

Narratives of Women's Belonging: Life Stories from an East London Street

Nicola Samson

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements of the
University of East London
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

September 2013

Abstract

Subjective belonging, defined here as emotional attachments to people and places which give meaning and security to people's lives, is the central theme of this study. It is not simply concerned with where, or whether people belong, but *how* they experience belonging. The thesis argues that narrative inquiry, in the richness of the depth and detail it offers, embedded within time and social context, is a most apposite methodology for drawing out the elusive and multi-layered meanings of subjective belonging through people's whole lives. The empirical research entails semi-structured interviews with 14 migrant and British women of diverse background, ethnicity, class and generation, all of whom live in one East London street, the one in which I also live. In a framework of childhood, citizenship, ethnicity, class, place and community, narrative interviews are used to elicit the multiple and shifting ways in which the experience of belonging is configured in the women's life stories. The research argues that an intersectional approach relating the women's belonging to their manifold social locations is crucial to the meaning-making of their experiences. Situating the research in its specific social and historical context enables exploration of the women's relationship with the locality and within the changing ethnic and class demographics of the area. Differentiating between identity and belonging, the thesis proposes that, belonging, unlike identity, demands performativity. The study focuses on the everyday performative practices of custom and tradition, including language and religion, as well as food and motherhood, and explores how these practices impact on the women's sense of belonging. Ultimately the thesis demonstrates that performativity per se cannot create belonging but that the women's varying positionalities understood over time are critical in explaining their sense of belonging.

There's a woman Nicola, she lives in this street, she came with her research, it was a PhD, and she was doing research on people's lives, everything and people's feel[jings], the questions she asked me, do I belong to anything, [how] do I feel like? That is the question .. I was so, made me LAUGH but it's nothing to laugh about, it's something to think about. I never thought of this belonging [laugh]. It's a hard question. It's so straightforward, it's so hard to answer.

(Samina, interviewee, telling me what she had said to a relative)

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:

The question of belonging	1
Conceiving the topic	1
Who am I to talk?	1
Thinking about others	2
Why women?	3
Belonging in words and images	5
Theorising belonging	5
Analytical frameworks of belonging	7
Conceptualising belonging	8
Complexities of belonging and not belonging	11
My analytical approach	12
Narrative	12
Intersectionality	13
Performativity	14
The street	14
The distinctiveness of my approach	15
Chapter outlines	16

Chapter 2

Situated narratives: methodology and methods	19
Introduction	19
Biography and belonging	20
At home in sociology	20
The matter of biographical lives	21
Unfolding narrative	25
Co-constructions of meaning	27
Interpreting hermeneutics	28
Belonging in time and narrative	31
Thematic content approach	35
Intersectional belonging	36
Introducing the neighbourhood	40
Research relationships	44
Meeting the street	44
Reflexive contemplations	47
An insider/outsider dilemma	48
Reconfiguring the insider/outsider relationship	51

Ethnic positionings	53
Ethical interpretations	55
Data processes	58
Conclusion	60

Chapter 3

Childhood and origins 62

Introduction	62
Setting the childhood scene	63
Stories of community and belonging	64
Localities of belonging	67
Diversity in childhood localities	70
Ruptures in glowing childhoods	76
Stories of dislocated belongings	80
Nomadic childhoods	80
Alienated childhoods	87
Nomadic and alienated belongings	91
Coming to and being in Britain	93
Women who moved to Britain	94
Women born British	102
Conclusion	103

Chapter 4:

Discombobulating ethnicity and citizenship 106

Introduction	106
Theorising ethnicity	107
Boundaries and content	107
Groups and categories	108
Identity perspectives	110
Distinguishing identity and belonging	111
Questions of ethnicity	114
Connecting childhood and adult ethnic belonging	118
Perceptions of citizenship:	120
Citizenship, gender and subjectivity debates	120
Answering the citizenship question	121
Citizenship stories	123
Citizenship and belonging	133
Politics of belonging perspective	133
Interviewees' perspective	135
Conclusion	137

Chapter 5:

Everyday ethnic belonging _____ **140**

Introduction	140
Custom and Tradition	141
Migrant women	141
Cultural transmission	144
First-generation British	146
Mixed-heritage British	148
Multi-generational British	149
Food, glorious food	151
A taste of theory	152
Ethnic belonging performed through food	155
Food outsiders	161
Paradoxes of food and belonging	163
Food positionalities	168
Conclusion	170

Chapter 6

Class, place and community _____ **172**

Introduction	172
Class belonging	173
S/elective theory	173
Coming to Newham, coming to the street	176
Moving in and staying put	180
A question of class impact	182
Place belonging	188
Social construction of place	188
Relationship and belonging in the locality	190
Inhibitors to belonging to place	193
Enablers of belonging to place	195
Community belonging	201
Concepts of community	201
Community and locality	205
Non-place-based communities	210
Conclusion	213

Chapter 7

Concluding thoughts _____ **216**

Changing places, changing times	216
Narrative articulation of subjective belonging	217

Theoretical illumination of subjective belonging _____	219
Everyday performativity of subjective belonging _____	222
Future research of subjective belonging _____	223
References _____	226
Appendices _____	250
Appendix I: Interviewee profiles _____	250
Appendix II: Interviewee citizenship/ethnicity _____	251
Appendix III: Letter to neighbours _____	252
Appendix IV: Local Living questionnaire _____	253
Appendix V: Ethics approval _____	255
Appendix VI: Participant information/consent form _____	256
Appendix VII: Interview Questions _____	258
Appendix VIII: Responses about relationship to the area _____	260

Explanatory notes

All names used in the thesis are pseudonyms.
Those of the interviewees were chosen by themselves.

Transcription conventions used in narrative extracts:

N	= interviewer
Other initial letter	= interviewee
xxxx	= unclear word
UPPERCASE	= strongly emphasised speech
'.' (full-stop)	= each full-stop represents a one-second pause in speech
'-' (hyphen)	at beginning or end of word = interrupted speech

Acknowledgements

There are, of course, many people to thank, without whom this thesis would never have reached the point of wanting to thank them.

My supervisory team, Molly Andrews, Nira Yuval-Davis and Mica Nava, have been wonderful, and their complementary expertise has been without any doubt invaluable. I sat somewhat in awe at our first joint meeting, where in discussion, the idea of using my street first arose (and where the seeds were sown of my collective noun, a 'position of professors'). You have supported and encouraged me throughout, knowing when to gently cajole and when to stand back, understanding my strengths and fragilities, enabling me to inch forward. As my Director of Studies, I cannot thank you enough Molly. From those distant undergraduate days you have continued to coax, uplift and inspire.

Thanks must also be given to the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) whose financial support has been crucial, I would never have embarked on this extraordinary journey without it.

Student counsellor Hanneke Kosterink gave significant support when I was at a very low ebb and finding it hard to believe I could ever complete the project. Your gentle and challenging guidance has been indispensable. Local resident/historian Lloyd Jeans, and Jenni Munro-Collins and Richard Durack at Newham Archives and Local Studies Library were especially helpful in learning more about the North Newham area.

Friends and family have stoically weathered the highs and lows of the past five years and your constancy has been immeasurable. There are so many people who cannot all be named but in particular Anna, Elaine and Sandra, who have always been there; my PhD friends, Jamie, Barbara, Masi, Cigdem, Tahir, Ali, and never-to-be-forgotten, Siyanda, all of whose continuing encouragement has been critical, and advice always appreciated. The same extends of course to my family; my mother and siblings, to Holly and Barney who have found themselves in a quasi-parental role upbraiding me for my prevarications when I should have been working, and, ever supportive and caring. Most of all, thanks must be given to David, my partner, who has enduringly fielded the fallout of fears and frustrations, has helped make the abstract concrete and bring structure to my ideas, and in the process has learned more about subjective belonging than he ever knew he wanted to know.

Finally, my neighbours. Women who have been so generous in offering me their life stories without which there would, of course, be no thesis at all.

Thank you so very much.

Chapter 1:

The question of belonging

Conceiving the topic

Who am I to talk?

Undertaking a PhD on the notion of belonging was not an abstract theoretical idea for me but was arrived at through an extended process, a coalescence of decades of my own experiences. As a child born in early 1950s Britain of refugee parents, our Jewishness was not a secret but neither was it an overt part of our lives, and we had no Jewish religion or culture that defined us. Yet out in the world of school and young people, anti-Semitic remarks and jokes rendered me 'other', despite being told by my friends that these didn't apply to me - / was all right. That they thought we ate strange food, that my parents 'spoke funny', and that there were words everyone but me seemed to understand, about which I was too embarrassed to ask,¹ added to my niggling sense of not quite fitting in; of not really belonging. Was it my lacking vernacular, the shape of my nose, or my somewhat olive-tinged skin that has caused people to ask throughout my life, 'But where are you really from?'. White comes in many shades, some more popular than others, and for much of Britain's 20th century, Jewish white was not a popular shade.² Yet ostensibly being seen as white, and having English as my first language, my lived experience was that of a doubled-edged sword; being assumed to belong, and not necessarily being accepted as belonging. Much later, as a middle-aged mother of teenagers, the experience of having to leave my East End home of 22 years was traumatic, forcefully rekindling earlier feelings about belonging. For as home to immigrants for centuries, the area, I realised, had been a fitting and comfortable place for me to be amongst so many who did not belong. Not long after leaving Tower Hamlets for the neighbouring East London borough of Newham, I began an undergraduate degree in Psychosocial Studies at the University of East London. After five decades of assuming my issues of belonging and not belonging were my own personal idiosyncrasy, my late-in-life start in academia taught me that

1 For example I think I was probably into my teens before I found out that 'the Bill' referred to the police. Asking my peers would have meant opening myself up to ridicule in the playground which I was loathe to do.

2 The Mass Observation Archive at the University of Sussex provides insight of first-hand 'ordinary' 1930s-1940s British attitudes to Jews, generally showing anti-Semitism as a norm, and some extraordinarily vitriolic. See also Samson (2008a).

belonging could be a meaningful subject to study, and gave me the freedom and a framework to explore it.

Had I not known better, I might have thought Molly Andrews' words were written about me:

Most often, the questions which guide our research originate from deep within ourselves. We care about the topics we explore – indeed, we care very much. While our projects may be presented with an appearance of professional detachment, most of us most of the time are personally involved in the research we undertake.

(Andrews, 2007, p. 27)

Mica Nava argues that biographical detail has an important place in illuminating the provenance of the academic author's research:

... the details of our personal lives, our sense of national and familial belonging, our 'race', class and gender, our social and political positioning, do all affect our intellectual production – how we investigate and make sense of the world ...

(Nava, 2007, p. 134)

I am coming to this thesis therefore, from my own stories, my 'identity narratives' that Nira Yuval-Davis describes as the:

... stories people tell themselves and others about who they are (and who they are not).

(Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 14; 2006a, p. 202)

These quotes thereby also tell a story of the invigorating academic underpinning of reflexivity and situatedness that inform this thesis.

Thinking about others

Given my own experience I was intrigued about how other women felt. Belonging is not a topic of general conversation; do others have complicated feelings about which they say nothing? In a period of increasing globalisation, ever-more sophisticated technology and multiculturalism, is the nature of belonging becoming more complex? Where, to whom, to what, and perhaps most importantly, how do we belong? In wanting to find out about subjective belonging I explicitly wanted to explore everyday lives, to investigate through ordinary, day-to-day practices how belonging becomes meaningful. In particular I wanted to examine how the complexities of ethnicity, generation and class shape women's sense of belonging. What impact do everyday activities such as custom and tradition including language and religion, food, motherhood, have on their sense of belonging? How do these very ordinary aspects of women's existence contribute to, or determine

how they make sense of their lives? With the continuous flux and flow of contemporary life, how is belonging understood with regard to place and community? If place is significant, which place? What importance does community have, and is it synonymous with locality?

In thinking of belonging it was apparent that looking only at current life would give neither breadth nor depth to people's experience. What or who have influenced a person's sense of belonging? How much is informed by past events or people or places? It seemed crucial to me to understand the women's belonging in the context of their whole lives and therefore to follow a narrative, holistic life history approach. Memories of childhood, family and home would tell not only of past belongings but inform how women make sense of their subjective belonging today and what meaning it has in the spaces and places of their lives.

