scottish kids and all these other kids’ (l. 6). The interaction is portrayed as being mutual by referring to the different groups of children, with the reference to ‘Scottish’ implying that the other ‘kids’ are of various other nationalities, and is described in strong positive terms: ‘it's wonderful’ (p. 7). Despite separating the group of ‘kids’ into those that are ‘Scottish’ and ‘all these other kids’, L5 then states that ‘they're more Scottish than we are’ (l. 10). It is important to remember that the interviewees are Scottish and that this statement seems self-evidently contradictory; however it must be treated rhetorically as claiming something about the young people it describes. This is reinforced through the lines that follow, as the interviewees – who possess Scottish accents – must ‘put on’ even stronger accents in order to imitate the children. In a sense, it appears that the potentially marginal status of the asylum seeker children must be countered not merely through suggesting that they are ‘as Scottish’ as the ‘Scottish kids’, but rather are ‘more Scottish’, thereby emphasising the extent to which they have taken on aspects of the local culture. The apparent need for this extreme case formulation (Pomerantz, 1986) is referenced in the alleged humour or oddity of the kids having strong Scottish accents and the incongruity with their ‘wee black faces’ (l. 21). Such an account seems to imply certain limits or questions about the application of ‘Scottishness’ to children of various national or ethnic origins.

It is important to carefully consider how this particular account constitutes integration in a specific way and applies it to a specific group. That is, while the account initially includes references to mutual engagement, in the latter parts of the extract it is the asylum seeking children who take on aspects of the local culture (in this case, the Scottish accents) rather than this being about the mutual sharing of culture. In this sense it resembles assimilation rather than integration (Bowskill et al., 2007). It is also worth noting that the account is applied to ‘kids’, and the way this is introduced – ‘but the kids (.) are the answer’ (l. 4) – leaves open the suggestion that adult asylum seekers are not integrating, and that this is problematic. In this way this seemingly positive account of integration actually mirrors the negative account in extract 1, whereby the interviewee stated: ‘°I don't think they inte↑grate° (0.6) the kids do [...] but I don't think the:e (0.5) adults integrate so much’ (ll. 1-3). This relates to Durrheim and Dixon’s (2005) observation that speakers may attempt to avoid being

labelled as racist by applying negative evaluations in a probabilistic fashion – that is, saying only ‘some’ members of an ethnic group display negative characteristics. Here, stating that ‘kids’ integrate, whereas adults do not, allows the speaker to criticise the behaviour of asylum seekers while avoiding the accusation that she is prejudiced against all asylum seekers. In this way, seemingly positive accounts of integration may also work to reinforce the view that many asylum seekers are not integrating and to encourage forms of ‘integration’ that actually resemble assimilation. This is not to suggest that there is anything wrong with refugee children adopting local accents (see Kiely, Bechhofer & McCrone, 2005, on Scottish accents as a marker for belonging); rather, the point is that constructing the situation in this way emphasises change among a sub-set of refugees rather than highlighting two-way processes, particularly among adults.

Given this extract provides an example of how asylum seeking children appear to integrate, it is important to consider a ‘positive’ account of adults integrating. The following extract was therefore chosen to provide an example in this regard. The extract comes at a point in the interview following the interviewee explaining his views on immigration.

*Extract 4: Local 2, male, living in Area A 6-15 years*

1 L2 um a friend of mine (0.9) ((name)) (1.8) u:uh (1.1) he (2.2) is an illegal illegal  
 2 an illegal immigrant (0.6) he's a Pakistani national (1.4) u:um (1.8) he got  
 3 arrested (.) he was in this country for ten years (.) he's the most Glaswegian  
 4 person (.) I know=  
 5 INT =hh hh  
 6 L2 swear- swear to god  
 7 INT heh heh heh  
 8 L2 he's a:an (.) amazing guy, knows everybody, he's met everybody (.) in  
 9 Scotland (0.5) I think  
 10 ((approximately 2 minutes omitted))  
 11 L2 I don't know what his chances are (0.6) he's been in the country ten years (0.8)  
 12 i- if integration's what ya want (0.8) he is (.) a glowing fuckin' example (.) he  
 13 is thoroughly integrated (2.2) he has people um (0.8) couch surfing round his  
 14 hoose fae all over the planet (0.9) he's just one of these (.) dreadlocked (0.6)  
 15 hippy dudes ya get ya  
 16 INT yeah  
 17 L2 ya- (0.6) Glaswegian (1.6) a (.) great guy (1.2) babe magnet  
 18 (.)  
 19 INT [Hhh heh heh ((laughing))]  
 20 L2 [the wee bastard but (.) ((laughing))] (.) and he's got uh (.) (unclear) in that  
 21 department (unclear) (3.0) um oh yeah he's a (.) cracking wee geezer (1.2) em  
 22 (3.0) from Pakistan