Having previously undertaken smaller research projects considering the belonging of Bangladeshi women and second-generation Jewish refugees in East London (Samson, 2008a, 2007), I wanted to broaden this remit by being more inclusive. Belonging cannot be seen purely in relation to migrant lives. What about, for example, British women whose families have lived in Britain for generations – surely they too may have issues with belonging, or not belonging? This research should therefore not be restricted to any particular classification of women but include a diverse group to produce a more inclusive model of subjective belonging. A diverse range of women could of course be found 'on my doorstep', neighbours in my own East London street. By making them the subject of my research, the problem of how to define which women in which parts of East London could be overcome. The limited geographical location of the street, replete with women hailing from disparate regions of the world, would enable a focused exploration of women's lives within a specific social and historical context. It would provide the opportunity to consider ideas of community and place within the borders and across the boundaries of a street. The research would explore how the social locations of ethnicity, generation and class impact on the women's experience of belonging given the changing, fluid and temporal nature of their lives in the multicultural diversity of East London.

Why women?

As stated previously, coming to this research from my own experience as a woman led me to want to explore the belonging experiences of other women. I could of course have chosen to interview men too, but everyday practices such as

parenting, food and custom and tradition still largely reflect gendered roles and the study would inevitably become complicated by gender difference. Analysis of belonging experiences would necessarily be defined by consideration of gender differences which would detract from the central focus of the thesis. While there is fundamentally no reason why such an area of study is not feasible, it would add further complexity to an already complex research design and would demand a substantially different approach to that which I wish to take in this thesis.

As a feminist I am also very clear that I am situating this study through an intersectional lens and within the tradition of women writing about women's lives. Discussion around the validity of writing about women's day-to-day life experiences as a means of understanding the social world has been paramount in feminist theorising (Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002; Maynard and Purvis, 1994; Cosslett, Lury and Summerfield, 2000). As Kitzinger (2007) notes, this tradition has been closely tied with the development of qualitative, narrative and oral history methodologies, and there are many examples of empirical narrative and oral history research which focus specifically on women's experiences (for example, Armitage with Hart and Weathermon, 2002; Forster, 2002; Cannon, 2001; Gluck and Patai, 2001; Pilcher, 1998; Sizoo, 1997). In addition there are many examples within different fields of social science of women focusing specifically on women's lives.³ It must also be recognised that some significant contributions to the subject of belonging have been made from a feminist perspective (see, Yuval-Davis, 2011, 2007, 2006a, 2004; hooks, 2009; Carrillo Rowe, 2005; Probyn, 1996).

Given my choices it is perhaps important to clarify that I am not assuming any essentialised differences between men and women in their experience of belonging, nor do I have any preconception that belonging has any more importance for women than men. Future research on subjective belonging could certainly include gender difference as a focus. It should also be noted that although I am choosing to consider everyday practices which are often performed by women, I am not discussing belonging within the home nor women's place in the home. Indeed, as I discuss later, home has quite complicated associations with belonging which will not be a focus of this thesis (see p. 12).

³ A few examples through the decades: Tamboukou (2010, 2003); Sheridan (1990); Brown (1996); Hartley (1994); Frankenberg (1993); Krause (1991); Jewish Women in London Group (1989); Braybon and Summerfield (1987); Bryan, *et al.* (1985); Heron (1985); Jewish Women's History Group (1983); Pember Reeves (1979); Llewelyn Davies (1977).

Belonging in words and images

Belonging has long been a subject written about. *Extravagant Strangers*, a book exploring writers and their work from the 1770s to the 1990s focuses on writers not born in Britain who were ‘...seeking to understand how they belong to Britain’ (Phillips, 1997, p. xiv). But while belonging may have been an issue for 250 years, and no doubt many more, it is in the globalised world of the 21st century that it has proliferated within mainstream culture. Now, the notion of belonging is a topic of interest in various media. Fiction shelves carry an ever-growing number of books in which the loss, the search for and the finding of belonging are central to their stories, and memoirs and biographies of poets, authors, broadcasters, journalists, academics, indeed presidents-to-be (Obama, 2008) and of course countless others, feature aspects of their belonging (see Chapter 2). Young people are making films exploring belonging in their own lives (*Belonging*, 2008; *(be)longing*, 2007), and drama such as *Belong* (Agbaje, 2012) whose chief protagonist no longer finds belonging in the Nigeria of his young life nor the Britain of his adulthood, is playing on the London stage. McClelland’s (2011) sculpture *Internal Geographies*, ‘draws on questions around displacement and migration’ in her presentation of floating maps suggesting notions of shifting belonging. Children’s books also encompass the notion, an eloquent example being the picture book *Belonging* (Baker, 2008) in which wordless collages trace the development of a family garden throughout the daughter’s life; as neighbours in the inner city wasteland are inspired to follow suit, they begin to find a belonging with each other as they ‘green’ the neighbourhood and find a belonging with the land.

Theorising belonging

Issues of belonging have arguably been central if implicit in much classical psychological and sociological theory (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 11; 2006a, p. 198). However, with the increasing globalisation of the late 20th century, belonging has become a more prominent subject of interest in many academic fields. From the 1990s the politics of belonging has been a key field of academic concern (see Castles and Davidson, 2000, Feuchtwang, 1992), and not least since Geddes and Favell (1999) argued that it should be a subject of study in its own right incorporating traditional standpoints of inclusion from the formal and legal aspects of migration and citizenship, and the more symbolic signifiers of language and culture. In more recent research, the question of how individuals’ status is affected by notions of citizenship and nationality has been a focus for Yuval-Davis and

others particularly relating to women (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 2008, 2007, 2006a; Yuval-Davis *et al.*, 2006, 2005). Aspects of language and testing in citizenship are discussed by van Oers *et al.* (2010), hierarchies of belonging by Wemyss (2009, 2006), and dual citizenship by Vera-Larrucea (2012). As shown by Antonsich's (2010) wide-ranging review of the literature on belonging, interest in exploring divergent aspects of belonging has grown phenomenally through the 2000s in many different disciplines. This growth is exemplified by my search of the journal *Childhood*, where of 104 articles discussing belonging only 11 were written before the turn of the millennium.

Given the range of issues considered in my study, a number of different areas of research on belonging inform my work. Within the field of migration studies, food and ethnic belonging are topics that are specifically pertinent (though these subjects are often talked about in terms of home), for example in the work of Raman (2011), Hage (2010), Rabikowska (2010), Alibhai-Brown (2010), Taylor (2009a) and Antoniou (2004). The shifting nature of migrant identity is explored in Anthias' (2008, 2002) concept of translocational positionality, and by Christensen and Jensen (2011) in their study of belonging and everyday life. Erel (2011, 2009) and Gedalof (2009, 2007) consider issues of mothering and cultural transmission facing women migrants. Transnational relations focusing on economic, cultural and emotional issues are explored by Skrbiš *et al.* (2007), Chamberlain and Leydesdorff (2004), Olwig (2002) and Westwood and Phizacklea (2000). Eade's (2004, 2002a, 1997) research into identity issues of Bangladeshis in East London argues that the complexities of belonging can no longer simply be understood within nation-state boundaries or nationalistic allegiances. Issues of national belonging and its formation through everyday discourse and practice are explored by Skey (2012, 2011a, 2010), and national belonging specifically relating to children by Scourfield *et al.* (2006a, 2006b). Other aspects pertaining to children's and young people's belonging are discussed by den Besten (2010), Bannister (2012), Ní Laoire *et al.* (2010) and Pinson *et al.* (2010). Probyn (1996) and Carrillo Rowe (2005) consider belonging from a feminist cultural theory perspective. Notions of belonging, locality and place are explored by hooks (2009) drawing on her own experience as a child in rural Kentucky, and by Butler with Robson (2003), Savage *et al.* (2005), Savage (2010, 2008), Watt (2010, 2009) and Benson and Jackson (2012), who discuss local belonging with particular reference to issues of class.

Of the above studies which all in varying ways discuss belonging, some follow a narrative or life story approach, some use an intersectional analysis and a few consider belonging through everyday performativity. None of the research however

incorporates all three approaches exploring belonging across the broad range of social locations, as my thesis undertakes. Moreover, as Antonsich argues, much of the research on belonging leaves the concept itself 'vaguely defined' and 'under-theorized' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 645). My thesis intends to address this lack of analytical clarity and the following section will discuss other analytical frameworks that inform my own conceptualisation of belonging.

Analytical frameworks of belonging

Three theorists from the fields of global studies, geography and sociology who have developed frameworks for understanding belonging will be discussed here: Yuval-Davis, (2011, 2006a), Antonsich (2010) and May (2011) respectively. Yuval-Davis distinguishes between belonging and the politics of belonging. Her theory defines belonging per se as a dynamic process concerning emotional and ontological attachments (2011, p. 10; 2006, p. 197), while the politics of belonging comprise specific political projects aimed at constructing belonging to particular collectivities. Within belonging she differentiates analytically between three facets: social locations, identifications and emotional attachments, and ethical and political values. The first facet of social locations concerns the varying positionalities such as ethnicity, nationality, age and class, which shape people's sense of belonging; the second she understands as identity narratives, and the last is closely associated with the politics of belonging. Yuval-Davis argues that while the three facets are related, their differentiation is critical to preclude the essentialising or racialising of belonging.

In following Yuval-Davis by distinguishing emotional belonging and the politics of belonging, Antonsich differentiates his theorising from hers in defining two, rather than three, dimensions of belonging which are:

... belonging as a personal, intimate, feeling of being 'at home' in a place (place-belongingness) and belonging as a discursive resource which constructs, claims, justifies, or resists forms of socio-spatial inclusion/exclusion (politics of belonging).

(Antonsich, 2010, p. 645)

In that, he very firmly ties emotional belonging to place and suggests that Yuval-Davis not only gives little attention to the emotional aspects of belonging, but overlooks the notion of place altogether as if, '... practices of belonging exist in a geographical vacuum' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647), a topic to which I will later return. Antonsich suggests there are five factors which contribute to the development of emotional 'place-belongingness': auto-biographical, relational, cultural, economic

and legal (Antonsich, 2010, pp. 647-8). He also states that place-belongingness intersects with the politics of belonging because belonging is both social and individual. But he argues that this intersection results in belonging being too easily conflated with, and used as a synonym for, identity, when belonging needs to be considered separately (Antonsich, 2010, pp. 644-645).

May (2011) outlines a four-part concept of belonging in her exposition of the relationship between the self and society. She describes belonging:

... as a concept that allows for a person-centred, dynamic and complex approach and that understands people as active participants in society.

(May, 2011, p. 367)

which she argues offers a 'mutually constitutive' means of acknowledging the interdependence of self and society, and renders belonging particularly appropriate to understanding social change (May, 2011, pp. 366-367). The four components of her theory, aspects of which will be considered in more detail in the next sections, are that: belonging enables the links between self and society to be considered from a person-centred perspective; people's everyday lives can be explored to understand how they engage with social structures; belonging embraces relational, cultural and sensory associations; and belonging's dynamism and sensitivity to change makes it a constructive means of studying social change (May, 2011, p. 368).

Conceptualising belonging

I perceive belonging as relating to deeply felt attachments to people, groups or places that give meaning, self-assurance and security in people's lives. That is, the internal sense of affective attachment, a visceral belonging, analogous to the visceral cosmopolitanism Nava (2007) describes as understood and experienced in the emotion and attachment of everyday lives. What I describe as subjective belonging is intimate and intricate, relating to emotional attachments which begin in early life and fluidly shadow the ebbs and flows of the life course. It is felt as the very core of one's self-understanding, the multiplicity and confusions of who one is, that demand insight, self-perception, self-knowing, and can be understood as a process that shifts and alters as life progresses (Samson, 2008a).

In his five (and later seven) level 'hierarchy of needs' paradigm, Maslow (1943) defines 'belongingness' as part of the third most basic human need, stating that a person '... will strive with great intensity to achieve [the] goal' [...] for a place in his [sic] group' (Maslow, 1943, p. 380), a conceptualisation with which my notion of

belonging accords. However I would stress that belonging is neither determined nor fixed but shifts and changes within the continuing social construction of the life course.⁴ Indeed, my understanding of belonging as complex and multi-layered is analogous to Hall's conception of identity as identifications, 'constantly in the process of change and transformation' (Hall, 1996, p. 4). In drawing this analogy, I nevertheless differentiate between belonging and identity as will be discussed in Chapter 4. It should also be clear that I am purposefully not imposing a rigid or restrictive characterisation of belonging but using it as a heuristic device to draw out women's experience of belonging. Importantly, my concern is not simply whether people do, or do not belong, but *how* they belong and how their belonging alters with time, circumstance and experience in the process of their lives.

The following part of this section considers my conceptualisation of belonging in relation to the theoretical frameworks of Yuval-Davis and Antonsich. My phenomenological approach takes as its starting point the everyday nature of the interviewees' personal lives. My previous research has shown that it is in the commonplace experiences of family, work, religion and food, that the primary affective attachments of belonging are felt (Samson, 2008a, 2007). Such attachments, at the core of one's belonging and changing through experience, are therefore fundamental to my study. Applying Yuval-Davis' tripartite framework of belonging, the primary focus of my research is on her second facet of identifications and emotional attachments relating to her facet of social locations. (Yuval-Davis, 2011, pp. 12-18; 2006a, pp. 199-205). Through the subjective lens of the individual women, I am investigating the relationship between their subjective belonging and their social locations. My analysis will consider how they locate themselves, through their national origins, citizenship, ethnicity and class, and how these locations relate to their affective attachments. My MA research (2008) showed how my interviewees' sense of belonging or not belonging was strongly affected by their sense of themselves as second-generation refugees. In the same way this research explores through the women's own perspective of themselves, how their social locations intersect and influence their lives, looking at how the differing elements configure varying realities (Brah and Phoenix, 2004; Hancock, 2007). To a lesser degree I will also consider Yuval-Davis' third facet of ethical and political values, again, as it relates to the women's emotional attachments. Although I do not intend to look at the politics of belonging per se, I will consider what impact institutional ideas and political norms of belonging, such as citizenship, have on the women's subjective lives.

⁴ This statement regarding belonging does not preclude the possibility of not belonging as a positive state, a notion I discuss in a following section.

As with Yuval-Davis, my conceptualisation of subjective belonging does not primarily involve Antonsich's second analytical category of the politics of belonging, but is more concerned with his notion of 'place-belongingness' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 646), though as will be seen, my conceptualisation takes issue with his prescribing of place. I am particularly concerned, as he argues, that belonging should be understood separately from identity (Antonsich, 2010, p. 645), a notion I expand on in Chapter 4, p. 129. His description of belonging as, '... a personal, intimate, existential dimension that narrates and is narrated by the Self' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647) is one that comfortably sits within the narrative approach I am taking, which will also be discussed more fully later (Chapter 2). Of the five factors he highlights as creating place-belongingness, three have explicit relevance to my conceptualisation of subjective belonging: the auto-biographical, particularly the significance in later life of places of childhood and growing-up; the cultural; and the relational factors in the '... social ties that enrich the life of an individual in a given place' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647). However, my conceptualisation differs from Antonsich in his central tenet that belonging is inevitably linked to, indeed cannot be separated from, place. Here, I position myself midway between his definition, and his concern that others, such as Yuval-Davis, overlook place to the extent of belonging appearing to exist without geographical anchoring (Antonsich, 2010, p. 647). For, if belonging is intrinsically linked to place, how can other forms of subjective belonging be understood? I argue that the sense of belonging that people experience, for example, in religious faith, or in ethnicity, or in interest groups central to their understanding of themselves (be they found on land or the world wide web), may be just as significant, but not necessarily based in place.

Antonsich states, '... to belong means to find a place where an individual can feel 'at home'' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 646). Yuval-Davis argues, 'Belonging is about an emotional (or even ontological) attachment, about feeling 'at home'' (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10). May asserts, 'Belonging can thus have both an emotional component of 'feeling at home' or 'yearning for a home'...' (May, 2011, p. 369). The quoted theorists are by no means alone in so closely allying home and belonging, as home appears to be in common usage as an expression of belonging (see, for a few examples: Duyvendak, 2011; Hage, 2010; Blunt and Dowling, 2006; Antoniou, 2004; Webster, 1998). Indeed, I originally thought I would be exploring home as an integral part of this study on subjective belonging but the more engaged I became, the more I differentiated between belonging and home. My empirical research suggests that home is simply not an adequate concept for considering the multiple forms of belonging in these women's lives. Their stories took me metaphorically to all kinds of 'homes' in places all over the world but these were not necessarily

where they found a sense of belonging, and sometimes were where they definitely felt they did not belong. A dissonant illustration is my interviewee British-born Samina for whom Bangladesh was 'home' though she had visited the country only very occasionally; 'home' was also Luton where she grew up, but 'home' in East London where she actually lives provides little sense of belonging (see also Samson, 2007, p. 31; Gardner and Shukur, 1994, p. 158). The synonymous use of belonging with 'feeling at home' suggests an assumption that home is always a positive experience. Antonsich states that by home he does not mean the '...domestic(ated) material space...' criticised by feminist theorists as gendered and patriarchal (Antonsich, 2010, p. 646), but such associations cannot be so simply dismissed. 'Home' which is home to domestic violence, forced migration or 'merely' expectations of conformity may not offer homely feelings of belonging. As Tamboukou argues in her portrait of Dora Carrington at home with Lytton Strachey, the home can be '... a 'non-place' in the constitution of female subjectivity (Tamboukou, 2011a, p. 31).

Complexities of belonging and not belonging

Much of my discussion throughout this thesis is framed in terms of 'belonging'. This framing is neither intended to exclude the reality of not belonging,⁵ nor is it attempting to prescribe 'not belonging' as a negative or a fixed state. I am seeking to illustrate differing experiences of belonging and not belonging not as discrete positions but as relative states within a shifting continuum which may be experienced either positively or negatively. The notion of not belonging is proposed as a potentially positive condition by May (2011) who argues that:

A feeling of not belonging need not always be experienced negatively. For many of us, there exists a tension between wanting to be similar to and belong with others, and wanting to be unique and different from others.

(May, 2011, p. 373)

Indeed, as will be seen, a number of my interviewees for varied reasons choose not to belong in particular circumstances. Others however find themselves outsiders beyond any choice of their own. The issue has its complications. While choosing not to belong, to be an outsider, may be a subjective choice, how much might it also be a response to prevailing norms? Nava (2007) states that for her, '... 'not belonging' did not mean being excluded', but in her following words, 'On the whole we were shielded from racist excess by our alternative network', she also suggests that her not belonging within generally accepted benchmarks was

⁵ Christensen (2009) terms this 'unbelonging', a term I do not find particularly helpful as to me it suggests a stark change from belonging to not belonging.

mediated by her belonging within a, ‘...growing community of non-belongers’ (Nava, 2007, 153). Thus not belonging was a positive experience but perhaps because there was an alternative position of belonging. Here, not belonging, where understood as not belonging within the realms of accepted norms, does not necessarily mean not belonging *at all*; when belonging is denied it can lead to other belonging. The writers of *Outsider Poems* (Zammit *et al.*, 1999) who find themselves outside the norms of mental health, have also, in coming together, forged a different belonging, beyond the parameters of the conventional. It is also important to clarify that not belonging can have different meanings within subjective belonging than it does in the politics of belonging. Within the latter, not belonging refers to exclusion (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 2006a; Yuval-Davis *et al.*, 2005). Within the former it can refer to different states of not belonging, whether chosen or not, such as isolation, lack of engagement or disconnection, in addition to exclusion.

My analytical approach⁶

Conceptualising belonging as shifting, multiple and multi-layered through everyday practices informs my choice to explore belonging through narrative, intersectionality and performativity because, as will be argued, these are most pertinent approaches to drawing out the complex nature of belonging.

Narrative

An early theorist on belonging, Probyn (1996) writes that belonging, more than identity:

... captures [...] the desire for some sort of attachment, be it to other people, places, or modes of being, and the ways in which individuals and groups are caught within wanting to belong, wanting to become, a process that is fuelled by yearning rather than the positing of identity as a stable state.

(Probyn, 1996, p. 19)

Similarly May, discussing belonging as a dynamic practice rather than a static state, cites de Certeau in stating that, ‘Belonging can in other words be depicted as a trajectory through time and space’ (May, 2011, p. 372). This mutable, dynamic trajectory of belonging posited by them corresponds with the reflexive demands of narrative which draws out meaning through its unfolding of lives through time and context (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Elliott, 2005). Indeed it could be questioned whether belonging can exist outside narrative, as its understanding is

⁶ This introductory outline to my analytical approach is developed more fully in Chapter 2, *Situated narratives*.

so dependent on the perspective of time. Therefore my life story narrative approach in exploring belonging begins with the women's childhood and follows the changes through the process of their adult lives. In addition, through stories, the narrative process can draw out self-understanding of belonging which is elusive and hard to define, as the quote from my interviewee Samina (p. ii) so palpably expresses, and as Ludwig states, '... it is through narration that the [intersectional] axes of identity and subjectivity become explicit...' (Ludwig, 2006, p. 249). As a deep emotional attachment, belonging is not simply difficult to express but is generally only recognised in its absence as it is not consciously apparent in everyday practices (May, 2011, p. 370; Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10; Squire, 2008, p. 41; Samson, 2007, p. 3; Maslow, 1943, p. 390).

Intersectionality

In recent years the concept of intersectionality has been applied to the study of belonging by a number of academics.⁷ Yuval-Davis argues that belonging should not be linked to any one social location over others but that belonging has to be considered at the intersection of many different locations such as gender, nationality and class (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 13). Christensen similarly argues that, '... there is no meaning to the notion of 'black' for instance that is not gendered and classed, no meaning to 'women' that is not ethnocized and classed' and that much discussion of belonging tends to 'homogenize the differential meanings of such identity notions' (Christensen, 2009, p. 25). Other theorists do not actually mention intersectionality per se in relation to belonging but advocate the need for a 'multidimensional' analysis (May, 2011, p. 370) that takes account of belonging's 'plurality of forms' (Antonsich, 2010, p. 653). Belonging studies which apply an intersectional approach include: a Danish project examining political structures and everyday life with migrants and non-migrants in a northern Danish town (Christensen and Jensen, 2011); Canadian research among newcomer youths arguing that the complexities of mental health and belonging cannot be understood through discrete social categories (Caxaj and Berman, 2010); and a London research examining the formation of 'identity, belonging and community' among women of differing ethnicities and sexualities (Jackson, 2008). Such an intersectional approach is evidently necessary for my study which explores the experiences of belonging of diverse women living in one East London street, which can only be understood by taking account of their varying social locations, including ethnicity, citizenship, generation, motherhood and class.

⁷ See for example: Christensen and Jensen (2011); Yuval-Davis (2011, 2007, 2006b); Caxaj and Berman (2010); Christensen (2009); Anthias (2008, 2002); Jackson (2008).

Performativity

According to the theory of performativity as outlined by Bell (1999) '... one does not simply or ontologically 'belong' to the world or to any group within it. Belonging is an achievement at several levels of abstraction' (Bell, 1999, p. 3). In this she argues that belonging is a product of performed cultural norms, and that cultural norms are not a consequence of belonging. As such belonging is achieved by the continued repetition of particular performed acts (Bell, 1999, p. 3; Leach, 2002, p. 285) which are embodied in sensory experience (Bell, 1999, p. 8). Following Butler, Fortier (1999) applied the theory of performativity to belonging in her empirical study of a London Italian migrant community, in which she argues that performativity is not merely the repetition of activity or the enactment of routine pursuits, but is the repeated invoking of social norms within such activities that gives them their 'binding power' (Fortier, 1999, p. 43). Fortier develops her argument on the basis of ritualistic religious practices; other research discusses performativity with regard to more informal everyday practices. Fenster (2004) uses the notion of 'ritualized' practices with a broader interpretation of everyday walking streets; women taking children to school, taking dogs for their daily constitutional, or for shopping (Fenster, 2004, p. 244). Similarly, Benson and Jackson discuss the formation of class belonging in South London through performative acts of shopping and house renovation (Benson and Jackson, 2012, pp. 8-9). My research follows this more everyday approach to performativity, particularly considering ethnic belonging, cultural transmission and belonging to place through performative practices such as celebrations, festivals, language, religion, motherhood and food.