This account begins with category descriptions that relate to the subject's belonging and his relationship with the interviewee. More specifically, beginning with 'a friend of mine' (l. 1), the subject is treated as having a relatively close relationship with the interviewee whereas the subsequent descriptions – 'illegal immigrant [...] Pakistani national' (l. 3) – portray his lack of legal status in the country and his foreign nationality. Given the category description of 'illegal immigrant', his 'arrest' can be taken as relating to his lack of immigration status, whereas his being 'in this country for ten years' (l. 3) is hearable as a long time that conveys the sense the subject has strong ties to the host nation, contrary to his precarious legal position. Moreover, describing him as 'the most Glaswegian person (.) I know' (ll. 3-4) applies a form of place-identity (Dixon & Durrheim, 2000) that implies both integration and belonging, notably in relation to the city, Glasgow, rather than the UK. This complex juxtaposition of category descriptions implies a lack of 'technical' (i.e., legal) belonging and yet a clear presence of 'organic' integration (Bates, 2012) or belonging. In common with the claim in extract 3 that the asylum seeking children are 'more Scottish than we are', here the statement that the subject is 'the most Glaswegian person (.) I know' is an extreme case formulation that functions to counter suggestions that he might rightly belong elsewhere.

The extreme nature of the positive descriptions continues with statements such as: 'he's a:an (.) amazing guy, knows everybody, he's met everybody (.) in Scotland' (ll. 8-9). In one sense these are simply very positive evaluations but in another sense they emphasise the extent to which the subject is integrated in Scottish society through his extensive social connections. The interviewee then directly references integration through this statement: 'if integration's what ya want (0.8) he is (.) a glowing fuckin' example (.) he is thoroughly integrated' (ll. 12-13). Such claims function to justify his belonging in the host society in the face of his tenuous legal status ('I don't know what his chances are', l. 11). However, they also emphasise a particular version of integration as illustrated in the description: 'he has people um (0.8) couch surfing round his hoose fae all over the planet (0.9) he's just one of these (.) dreadlocked (0.6) hippy dudes ya get' (ll. 13-15). This highlights interconnectedness, not simply with members of the local community, but rather with people from many cultures around the world, and yet the description also implies he is someone normally associated with sub-cultural groups. What is interesting is that the description, despite being followed by the word 'Glaswegian' (l. 17), describes traits that are unlikely to be heard as quintessentially Glaswegian. In this way the subject's belonging is declared rather than evidenced, and is

supported by a range of generally positive evaluations and characteristics, as well as the length of time he has lived in the city ('he's been in the country ten years', l. 11). The final description in the extract – 'he's a (.) cracking wee geezer (1.2) em (3.0) from Pakistan' (ll. 21-22) – emphasises these positive traits in vernacular terms that imply his character is compatible with the host society in a way that positions these aspects as superordinate to his nationality: 'from Pakistan'.

On the one hand, this account could read as an example of the extent to which people coming into Scotland successfully integrate and act as exemplary members of society. Such an account can also be read as supporting the legitimacy of asylum seekers' or other migrants' rights to belong in the host society despite legal or technical barriers (Authors, d). However, this account can also be treated as an extreme and highly individualised way of portraying someone as being integrated or belonging; it would be difficult to imagine such an account being applied to large groups of people or to asylum seekers in general. Rather than being an example of the many ways in which asylum seekers or other migrants integrate in Scotland, this account may more readily be heard as an exception to the rule. Moreover, the account does not seem to resemble the two-way or mutual integration description in the standard integration framework (e.g., Ager & Strang, 2004a), but rather seems to be a combination of building highly diverse social connections and taking on characteristics that are not normally associated with either the mainstream of the host society or the subject's country of origin. In this way, the account could be treated as consistent with the claim that many asylum seekers do not integrate, either because the particular example seems highly unusual and therefore uncommon and / or because it does not resemble integration as it is normally understood.

As a final analytic point, it is important to consider how the interviewees pull off these accounts in the context of the interview. As mentioned in the previous sub-section, those producing accounts of integration 'failure' included warrants and caveats, such as highlighting the lengths locals have gone to in order to encourage integration, references to kids integrating even if adults do not, and excusing a lack of locals' engagement as being due to a lack of knowledge. However, such warrants are notably absent from the accounts of integration 'success'. That is, these accounts are treated as being highly positive even though careful analysis suggests these examples depart from ideal versions of integration in many ways. The implication is that, while the people describing negative examples of integration orient to its potentially problematic nature, those describing supposedly positive examples

treat them as non-problematic. However, these accounts of integration ‘success’ and ‘failure’ both imply that mutual integration is lacking and that in general adult asylum seekers may not be integrating.