The street

The Family from One End Street (Garnett, 1937), one of my favourite childhood books (and still on my bookshelf), was probably my first encounter with the idea of people's lives on 'the street', which, as a device used across media and within academia, appears to be gaining popularity. *Coronation Street*, Granada Television's soap opera is now in its sixth decade but a number of more recent street incarnations include the Jimmy McGovern TV series, *The Street* (2006, 2007, 2009), set in a Manchester street which is used as launch-pad for dramatising crises in residents' lives, and John Lanchester's (2013) novel *Capital* which relates the lives of the residents of a South London street as it unravels the mystery of postcards they are receiving. The TV documentary *My Street* (2008) was Sue Bourne's means of getting to know her neighbours in Chiswick, and retired

academic Elizabeth Sandie (2011) profiles her York neighbours in *Just One Street*. Jerram's (2011) *Streetlife*, uses the notion of the street to explore Europe's 20th century history through looking at the provenance of momentous events on city streets. Miller (2008a) and Miller and Woodward (2012) base their research into material culture on the inhabitants of London streets, exploring their relationships through their objects, and, investigating why people wear denim. My thesis therefore follows a varied tradition of using the street, in my real life scenario as the bedrock from which to research everyday practices to elicit how people experience belonging. The novelty of my own positioning as a neighbour brings a piquant distinction from other work but generates its own potential relationship complications which will be considered in the following chapter.

The distinctiveness of my approach

Most empirical research on subjective belonging has focused on particular social locations. Class is the specific focus of belonging in a number of studies (for example, Benson and Jackson, 2012; Watt, 2009; Rogaly and Taylor, 2009; Savage *et al.*, 2005). Within different age groupings such as children, young people and adults, belonging is commonly explored through migrancy (for example, Erel, 2011, 2009; Ní Laoire, *et al.*, 2010; Gedalof, 2009; den Besten, 2010; Christensen and Jensen, 2011; Caxaj and Berman, 2010), and very often belonging is examined in relation to specific ethnic groups (for example, Erel, 2011, 2010; Fathi, 2011; Haw, 2011, 2010; Skey, 2011a; Begum, 2008; Jackson, 2008; Antoniou, 2004; Fenster, 2004; Anthias, 2002; Eade, 2004, 2002a; Olwig, 2002). My research is distinctive in that it is exploring belonging across a broad range of social locations and is considering the subject from varying ethnic backgrounds, both migrant and non-migrant, with women of different classes, and cross-generationally, seeking to develop a more inclusive understanding of subjective belonging. That is, I have not chosen a topic or social location, but, within a classification of women, am exploring *how* particular women experience belonging through their everyday practices.

I am adding to the body of existing work on belonging by applying narrative methodology to the study of belonging in women's ethnically diverse, everyday lives. I believe narrative inquiry is particularly well suited to uncovering layers of meaning within subjective experience. By detailed investigation of women's subjective belonging through semi-structured life history interviews, and through hermeneutic, thematic analysis, I am exploring the multi-layered complexities of

belonging within the realities of women's whole lives. I am applying a holistic life story approach across social locations exploring everyday practices to consider the nature of subjective belonging.

My methodological approach reflects my theoretical construction of belonging as a multi-layered, complex and shifting process. I perceive belonging as a multiplicity of affective attachments that give meaning, self-assurance and security to people's lives which alter with time and experience. Rather than proposing a positivist definition of belonging to be hypothesised and proven, my approach is phenomenological, encouraging the women's sense of belonging to unfold and be understood through their own subjectivity.

The thesis is also innovative in focusing the study of belonging in one East London street, home to a particularly diverse population. Situating my research in this specific geographical context enables me to explore belonging not only in relation to individuals' social locations but also in terms of how the women relate to the street, to their neighbours and to communities. That the street is also my own home brings another original perspective to the research.

Within the historical and social context of the one street I am applying a holistic, life history approach and narrative methodology to create an inclusive model of women's subjective belonging, and develop a theoretical framework for understanding the multi-layered complexities of belonging.

Chapter outlines

Having established in Chapter 1 the theoretical rationale for subjective belonging, Chapter 2 considers in detail both the methodological framework of narrative inquiry and the methods used in the research process. The chapter begins by situating the study of belonging within the sociological tradition of linking individual biography with social history, before exploring examples of belonging in biography. The chapter argues the fundamental value of narrative methodology for studying subjective belonging, discussing in particular: meaning-making through co-construction; the pertinence of restorative hermeneutic interpretation; the temporality of belonging understood through narrative articulation, and using a thematic content approach. It also argues that using an intersectional approach is crucial to understanding belonging through people's multiple social locations. The second half of the chapter discusses the research process, beginning with a short

descriptive history of the research locality, and detailing the participant recruitment process. Various aspects of the interviewer/interviewee relationship are reflected upon, particularly dilemmas and ethical issues arising from my position as researcher and neighbour.

Chapter 3 is the first of four analytical chapters and considers the participants' childhoods and origins. The first section focuses on the women who experienced a strong sense of belonging as children, and proposes the concept of 'localities of belonging', which refers to the attachments to particular people in particular places which give meaning to their lives. The second section discusses the women who, by the nature of either their moving from place to place, or their being estranged from others, experienced what are described as 'dislocated belongings'. The third section explores the reasons and circumstances for migrant women moving to Britain, and on the part of the British-born women, their migrant and/or British backgrounds.

Chapter 4 and Chapter 5 are closely related in focusing on the women's ethnic belonging. Chapter 4 begins with a theoretical section outlining differing definitions of ethnicity, and argues that ethnic categorisation limits and undervalues the significance of subjective ethnic belonging. A brief outline of some of the varying meanings attributed to identity leads to an argument that belonging should be differentiated from identity on the premise that belonging, unlike identity, demands a performative element. The following sections analyse the women's responses to the question of what meaning ethnicity had for them, drawing out the complexities of their adult ethnic belonging and making connections with their childhood localities and dislocations of belonging. The second half of Chapter 4 considers the relationship of citizenship and belonging, not least highlighting the women's difficulties in articulating meanings of citizenship beyond that of status, or connections with their everyday lives. Four case studies are used to illustrate very differing migrant experiences relating to citizenship status. The narrative process draws out some of the deeper implications for their belonging in the light of government policy and the women's own changing circumstances.

Chapter 5 considers the performative aspect of everyday practices which, it is argued, reveal the multiplicities of subjective ethnic belonging. The first section explores the women's narratives of custom and tradition in the form of celebrations, festivals, language and religion, and examines the significance of cultural transmission in the lives of both migrant and non-migrant mothers. Food is the focus of the second half of the chapter, drawing first on theories of food and

performativity in migrant studies, before unravelling the multifaceted and complicating relationships between food and ethnic belonging, revealed through the narrative process. Analysis of these food stories demonstrates that performative practice per se does not offer ethnic belonging, but that context and meaning related to the women's multiple positionalities are the crucial determinants.

Chapter 6, the final analytic chapter, considers the women's belonging to the local area. The chapter comprises three sections concerning class, place and community, exploring the women's sense of belonging in the three separate fields, but also considering how their constitutive relationship influences the women's belonging. The class section focuses on the women's reasons for coming to and remaining in the street pertaining to theories of elective and selective belonging, and discusses the concept of middle-class habitus in relation to the complex and changing ethnic and class demographic in Newham. Using a fluid notion of place as social relations, the second section analyses the women's predominantly ambivalent relationships to the area and through their stories explores the factors which inhibit or enable belonging to place. After reviewing differing concepts of community, the last section considers community through a notion of shared fields of belonging and analyses the women's attachments to both place-based and non-place-based communities.

Chapter 2

Situated narratives: methodology and methods

Introduction

The methodology and the methods used in my research are discussed in detail in this chapter. In clarification, I am using definitions of methodology as the epistemological approach for understanding social reality, and methods as the techniques and processes used in understanding it (Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002, p. 11). Narrative inquiry is discussed as both the primary methodology employed and as the methods of data collection and processing. The chapter argues that narrative inquiry is the most apposite means of studying subjective belonging as it offers a depth and richness of detail in its explicit focus on the stories of people's lives within the context of their social and historical period (Elliott, 2005). Contextualising the personal and social connections of belonging within sociology and biography, I argue that the humanistic and phenomenological approach of narrative is most appropriate to the demands of understanding the complexity of subjective belonging throughout people's whole lives.

The chapter discusses core elements of narrative theory including meaning-making and co-construction, hermeneutic interpretation, and autobiographical time, proposing their pertinence for the exploration of women's experiences of belonging.⁸ Crucially the chapter also argues the necessity of an intersectional approach within the methodology, situating the women's narratives in relation to their (and my) multiple social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2006b), and exploring belonging through the contextual particularity of their distinctive and varying positionings. I propose that the open and unfixed qualities of both intersectionality and narrative inquiry (Tamboukou, 2011b; Davis, 2008; Squire, 2008) complement each other in their application to the shifting, ambivalent and complex nature of subjective belonging.

The second half of the chapter situates my research within the social and geographical history of the street and considers the research methods specifically in the context of my roles as both researcher and neighbour. Detailing the recruitment of interviewees in the street and the reflexivity required in 'my own

⁸ It is not suggested that time is prioritised over other modalities of belonging such as people, place and sensory experience which are given close attention in later chapters. Narrative psychologists in particular often prioritise the component of time in their discussion of narrative meaning, for example Freeman (2012, 2010b); Brockmeier (2009, 2002, 2001); Andrews (2008).

backyard', I take account of the potentially differing perceptions and power imbalance between my interviewees and myself. I ruminate on the insider/outsider positioning that my being neighbour and researcher puts us all in, not only during the research process but also far beyond, and consider how the relationships between us are changing as the process continues. An important focus is given to my failure to involve more than one South Asian woman in an area in which South Asians constitute a substantial population.⁹ The context of neighbourly research brings enhanced dimensions to ethical issues such as anonymity, confidentiality, and particularly informed consent.

Biography and belonging

At home in sociology

To go backwards in order to begin, it is useful to be reminded of the importance some leading sociological theorists have afforded individual biography. Mills (1959) in his seminal book *The Sociological Imagination* of half a century ago, argued that it was imperative to link history and biography to understand the world (Mills, 1959, pp. 3-13). That to make sense of society one had to look at individual lives, and vice versa; that a critical understanding of the connections between the private and the public was the only means of becoming knowledgeable about either. Nearly sixty years on Back (2007), in an ethical bid to better understand the multicultural world in which we live, urges us to '... pay attention to the fragments, the voices and stories that are otherwise passed over or ignored' (2007, p. 1), and prompts us to listen '... for the background and half muted' (2007, p. 8) and '... allow the 'out of place' a sense of belonging' (2007, p. 22). He calls for the need '... to link individual biographies with larger social and historical forces and the public questions that are raised in their social, economic political organization' (Back, 2007, p. 23). Thus across the temporal divide, the quest for a more rounded, broader, thicker, more nuanced understanding of our world, has not lost that focus. In the late 20th century, characterised by him as the late modern period, Plummer (2001) notes how a wide swathe of disciplines across social sciences had taken a 'narrative turn' (Plummer, 2001, pp. 10-15) emphasising thinking about individual lives. The first criterion of Plummer's own theory of 'critical humanism' is that of human subjectivity, and in his most recent book on sociology he states:

⁹ 'South Asian' is used to denote people whose ethnic origin comes within the regions of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who comprise nearly 36 per cent of Newham's population (Great Britain. ONS, 2012).

... if we lose sight of real, lived biographically fleshy, feeling lives then we can easily get lost in abstractions divorced from social life. Sociologists can never forget that it is a dense moving biographically grounded web of human life that is the baseline of their study. [...] A central tool for sociology is hence always the **life narrative** – listening with empathy to the stories that people tell of their lives.

(Plummer, 2010, p. 116, emphasis in original)

The matter of biographical lives

Understanding people's lives, as we have seen from the above, is central to understanding society. There are of course many ways both quantitative and qualitative of researching lives by involving people who are said to be representative of any given group. People's desires, beliefs, needs and situations can all be taken into account to provide generalised portrayals of what is meaningful in their lives. Indeed, much research is undertaken using large samples whose participants are said to be representative of the demographic being studied. But while such research can provide useful information, what it cannot offer is the richness and the complexity that is inherent in a person's life, and the depth of subjective understanding that gives meaning to it. *Belonging*, a study undertaken by *The Social Issues Research Centre (SIRC)* (Marsh *et al.*, 2007), is an example of a large-scale project which used more than 2,200 online poll participants, with poll questions informed by two focus groups. This research explored the notion of belonging in the 21st century '... and identified six key social identities in which people most frequently anchor their sense of belonging today' (Marsh *et al.*, 2007, p. 4), which were: family, friendship, lifestyle choices, nationality, professional identity and team spirit/shared interests. These six areas are not dissimilar to some of the themes of my study but what such research cannot offer is the depth of narrative inquiry. The report suggests a complexity within its results and we learn for example that whereas 14 per cent of participants had a strong belonging to one particular social group, 34 per cent believed their belonging had changed over time (Marsh *et al.*, 2007, p. 10). However the research does not explain how their belonging had changed, or why, or what the changes meant to the participants. Similarly, the poll results inform that nationality provides approximately 37 per cent of people with a sense of identity and belonging (Marsh *et al.*, 2007, p. 13) but the intricate complications of nationality and belonging cannot be discovered through a poll or focus group. Quantitative research of this kind is clearly useful in offering a breadth of enquiry to the study of subjective belonging but needs to be complemented by qualitative research which can offer more detailed, nuanced

understanding of what that belonging actually means to those individuals and their lives.

Insight into the multi-dimensional nature of people's lives is produced less from generalised questionnaires and more in the construction of personal life narratives within which layers of meaning unfold in the stories that are told. Such case studies cannot create the statistical samples offered by the poll questionnaire, nor claim to be representative of the nation, but the depth and diversity of life story data provide the fullness of experience that does allow us to make general inferences about social processes (Riessman, 2008, p. 13). In addition, my research is not attempting to achieve a representative sample of women. I have neither desire nor intention to attain some form of statistical depiction of belonging such as the *SIRC* report exemplifies. My purpose is to look beyond generalisations to individual storied lives, '... where insights, understandings, appreciation [and] intimate familiarity are the goals ...' (Plummer, 2001, p. 153). Previous narrative research I have undertaken on belonging also suggests that the concept of representation is somewhat flawed. I have interviewed four women who, like me, were all second-generation Jewish refugees who lived in East London. We all had left-of-centre politics, were not religious and all worked within related fields. The research revealed however that despite these similarities all of us had very different experiences of belonging. Although we may have been categorised as representational of a certain type of person, such categorisation offered no profound understanding about our subjective selves (Samson, 2008a, p. 63).

A very different but interesting question concerning representativeness was illustrated in my research with two Bangladeshi women. Safiya, a college educated, middle-aged divorcee had lived most of her adult life in East London. She was insistent that she was the wrong person for me to interview because she was untypical of other Bangladeshi women in the area. She had an expectation that I was looking for something in particular which she did not fit. She seemed unconvinced by my attempts to explain that I was not looking for generalisations, or norms, and much less stereotypes, and rather than seeking characterisations to slot into a notional category, I was looking to understand her unique life (Samson, 2007, p. 35). It is the very complexity of the individual life that is compelling, the depth and multiplicity of an individual's experience that can yield such wealth in understanding. And as Plummer appeals, there is a '*... need for grounded, multiple and local studies of lives in all their rich flux and change*' (Plummer, 2001, p. 13, emphasis in original).

Belonging is an issue that has been written about across many genres and it is significant that the majority of this writing incorporates elements of life story. I would in fact question whether it is at all possible to write about subjective belonging without biographical input, whatever the genre, precisely because belonging is such a personal experience, it is at the emotional core of oneself. Discovering, seeking, understanding, finding and experiencing belonging – and not belonging – all feature in the fiction, non-fiction, memoirs and literature of Alibhai-Brown (2010), Alagiah (2006), Guterson (1995), Hoffman (2005, 1991), hooks (2009), Karpf (1997), Kay (2010), Litvinoff (1972), Manzoor (2007), Obama (2008), Phillips (2001), Pool (2006), Said (2000), Stone (2007) and Younge (2010) to name but a few. Whatever the overt theme of the book, subjective belonging often emerges as a subtext, insinuating its way into the work, albeit not necessarily having been signposted as an explicit intent. As will be seen in the following section, thinking about belonging is often triggered by experiences of disruption or not belonging.

Younge (2010), for example, warns that 21st century world issues are cornering people into finding ways of survival through fore-fronting their identities above all else, rather than finding commonalities with others. In considering how capitalism, globalisation, religion, poverty and other world-defining matters lead people into identity alignments, Younge weaves his own story of seeking belonging in Britain, his birthplace and childhood home, Barbados from whence his mother came, and America, where he now lives. In a biography telling the story of a child born of white parents in apartheid-ruled South Africa, Stone (2007) unfolds the extraordinary events in the life of Sandra Laing whose race was legally reclassified back and forth from white to coloured three times until she, as an adult, finally claimed her right to be accepted as coloured. The complexities of belonging arising from Sandra's life story are profound. For it was not simply her own belonging found in question but that of her seemingly white supremacist parents and her brothers, from all of whom she was estranged for nearly 30 years. As a middle-aged adult reflecting on her life, Sandra wonders whether as a 10-year-old having been forcibly removed from her whites only school, she chose to spend her time with black people because, 'Maybe I was testing did I belong with them' (Stone, 2007, p. 123).

Sri Lankan-born BBC newscaster George Alagiah (2006) intertwines an exploration of multiculturalism and migration in Britain with his personal memoir of his life in Sri Lanka, Ghana and Britain. As with others, Alagiah does not directly discuss belonging. After some 40 years since leaving Sri Lanka he returns to discover he has an unexpected 'umbilical connection' with the country. He says:

This is not about citizenship. I am British, This is not about allegiance. I am loyal to Queen and country – whatever that means these days. This is not about where I call home – it's London. This is about a *feeling*.

(Alagiah, 2006, p. 53, emphasis in original)

Guterson's (1995) novel, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, is a 'whodunit' whose tale of an American-born Japanese man on trial for murder exposes historical racism in its evocative portrayal of Japanese migrants in the US. The not belonging of second-generation migrants is conveyed in the reflections of the character Hatsue as she contemplates being forced to leave her American home after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941. She reflects on '...the gulf that separated how she lived from what she was. [That she] was of this place and she was not of this place...' (1995, p. 179). Hoffman (2005) recalls in her 'meditation on the aftermath of the holocaust', her initial rebuff of holocaust survivors' children (of which she is one) being part of a 'second generation'. While she saw such a claim as an identity group affectation, she also found it to be some relief that it was an experience that counted, suggesting it was a symbolically understood 'imagined community' that offered '... a sense of mutual belonging' (Hoffman, 2005, pp. 25-28).

Jackie Kay (2010) and Hannah Pool (2006), both subjects of transcultural adoption, tell remarkable stories of their experiences of tracing and meeting their birth families and their relationships with the families they grew up in. With uncompromising openness Pool describes the excruciatingly complex feelings of going from her London home to Eritrea aged 29 years to meet the village family she was born to having been adopted by a British academic as a six-month-old baby. With sensitive insight Pool reflects on the insecurity of not having a sense of belonging that the norm of family usually brings, and the complex losing and finding belonging with old and new family and friends. Kay, the birth-daughter of a Scottish Highland mother and Nigerian father, vividly portrays her seven-year-old incomprehension on finding out her white Glaswegian parents are not her real parents when she questions why she is a different colour to them. With great humour Kay tells of the enormous love and closeness she has for her childhood family, her euphoria at university in finding other black people and joining women's and gay groups, and the emotional roller coaster of trying to relate to the birth parents she finally meets as a middle-aged mother herself.

Said's (1999) memoir *Out of Place*, a vivid account of his multicultural, multilingual and multinational life, and hooks' (2009) *Belonging: A Culture of Place*, both concern themselves expressly with the nature of place and its relation to belonging in their lives. Said, a Palestinian born in Jerusalem who found some belonging as a

schoolboy in an American school in Cairo and spent most of his teenage and higher education years in the US, contextualises his subjective narrative with both Arab and world events, concluding that he learned ‘... to prefer being not quite right and out of place’ (Said, 1999, p. 295). In a series of essays, hooks writes about home, land, nature and environmental sustainability, race and class through a lens of belonging. She left her Kentucky home as a young woman feeling at the time it was a place she needed to escape from, but she kept with her the quilted blanket given by her grandmother and braided tobacco leaves which exemplified her belonging there. In later life hooks finds herself unexpectedly returning to live in Kentucky where she felt, ‘a sense of belonging that I never felt elsewhere, experiencing unbroken ties to the land, to homefolk, to our vernacular speech’ (hooks, 2009, p. 24).

It is clear from the examples given that belonging is closely related to a wide range of issues including identity, race, migration, multiculturalism and place. Such issues are often written about in more theoretical terms but when these matters are explored through more personal, reflective stories, subjective belonging and not belonging come to the fore.

Unfolding narrative

Having explained why I believe a narrative approach is the most appropriate for studying subjective belonging, it is clear that I need to consider the theoretical approach in greater depth. As Roberts (2002, p. 132) states, narrative inquiry offers a ‘meaningful, interpretive, humanistic’ perspective in the understanding of people’s lives. Squire (2008) in her description of experience-centred narrative, goes even further in arguing the human affinity with narrative, ‘...the experience-centred approach assumes that sequential temporal orderings of human experience into narrative are not just characteristic of humans, but *make* us human’ (Squire, 2008, p. 43, emphasis in original). It is precisely this human/narrative bond that determines narrative as the most apposite tool for exploring belonging. I would argue that belonging is central to the self and a profound human need. It is at the core of a person’s sense of self and is a relational process that shifts and changes through life. As such it demands a holistic approach (Lieblich *et al.*, 1998) that considers the whole person within their life story. Indeed, it is arguable that subjective belonging can only be understood in the context of people’s whole lives and the stories they tell. Narrative, through a framework of chronology, meaning and social context, is the story of a life told which gains meaning through its

unfolding of time and sequence within its cultural context (Elliott 2005, p. 4). Applying Ricoeur's (1967) idea of a hermeneutic circle, my process of understanding belonging begins with my interviewees' own articulation of it and develops as they make meaning of their own lives in story.

It is as well to consider how meaning becomes meaningful. For there is no meaning a priori, meaning is made by humans, and as Plummer notes, humans are the only meaning-making animals. It is human cultural life that enables humans to make meaning of their lives and it is, 'Only humans [who] weave complex narratives about the nature of their own identities and personhood' (Plummer, 2010, p. 38). Taking Plummer's words to be true, who is making meaning of what is said? Someone must have responsibility for making that meaning. Could it be, initially at least, anyone other than ourselves? Do we not talk to ourselves, mostly in silence, sometimes out loud, all the time? Are we not always telling ourselves things, imagining how our day, or year, or life is going to pan out? Those are the stories that perhaps originate from others and develop when we talk with others – we are constructing meaning as we tell those stories. In describing this construction of our own 'narrative identity', Eakin questions how we would know who we are, if we could not tell stories about ourselves, giving examples of two people who suffered respectively brain damage and dementia, neither of whom could remember who they were; whose lives he describes as having been 'de-storied' (Eakin, 2008, pp. 1-8).¹⁰

I would argue that belonging should be understood much as Eakin describes the relationship between narrative and identity, when he says that '... narrative is not merely *about* self, but is rather in some profound way a constituent part of self' (Eakin, 2008, p. 2, emphasis in original). Belonging is of self and is also meaningful only as a constructed understanding (other than perhaps in the more external sense of being a member of an organisation). For, as discussed earlier, belonging cannot fully be understood through a questionnaire – the core sense of belonging that I assert does not come in tick-box or simple sentence answers, it is something deeper, a meaning that needs to be made sense of, that needs to be considered, constructed. The response from my interviewee Agnes when I asked if she belonged in the area she lives, was that I asked a 'hard question'. And in answer to whether she felt she would lose her Polishness if she did not celebrate Polish traditions she stumbled over her thoughts saying, 'No, no, no, no, no. No it's hard. Hard to say. Er ... I don't know. I feel, how do I feel?' It was not at all clear-cut

¹⁰ See also Sacks (1986).

and simple for Agnes to express her sense of belonging, because its meaning was not immediately apparent to her, it had to be revealed through a process of reflecting about her life. The complexities and nuances of the interviewees' own understanding of themselves is elicited through narrative exploration: their feelings, ambivalences and internal tensions.

This prompting of conscious awareness is also exemplified in my previous research. At the end of one interview, my interviewee commented that she had known she was confused about her life but that the interview had highlighted to her quite how conflicted her thoughts were (Samson, 2007, p. 34). Another interviewee thanked me for interviewing her saying, 'It's not often I get a chance to consider my life in so much detail' (Samson, 2008a). The examples above illustrate what Squire notes of the experience-centred narrative approach, 'The work rests on a phenomenological assumption that experience can, through stories, become part of consciousness' (Squire, 2008, p. 41).