## **Discussion and Conclusions**

This paper has illustrated that lay accounts of asylum seeker integration ‘failure’ and ‘success’ can be treated as functioning to justify or criticise certain types of behaviour. More specifically, while accounts of ‘failure’ placed the responsibility onto asylum seekers, and legitimised or defended the actions of local people, accounts of integration ‘success’ could also be seen to support behaviour that resembled assimilation rather than integration or otherwise were compatible with the accounts of integration ‘failure’. This is not to imply that this is always the case (e.g., see Authors, a), but rather it illustrates the usefulness of moving beyond treating public attitudes merely in terms of their positivity or negativity and exploring accounts of integration for reasons other than measuring integration or developing conceptual frameworks.

One of the key functions of such accounts relates to the allocation of responsibility. Extracts one and two positioned asylum seekers as being responsible for integration, despite these accounts outlining two-way or mutual forms of integration. In this way, the speakers were able to support these forms of integration while also criticising asylum seekers for not engaging, despite such accounts actually describing the ways in which asylum seekers engaged with integration activities and portraying locals as not engaging with these opportunities. This highlights that support for two-way integration, which should imply responsibility among both asylum seekers and the host society, can also be used to criticise the behaviours of asylum seekers.

The analysis also demonstrated the way in which accounts of integration ‘success’ were not straightforwardly ‘positive’. That is, these accounts described integration behaviours in ways that seemed to resemble assimilation (e.g., taking on the local accent) or otherwise did not appear to constitute mutual forms of integration (see Bowskill et al., 2007). Moreover, examples that referred to asylum seeking children or highly idiosyncratic cases worked to reinforce the perception that asylum seekers in general were not integrating. In the case of the children, this was compatible with the account in extract 1, whereby adults were portrayed as not integrating whereas ‘kids’ were described as integrating; moreover, the account of

integration 'success' implied that there were wider problems regarding the 'mixed' nature of people in the community. This demonstrates that apparently 'positive' or 'negative' accounts of asylum seeker integration should not be taken at face value; rather, the careful analysis of these accounts can illuminate the ways they function rhetorically to justify or criticise specific behaviours in relation to integration.

This analysis builds on and moves beyond previous research on attitudes towards, and lay accounts of, asylum seekers (Pearce & Stockdale, 2009; Leudar et al., 2008; Lewis, 2005, 2006; McKay et al., 2012). Unlike much of the previous research, the present study does not approach the data in a way that characterises the accounts in terms of hostility or positivity. Rather, the careful discursive analysis of such accounts highlights the way in which seemingly 'negative' views may also support 'two-way' forms of integration whereas seemingly 'positive' accounts may reinforce assimilationist policies. Building on the work of Bowskill et al. (2007), this study also highlights the importance of exploring notions of integration not merely to create typologies or measurements, but also to explore how such accounts function to justify particular policies, practices and behaviours at the community level where integration (or non-integration) actually occurs. The corollary of this is that particular typologies of integration also have a rhetorical function, in the sense that those that emphasise individual level integration (e.g., Ager & Strang, 2004a) may serve to legitimise accounts that portray individual examples of integration as the exception or that criticise a lack of engagement on the part of asylum seekers and refugees. In terms of policy and practice, this research suggests that individuals and organisations advocating on behalf of asylum seekers and refugees need to ensure that 'positive' accounts of refugee integration do not unintentionally reinforce problematic versions of integration, for example by focusing on children or exceptional adults, but may need to convey the everyday ways in which people of different cultural backgrounds come together and take part in shared experiences.

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## Appendix 1

### *Demographic background of interviewees*

[Insert table here]

## Appendix 2

### *Transcription symbols (adapted from Jefferson, 2004)*

[ ]	Square brackets indicate overlapping speech
(0.8)	Numbers in round brackets indicate pauses in seconds
(.)	A full stop in rounded brackets indicates a micro pause
right=	Equals signs indicate ‘latching’, where there is no pause between speakers
<u>never</u>	Underlining indicates stressed words and syllables
°yeah°	Degree signs indicate quieter speech and whispering
u::h	Colons indicate elongation of the prior sound
↑I was↓	Up arrows indicate increased pitch and down arrows indicate decreased pitch
>I don’t<	‘Greater than’ and ‘less than’ signs enclose speeded up talk
w-	Hyphens indicate sounds and words that have been cut off
yeah?	Question marks indicate a ‘questioning’ (i.e., rising) intonation
heh	Voiced laughter
hhh	Indicates aspiration (out-breaths)
((name))	Double rounded brackets indicate actions, describe words that have been removed in order to maintain confidentiality or otherwise include notes from the transcriber