Co-constructions of meaning

The narrative process is explicit in revealing how meaning is constructed not only through interviewee self-reflection, but also through the interviewer/interviewee interaction. In an overview of several oral historians Yow (2006) shows that since at least the 1980s prevailing thinking on narrative inquiry compellingly argues the notion of meaning being produced through the joint subjectivity of both people. She describes this approach as '...a collaborative effort, not between authority and subject but between two searchers of the past and present' (Yow, 2006, p. 62). Similarly, Thompson says, quoting Mishler, '...the interview should be interpreted as a joint product between *two* people, 'a form of discourse...shaped and organised by asking and answering questions'' (Thompson, 2000, p. 280, emphasis in original). Within Tedlock's concept of the intersubjectivity of dialogue, it follows that the questions asked must be examined as much as the responses (Tedlock, 1979, cited in Yow, 2006, p. 59). In more recent years, this notion of co-construction has become embedded in narrative theory. Salmon (2008) writes that interviews are:

... in fact *a/ways* a co-construction. Interviewers now routinely seek reflexivity to trace how, often in the most subtle ways, they have jointly acted to construct the narrative which has emerged from the encounter.

(Salmon and Riessman, 2008, p. 80, my emphasis)

The implications these statements have for my work are clear. And, with reference to my earlier argument that meaningful belonging is a construction, it is inevitable

that I would choose both theory and method that support such a dialogic approach. For I am purposefully pursuing subjectivity. There is neither neutrality nor objectivity in what I am doing – I am seeking the personal understandings and feelings of others, from an involved and emotionally engaged perspective as the interviewer. It must be remembered that I am coming to this research wanting to understand the meaning of belonging and not belonging to others precisely because of my own relationship to belonging and not belonging. I never was an objective observer; I have always been deeply involved. I see the integrity and empathy I can bring to the co-construction of the interviews as a value of the narrative approach – in diametric opposition to a traditional positivist stance.

The notion of co-construction should not however be mistaken for a cosy tête-à-tête where two people are on equal terms. As a feminist I am conscious of ‘... how power is implicated in the process of producing knowledge’ (Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002, p. 156). ‘Prior concepts [...] shape [...] my listening and questioning ...’ (Riessman 2008, p. 32) and my being seen as white British and/or Jewish may impact on interviewing women of varying ethnicities (Phoenix, 2008, 1994; Bhopal, 2001; Andrews, 1991). These are my questions that frame the interview and convey my interest; they do not merely implicate me in the shared process but demonstrate long before it has even begun the power I exercise (Andrews, 1991, p. 58). In employing a semi-structured interview method I ask the same questions of all interviewees, and their experiences take them along routes of thought that in the co-constructions weave very different stories. But of course this too can be waylaid by the most conscientious of interviewers who may interrupt and thereby determine other directions of thinking (Riessman, 2008, p. 33). Interviewees are not entirely powerless, they can refuse to answer questions or withdraw altogether (Phoenix, 1994, p. 58) but a co-constructed interview is designed and generally directed by the researcher. Lastly, I come to each interview differently. In many ways the same person with the same questions, my state of mind will not necessarily be the same, any more than my relationship with different people, and such matters inescapably affect the resultant co-construction.

Interpreting hermeneutics

The unfolding of meaning is not of course complete in the co-construction of the interview. It is a process that continues in the analytic interpretation of the stories told, and beyond. Indeed, it is questionable that the interpretation process has an end, for every understanding of the analysis will be made through the reader’s own perspective; there is always potential for a new interpretation. Back (2007)

suggests that we could understand the perspectives of people photographed without their explanatory words if we could only 'listen as we look' and think our way into their lives (Back, 2007, p. 113). Yet is it not also true that however carefully we listen and however hard we concentrate on hearing the voices of the pictured, we are hearing them through the sounds of our own cultured experience – we are interpreting them? Similarly, despite my efforts to understand my interviewees' words, silences, laughter and distress, their meanings are mediated through the intangible filter of my life and my belonging. My understanding and resultant transcription influence analytic meaning (Riessman, 2008, p. 22), and it is through the lens of the reader that my words will later be read and understood. It is the interaction between the context of the text and that of the reader that gives the narrative its significance (Ricoeur, 1991a, p. 26). Interpretation therefore is both inevitable and subjective and such a hermeneutic approach demanding "imaginative reconstruction' or 'empathy'" on the part of the researcher (Elliott, 2005, p. 37) makes it a suitably appropriate means of analysing subjective belonging.

But which hermeneutic approach? Josselson's (2004) discussion of Ricoeur's hermeneutics of faith and hermeneutics of suspicion is illuminating. Considering them in more specific and less emotive terms, Josselson uses the notions of restorative to refer to the hermeneutics of faith, and demystification to those of suspicion. Restorative hermeneutics fore-fronts belief in the words and meaning of the interviewee, the interpretation a means of revealing that culturally symbolic meaning, that is, 'restoring' the meaning intended by the interviewee. In contrast, hermeneutics of demystification derives from the idea of the interviewee's meaning being hidden from the interviewee herself, the cultural symbols being used to disguise meanings which have to be demystified, or discovered from the unconscious. I believe it is the humanist hermeneutics of restoration that offers the form of interpretation that can suitably be applied to notions of subjective belonging. It is precisely the subjectivity, the personal sense of how women experience belonging, that I am interested in exploring. The veiled meanings of the hermeneutics of demystification, typically employed in psychoanalytic analysis, are not what I am seeking in these women's stories. I wish to interpret the women's sense of their lives in ways meaningful to them, not superimpose a perspective that suggests their insensible knowledge is more meaningful than their conscious beliefs; it is the meaning-making of the co-constructed dialogue that is significant for me through a restorative perspective. My providing transcripts for interviewees to verify whether the co-construction has been interpreted in accord with their

memory is an important part of the meaning-making and ethical process and one that could have little place in the hermeneutics of demystification.

While I position my approach within the hermeneutics of faith/restoration I am not simply looking to mirror the women's words, indeed, there are times when I question their understanding. Also it is necessary on occasion to consider the meaning of silences when there are generally none, hesitations in a usually articulate and flowing speaker, and contradictions where one might expect consistency. Such inconsistencies can be revealing of an interviewee's uncertainty about her life, as in the examples given earlier of Agnes being unable to simply discuss notions of her belonging. In recognising her own cognitive disconnection with her belonging, the co-construction of the interview acted as a catalyst of realisation and exploration where Agnes could assemble her thoughts, make sense of, indeed construct her understanding of her belonging. Surprisingly Josselson states that such matters of interpretation are more in accordance with the hermeneutics of suspicion which she says understands the life story as 'a construction', while the hermeneutics of faith sees it more 'as a report about life experience' (Josselson (2004, p. 14, 18). While she does subscribe to the idea of the interview being a collaborative event (Josselson, 2004, p. 7), Josselson's view appears to be at some variance to the mainstream understanding of narrative, to which I subscribe, of meaning not only being constructed but also co-constructed.

Josselson argues it would be unusual for researchers to combine hermeneutic stances suggesting that demystifiers would find subjectivity superficial, and restorationists would balk at looking at hidden meanings (Josselson, 2004, p. 22), while also stating some combination would be possible. However, she also presents the hermeneutic approaches as opposing camps with a stark dichotomy of purpose: restoration for 'giving voice', and demystification, for decoding hidden meanings. I would argue that there is a hermeneutic spectrum with blurrier edges than Josselson sets out, because although I am specifically concerned with subjective belonging, I am very wary of the plausibility of 'giving voice' as she describes (Josselson, 2004, p. 6), and while exploring subjectivity, I will also investigate less explicit responses. My stance will not therefore be 'moving between' (Josselson, 2004, p. 22) the positions that Josselson notionally offers, but will stand between them, not 'giving voice' but seeking to reveal layers of meaning, including those found in contradictions and silences. (Ultimately positioning myself in faith, with a small dose of suspicion thrown in.)

Here I wish to return to Ricoeur's (1967) circular hermeneutics with both the co-construction and interpretative processes in mind. For, a more linear thinking could suggest they lead to a post-structuralist notion where each step on this meaning-making path eventually leaves little or nothing real about subjective belonging; that endless permutations of meaning dilute the possibility of any real sense of belonging and merely lead to a relativist dead-end of nowhere and nothing. Instead of which I argue that the gradations of co-construction and the variant cycles of interpretation are not only 'circle[s] of belief and understanding' (Josselson, 2004, p. 9) offering layers of meaning each developing from another as in Ricoeur's hermeneutic circle, but are perhaps better imagined as a hermeneutic spiral; interconnecting meanings that can also be traced temporally and contextually back and forth along the process.

Belonging in time and narrative

In itself it is nothing, yet it is experienced in every aspect of our lives. We cannot escape it, but we cannot hold it. So integral, yet so elusive. Time. Christian Marclay ingeniously captures time in his 24-hour long video *The Clock* (2010). For two hours I sat captivated by the montage of thousands of famous and not-so-famous film scenes edited together in real time, creating a minute-by-minute narrative of splintered stories. A real-time chronology of fragments which itself creates a fragmented chronology of a 24-hour slice of life.

Marclay's play with time underlines time's inescapable parallels and interconnections with life and with narratives as the stories of life told. Time permeates, delineates, orders our lives; we live through and within time. Hoffman (2009) notes how the vast and infinitesimally small extremities of time do not belong within the temporal scale of human experience (Hoffman, 2009, p. 17), but our human belonging and not belonging are experienced firmly within those extremities. Time binds and bounds our experiences of people and place, language and love, reason and emotion. We are enveloped by time and we experience belonging within time, at various times. Time is surely the one universal constituent of belonging. Our cultural belonging tempers how we live time, and we understand time through narratives we tell of our belonging.

The timely thoughts outlined above indicate the inseparability of belonging and time, and demonstrate why the study of belonging therefore cannot but incorporate, if not be guided by, the element of time. In this context, it can also be clearly appreciated that narrative inquiry, considered in a framework of temporality,

meaning and social context (Elliott, 2005, p. 3-15), provides apposite methodology and method for exploring belonging. Subjective belonging is thoughtfully articulated through consideration of life events and experiences narratively, and such a medium both encourages reflection on how belonging is experienced at different times of life, and enables mapping of changes in belonging over the life course. Time features in interviews on belonging not only in response to directly time-related questions such as, 'Would you tell me about your early life', but also in apparently temporally unrelated questions such as 'Are you a British citizen?'. The latter in fact can draw out whole stories about when, as well as why, people acquire different citizenships.

As an example of how life story, time and belonging can be found embodied in the most unexpected of questions, I would like to relate a little story about me. I was recently asked, 'Why is rye bread so important to you?'. I responded:

This is not any rye bread, this is a particular rye bread that we used to have occasionally at home when I was a child. It was a special treat and we got it from the delicatessen. [My eyes shut] I can see, I can smell the delicatessen; it was so special and was the only place where we could get the different foods that were occasional treats but were somehow a part of our life. You couldn't buy rye or salami and such things generally then. It was just so fantastic when I moved to Tower Hamlets in the 70s and I found the same rye bread in the beigel shop. It was such a surprise and was just wonderful. I hadn't had it for years. It became something I had at home with my children and they love it too. Living in Newham now we only have it occasionally again since we're no longer near the beigel shop.

This very small story so vividly illustrates how time and belonging naturally emerge in narrative. It incorporates the re-living of long past sensory memories of childhood which intimate belongings to ethnic origins as well as family, the recent past of re-found belongings, the passing on of inherited connections, and the loss of belonging. The story connects the different places, people and food which both imply and exemplify what were both real and imagined belonging and not belonging to childhood and adult homes, family, parents, offspring, Germany, Jewish, being, moving, yearning. These connections are reflected in Hoffman's notion that time is not only subjective but importantly also 'relational and intersubjective' (Hoffman, 2009, p. 117), as the story brings together experiences shared with other significant people in different periods of my life. The story also illustrates how belonging is embodied in time (as well as in people, place and sensory experience) through the performativity of repeated acts (Bell, 1999; Leach, 2002).

Every story, according to Ricoeur (1991a), combines two sorts of time, one, a formless, unending and undefined succession of events, and the other, the

elements of 'integration, culmination and closure' which give the story its shape, or as he says a composition, '... drawing a configuration out of a succession'. Within this definition he suggests the character of the story's 'temporal identity' is one of '... something that endures and remains across something that passes and flows away' (Ricoeur, 1991a, p. 22). Applying Ricoeur's dual notion of time to my recollections, the persisting experience of the rye bread are set against the memories of my passing life.

The rye bread story simultaneously speaks *of* the past and the present (Bruner, 1991, p. 29) and *in* the past and the present, reconciling time periods like layered scatterings of composite matters; time-coated belongings. The evocation and merger of such varying time modes as these create a complexity that Brockmeier (2000) considers a distinctly human temporality, and manifestly different to chronological time. Naming it 'autobiographical time', he describes this human temporality as, '... a multi-layered weave' in which modalities constantly shift between past, present and future and argues that narrative provides the most appropriate, if not the only form '... in which this most complex mode of human time construction can exist at all' (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 56). Unlike the classical linear concepts of what Brockmeier calls 'Newtonian time', he describes the narrative concepts of time as, 'outcomes of symbolic constructions', which can only come into being through language. In this way, time is evoked as a means of making sense of experiences through the telling of stories (Brockmeier, 2009, pp. 117-118).

In this proposal of autobiographical time, Brockmeier discusses the notion of identity being a 'diachronic construction', a reflexive construction understood through its historical development, that is, a formation shaped by life experiences of different times. It is not a 'once-and-for-all', permanent composition, but one that is formed and flows through the influencing stimuli and effects of different times (Brockmeier, 2000, pp. 53-54), (and perhaps analogous to that of Hall's notion of identity of 'becoming rather than being' (Hall, 1996)). This relational perspective regarding identity is one that I would argue must also apply to belonging. For as argued previously, belonging is unlikely to be either a singular or a fixed aspect of life. More plausible is that people's belonging will modify as different aspects of their life adapt, move, and transform, and as the life course develops. It follows therefore that awareness within the continuum of belonging and not belonging is most commonly felt in relation to different time experiences, or understandings of belonging which have been disrupted.

Subjective belonging cannot be understood without time being seen as a fundamental constituent. Consider how and when belonging, or not belonging, is contemplated. It is thought about in the present but it is reference to the past that provides the relational time-space which makes sense of belonging. This retrospective reflection can also give meaning to thinking about future belonging. A number of my interviewees commented that they had never really thought about their belonging, and certainly not as children. Yet, the interview process prompting consideration of their early lives brought many stories of belonging and not belonging from childhood and their later lives. How this temporality – specifically retrospective reflection – is interwoven with meaning and narrative is deftly summarised by Freeman (2010a) when he states, ‘Self-understanding occurs, in significant part, through narrative reflection, which itself is a product of hindsight’ (Freeman, 2010a, p. 4). He argues that hindsight brings understanding and meaning that cannot be known in the present and that endings bring significance to events that they cannot previously have had (Freeman, 2010a, p. 41-62). Such significance is dynamic rather than static as meaning given to an experience in the present is not the only meaning, but time and further experience create other meanings which are neither more or less truthful but different. Perhaps present experience could be described as being in limbo, awaiting future hindsight to clarify or bring other meaning. As Freeman says:

... the stories we tell are always provisional and revisable, partly owing to the nature of interpretation and partly owing to the nature of narrative and narrative time: even when I least expect it, a new experience or piece of information may come along that will utterly transform my understanding of the past and the story I tell about it.

(Freeman, 2010a, p. 85)

The narrative process Freeman describes is evidently applicable to my interviews in which the women are motivated to re-interpret their past lives in relation to their belonging.

For Game (2001), belonging is found neither in the past of childhood nor the present of new experience but in the principle of childhood as, ‘...a changeless state co-existing with irreversible and chronological times’. She argues that belonging is, ‘...a primitive knowledge, beyond the actuality of years’ (Game, 2001, p. 227). It is an argument with which I find accordance in so far as belonging can be seen as ‘a-temporal’, that is, as being outside of any particular time period. For example, feelings of belonging in the past, or past belongings, are experienced in the present. We look back to consider how we belonged as children, or of course, how we did not belong. The feelings are felt in the present but they are not of the present. I also agree with Game that feelings from childhood remain with us at a

deep level whether for example, they are her feelings of her sense of belonging with horses or mine about not belonging amongst my peers. These are what I would call deep, visceral feelings that remain inside us and can be evoked at different times. Where I take a different approach to Game is in her understanding of such feelings to be beyond human time and found in the archaic and mythical realms of a more spiritual analysis. My concern is to understand these feelings of belonging through hermeneutic exploration of women's lived and living experience, and through my interpretive analysis of their social locations in the time of their lives, or as Brockmeier proposes, in autobiographical time (Brockmeier, 2001, p. 248).

The time element of narrative inquiry has been shown in this section to be particularly apposite for studying belonging. As well as incorporating time, narrative is important in that it also allows people time to reflect on their subjectivity. A number of interviewees have thanked me for giving them an opportunity to consider their lives in greater depth, time that is rarely given for such contemplation. Hoffman thought-provokingly sums this up:

... if we want to make sense of our own affective experience, we also need to dip inwards and travel through our subjectivity; to 'work through' the content of our feelings and let them sift through strata of the self; to weave disparate episodes of our lives and interpret and reinterpret their meanings.

(Hoffman, 2009, p. 173)

Thematic content approach

The choice of analytic approach is made complex by the fact that narrative analysis engenders wide theoretical debate and is increasingly varied in form (Plummer 2001, p. 187; Riessman 2008, p. 13). The diversity of analytic method is therefore vast but key distinctions are made. Mishler suggests a three-way categorisation of content, structure and performance, while Lieblich *et al.*'s (1998) approach is two-dimensional, distinguishing between content and form and between holistic and categorical perspectives (Elliott, 2005, p. 38). Riessman (2008) suggests four typologies of thematic, structural, dialogic/performance and visual. My life history interview approach, fitting with the whole-person nature of belonging, patently points to a predominant focus on content analysis rather than structural, and from a holistic perspective. A thematic approach to my interviews has previously proved to be an invaluable means of considering the complexities of belonging found in the intricate weaving of strands that comprise people's lives (Samson, 2008a, 2007). As Riessman notes however, choosing a thematic route is itself not entirely

straightforward as there is no 'set of rules', it can be approached in various ways. How the 'unit of analysis' is defined is a key marker of the different approaches (Riessman, 2008, p. 54; 75). In my case the units of analysis are the stories told by interviewees in response to questions which themselves are informed by the themes identified to elicit intricate detail of the women's lives. These responses vary between short answers, lengthy stories and interactive exchanges – all constructions of meaning that offer insight to their understanding. While thematic analysis does not have to be narrative, narrative methodology is distinctive in keeping the story intact for interpretative purposes, preserving sequences of dialogue giving a 'wealth of detail' for scrutiny. In addition it is case-centred, and because it is specific to time and place, it rejects generalised theories and explanations. For these reasons thematic narrative analysis is unlike the grounded theory approach in which theory evolves from data. In contrast, narrative is theory-led but allows 'novel theoretical insights to be made' (Riessman, 2008, p. 74).

Intersectional belonging

I began this chapter by considering biography and its link with belonging. As biography is of course embedded in history, so the individual is embedded in the social, making evident that belonging too has a social as well as personal dimension. Hence this study is more than the sum of 14 individual parts, in studying the women's personal lives it is also studying society and social practices. People's subjective experiences are inevitably shaped, although not determined, by their social positionings (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 198), and my analysis of women's belonging accordingly takes account not only of their varying social locations, but also my own as the researcher, situating us all in respect of our different social locations of class, ethnicity, generation, etc. which render us 'multiply situated' (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p. 316). Arguing against a relativist and totalising '... godtrick of seeing everything from nowhere...' (Haraway, 1988, p. 581; 584), Haraway demands, '... the view from a body, always a complex, contradictory, structuring, and structured body...' (Haraway, 1988, p. 589) in which knowledge is situated. It is argued that other forms of subjective experience, such as the imagination, are similarly situated (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002). Intersectionality is an approach which enables consideration of people's experience in relation to these multiply situated locations, as '... the positionings of social individuals or groups is multifaceted, intersectional, shifting and contradictory' (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p. 325). These varying positionings influence individual experience in different and contradictory ways rendering

subjectivity itself subject to ambivalence and instability (Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis, 2002, p. 326).

For clarity in defining my approach in using intersectionality I will first sketch an outline of prevailing definitions and interpretations. While identified long before, it was first named as a means of understanding the oppression of black minority women in the United States at the end of the 1980s, and there is continuing debate about how intersectionality should be used, what it can achieve, and its benefits and disadvantages as theory and/or method. There is however general agreement that intersectionality has a much broader application than the intersections of race, gender and class alone, and has relevance in considering all women's lives (see for example: Lewis, 2009; Davis, 2008; Hancock, 2007; Yuval-Davis, 2007, 2006b; Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006; Brah and Phoenix, 2004). Davis suggests:

Intersectionality refers to the interaction between gender, race, and other categories of difference in individual lives, social practices, institutional arrangements, and cultural ideologies and the outcomes of these interactions in terms of power.

(Davis, 2008, p. 68)

Hence the perspective of intersectionality enables understanding through consideration of the many facets of people's lives rather than fixing them by individual elements that constitute their selves, and it considers those elements in relation to each other. As Brah and Phoenix argue, intersectionality is a challenge to essentialist notions of 'woman' and signifies:

... the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts.

(Brah and Phoenix, 2004, p. 76)

Using intersectional analysis thus allows difference and diversity to be explored alongside theorising in a meaningful way for all women (Davis, 2008, p. 72). Yuval-Davis also states that the point of intersectionality:

... is to analyse the differential ways in which different social divisions are concretely enmeshed and constructed by each other and how they relate to political and subjective constructions of identities.

(Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 205)

It is evident from the definitions given, particularly those related to subjectivity, identity and experience, that intersectionality can offer both a suitable and valuable approach to analysing subjective belonging.

Within the different intersectionality approaches, a persistent discussion has centred on how the various social divisions might intersect, whether in an additive

way or as constitutive of each other. The constitutive approach offers a means of considering how each social location is linked to, affects and is affected by the others, while it is argued that the additive approach leads to a more simplistic counting up of how many divisions by which a person is disadvantaged. The constitutive approach ensures a more holistic understanding, through the consideration that all the social divisions can only be understood in the context of each other. For example, that class is always raced and gendered, race is always gendered and classed, and gender is always classed and raced (Yuval-Davis, 2006b; Anthias 2008; Davis, 2008; Lewis, 2009).

Yuval-Davis (2006b) discusses three issues specifically important to my research. First, there is now a consensus amongst many feminist academics, if not all, that intersectionality can be used as an approach to all women's lives, the, '... advantaged as well as disadvantaged. This expands the arena of intersectionality to a major analytical tool...' (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 201). Second, as long as the positionings expressed by women themselves are not conflated with the social divisions generally, there is no reason why any number of relevant social divisions could not be used in analysis providing they are situated in their particular social and historical contexts (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 202). Lastly and significantly, the major social divisions that are relevant to most women such as ethnicity, class, generation, religion and nationality are not the only ones that need consideration. While others are deemed minor because they do not affect the majority of people, they are crucially important to those whom they do affect in making sense of who they are and establishing themselves within hegemonic structures. Yuval-Davis cites membership of castes, and indigenous and refugee peoples, as minority axes which may be invisible (Yuval-Davis, 2006b, p. 203); other examples of minority axes, certainly in Britain, may be people with disabilities, second-generation immigrants and travellers.

These issues are relevant to my work since my methodological approach includes asking a range of questions which directly relate to the differing social locations of belonging, of women from many parts of the world, and analysing how those social locations of belonging intersect. As a social phenomenon belonging is constructed in relation to the different social divisions such as gender, class, sexual orientation, ethnicity, generation. In particular I am exploring issues of everyday life including, for example, food, motherhood, religion, citizenship, ethnicity and class which have major impact on how women's lives are lived. In using an intersectional approach I intend to '... make visible the multiple positioning that constitutes everyday life and the power relations that are central to it' (Phoenix and Pattynama, 2006, p. 187).

Similar features shared by narrative inquiry and intersectionality complement each other and make the latter a most appropriate methodology for my research. Both are enriched (and possibly burdened) by the nature of their flexibility, fluidity and equivocality; neither have strict nor fixed parameters firmly guiding their application, providing freedom to follow one's research and create a path distinctive to its needs; an exciting, exploratory route to take (but which also brings fears and fantasies of failing to 'do it right'). Andrews *et al.* (2008) introduce their book, *Doing Narrative Research*, by stating that, '...narrative research offers no automatic starting or finishing points. [...] Clear accounts of how to analyse the data ... are rare' (p. 1). And in her opening words to the Centre for Narrative Research celebratory tenth anniversary conference, Tamboukou (2011b) stated that for 10 years, '... we have been trying hard not to answer the question of 'what is narrative?'. She argued that pinning down narrative was 'futile' and that it should not be ontologically defined but be allowed to remain an open process 'about doing' (Tamboukou, 2011b, pp. 7-8). Davis (2008) argues similarly about intersectionality that its open-endedness and ambiguity are both its strength and weakness. That its lack of pre-defined constraints leaves it open to criticism for potentially enabling limitless intersections of social divisions, but that for the same reasons it also allows the unearthing of evermore fruitful areas of exploration. Davis states, '... its vagueness and open-endedness, initiates a process of discovery which not only is potentially interminable, but promises to yield new and more comprehensive and reflexively critical insights' (Davis, 2008, p. 77).

Ludvig (2006) discusses how intersectionality is seen to be weak because the varying social divisions that may exist cannot all be separated out to establish subjective understanding of which difference may cause discrimination (p. 247). However she also argues that narrative inquiry can offer clarity in subjective understanding of the differing axes, stating that, '... it is through narration that the axes of identity and subjectivity become explicit' (Ludvig, 2006, p. 249). As such, narrative inquiry can overcome the problem for intersectionality of potential endless differences, because it is the narrator who defines her own issues, highlighting what differences are specifically important to her. Applying McCall's 'intra-categorical' approach to intersectionality, Ludvig uses the example of a single person narrative to study the intersections within individuals as well as their relations to others (Ludvig, 2006, p. 248), an approach very much in line with my own.

A useful example combining an intersectional approach with narrative to explore belonging is provided by Prins (2006). In her research she studies a number of her

former Dutch and Moluccan classmates, analysing their belonging in relation to a number of social locations such as gender, ethnicity and class. Her findings that:

... individual identities are constructed at the crossroads of different axes of social difference and inequality and that these positions are not static and given, but sites of constant struggle and negotiation.

(Prins, 2006, p. 284)

are clearly relevant to my own research in which I argue that belonging is a multi-layered, complex and shifting process that can continue to change throughout the life course. In addition Prins argues that, contrary to the suggestion of Anthias and Yuval-Davis (1992, p. 6, cited in Prins, 2006, p. 288), belonging is not exclusively linked to ethnicity. Indeed, just as my interviews revolve around questions of belonging related to family, childhood, origins, and notions of home, Prins finds that belonging is, '... related to attachment to, or identification with, social class, family, forebears, a particular region or the landscape of one's childhood' (Prins, 2006, p. 288). She adds that belonging denotes an experience of 'fitting in' to a range of social locations which may be hegemonically or narratively constructed. In my previous research (Samson, 2007) exploring the narrative belonging of two Bangladeshi women, I found some significant differences in their feelings of belonging which could be analysed according to intersecting social locations. Despite both women describing their ethnicity as Bangladeshi (they were both British nationals), their sense of belonging to Bangladeshi culture and religion was very different. Generational difference¹¹ was apparently a major factor, as was place of birth. One of the women came to live in Britain as a young adult and had been here about 20 years at the time of the interview, the other was a 19 year-old British-born teenager. At the time I did not knowingly use an intersectional analysis but my findings both accord with an intersectional approach, and are in agreement with Prins' assertion that belonging is much broader than ethnicity alone.

Introducing the neighbourhood

The Hollybarn¹² neighbourhood is situated in the northern reaches of the present London Borough of Newham. Large Victorian houses in leafy tree-lined streets originally provided a comfortable suburbia for the middle-classes. At the turn of the 21st century it is undoubtedly less salubrious than in its heyday. While many of the houses are still single-family homes, others have been divided up into bedsits, flats or maisonettes, and householders a mix of owner-occupiers, local authority,

¹¹ See, for example, Andrews (2002) and Pilcher (1998) on issues about women and generational difference.

¹² A pseudonym.

housing association and private tenants jostling side by side. Though the neighbourhood is still considered a distinctively more 'upmarket' area of Newham, it is no longer a suburban haven, and Newham ranks decisively as one of Britain's most deprived boroughs (Great Britain. Department for Communities and Local Government, 2011). Using the street as the basis for exploration situates my research in a particular social and historical context, where belonging can be considered with reference to a specific time and place. This section provides a brief history of Hollybarn highlighting the changes that have occurred over time, both in the buildings and in their inhabitants.

Developing West Ham

In the early 19th century West Ham was the south-west corner of rural Essex, bordering London's East End to the west alongside the River Lea, with the River Thames to the south. Industrial development during the early part of the Victorian era heralded major changes. The construction of the East Counties Railway in the mid-1800s in which Stratford became a key railway junction and major employer in the area, and the development of the Royal Albert Docks, both generated further industries. Increased demand for unskilled and semi-skilled labour coincided with a reduction of work both in the East End and agricultural Essex and many workers migrated to West Ham, meeting the needs of the expanding workforce (White, 2007, p. 83; Newham History Workshop, 1986, pp. 1-16; McDougall, 1936). Thirty-thousand houses were built in the area between 1871 and 1901 (Powell, 1973) and what had been a largely rural district became a densely packed town of Victorian back-to-back terraces in the southern part of the borough and in Stratford for workers and their families. The north-eastern sector of West Ham saw a markedly different kind of development. The advent of the railway led to the development of higher quality homes for the middle-classes who could now commute from Central London, and for the clerical workers and professionals in the new local industries (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, pp. 4-5; Hall, 2007, p. 84; White, 2001, p. 24; Marriott, 1991, pp. 13-19). Born in 1891, West Ham resident William Perry recalled as a boy seeing 'a cripple' making wire baskets which he would sell '...to the rich people of [North Newham] who had conservatories' (Perry, 1984, p. 8).

The Hollybarn neighbourhood and its early residents 1891-1911

Developed in the late 1800s, Hollybarn boasted mostly large properties with gardens front and back and often with servants' annexes. Houses were the only buildings on these streets, without shops, churches, community spaces, or public

houses within the neighbourhood itself. A nearby high street was developed and a number of churches were built in the local area, particularly non-conformist chapels, and by the end of the 19th century the neighbourhood became home to a respectable Victorian middle-class community. Census records¹³ for the period show that the early occupants were predominantly nuclear families, sometimes with extended family members and/or boarders, and many with a servant. Employment of male residents around the turn of the century included a mix of professional, clerical, business and trades, while the few women who were employed worked mostly in teaching or dressmaking. These householders and their wives tended to be British-born, many of whom had moved into the neighbourhood from the East End and other parts of what are now East London, and some who had moved within the area taking advantage of the new large houses it offered. By now there were a number of churches in the area and ‘... a large proportion of West Ham’s churchgoers came from the middle-class areas of [North Newham]’ (Powell, 1986, p. 127), so it is likely many of the Hollybarn residents were church members or possibly attended the nearby synagogue which was permanently established in 1899 (Bloch, 1997, pp. 7-9).

Mapping people and properties: 1911-1946

Through use of Electoral Registers it is possible to some degree to map the changing nature of residents, and the changing nature of the properties they lived in. From the early 20th century when the vast majority of recorded surnames were Anglo-Saxon, significant changes can be marked in the type of names that appear over the following decades. Indeed, the use of ‘ethnic names’ is an established means of plotting population changes (Waterman and Kosmin, 1986, p. 489). Registers of the first half of the 20th century show an increasing prevalence of names in the street that can be identified as East European, German or Jewish, which concurs with Bloch’s (1997) history of the local synagogue whose members grew nearly fourfold between 1911 and 1935,¹⁴ and the relocation to the area of Jews from the East End (Marriott, 2012; Cherry *et al.*, 2005; White 2001; Bloch, 1997; Widdowson and Block, no date; McDougall, 1936). A changing Hollybarn population was also recorded during the Second World War by Doreen Idle who noted that many labourers and unskilled workers moved from the south of the borough into the former homes of ‘professional and artisan types’ in the north:

13 For reasons of anonymity no explicit references are given for census records or electoral registers. The information given is very general, based on a sample of properties and their households followed through the lifetime of the street. It offers a sense of the neighbourhood’s history without providing specific detail.

14 Waterman and Kosmin (1986, p. 493) specifically discuss use of synagogue membership lists as well as Electoral Registers and telephone directories for mapping Jewish populations.

Many of these better houses built during the last two or three decades of the nineteenth century are now seldom or never inhabited by the class for which they were built. Originally intended for the use of a single family, they now hold two, three, or even more families.

(Idle, 1943, p. 20)

Mapping people and properties: 1946-2010

Electoral Registers demonstrate that the post war decades to the mid-1970s saw the highest levels of multiple occupancy with most of the properties fluctuating between single and multiple occupancy. In the early post-war period people tended to stay for many years whether in multi-occupied or single-family homes, but the 1960s and 1970s saw great change in patterns of residency with many changes of occupants. Those years also saw the greatest number of singletons in addition to couples and families. While there were still a few very long term residencies, this period also marked the start of a more mobile, transient population. Since the 1970s there has been a definite reversal with properties being changed back to family homes though there are still far more units of accommodation in the street than were originally built due to the number formally converted into flats and maisonettes.¹⁵ This reversal to single family properties is reflected in the Electoral Register in the shift from approximately 75 per cent multiple occupation in 1946 down to about 35 per cent in 2010. However late 20th century incomers tended not to stay as long as early family households and were mostly no longer spending decades in the same home.

It can also be seen in the Electoral Registers that the post-war decades brought considerable change and diversity to the ethnic make-up of Hollybarn. European Jewish names appeared in the records less frequently, hardly any by the 1970s which is also when local synagogues amalgamated due to dwindling congregations (Bloch, 1997, pp. 105-106; Widdowson and Block, no date). Names with identifiable European and African origins began to appear from the mid-1960s. South Asian¹⁶ and Caribbean people had been living in Newham at least since the mid-19th century¹⁷ and have constituted a growing proportion of the borough's population since the latter part of the 20th century (Marriott, 2012, pp. 330-342;

¹⁵ Personal conversations with some housing association tenants have revealed that they are being relocated from their flats to free up houses for reconversion to large family homes.

¹⁶ As it is not possible from the Electoral Registers to define country of origin, South Asian is used to denote names whose ethnic origin comes within the regions of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

¹⁷ South Asian, African, Caribbean, Irish and European people have lived in what is now the London Borough of Newham for centuries (see for example, Marriott 2012; Chater, 2009; White, 2007, 2001; Winder, 2005; Visram, 2002, 1993, 1986; Fraser, 1993; Hutton, 1993; Merriman, 1993; London Borough of Newham. The Newham Story, no date; Widdowson and Block, no date).

White, 2001, pp. 130-144; London Borough of Newham. The Newham Story, no date). It is not possible to identify Caribbeans by name from the Electoral Registers, but there have certainly been Caribbeans in the neighbourhood during the past decades.¹⁸ Precisely because South Asian names are distinctive, it is possible to mark the arrival of Indians, Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in the registers and there appear to have been few South Asians living in the Hollybarn neighbourhood before the 1980s. Like the Jewish migrants before them, many lived elsewhere, including the East End, while establishing themselves, presumably before being able to buy property in the neighbourhood. By 1990 the Electoral Register suggests about 25 per cent of the properties housed South Asian people, and by 2010 approximately 36 per cent of the households are South Asian. In Newham generally 'The fastest growing ethnic group is the Asian community' (A2D, 2011, p. 2), and the 2011 Census confirms that South Asians constitute over one-third of its population (Great Britain. ONS, 2012).¹⁹

This brief historical journey through the last 120 years has evidenced the continuously changing environment of people and property in the street and it provides a context to understanding the current ethnic and class mix among my interviewees.

Research relationships

How little we know of our next door neighbour and his habits; how little we know of ourselves. Of conditions of life and thought in another class or district, our ignorance is complete. The anthropology of ourselves is still only a dream.

(The Photographers' Gallery, Mass Observation, 1937)

Meeting the street

By the time I began some preparatory fieldwork I had lived in the street for over nine years but I knew few residents. I had neighbourly relations with people opposite and adjacent to me but besides them my connections were decidedly few, and there were no obvious community foci within the neighbourhood. I initially rejected cold calling or using a letter outlining my research as first means of

¹⁸ I am aware of this through personal connections.

¹⁹ Of the London boroughs, Newham currently has the highest number of people with Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin (Great Britain. ONS, 2013).

approach; I wanted it to be more personal, so chose to use my limited connections to ask those people I did know, who they knew. Who did I 'know' apart from immediate neighbours? One family, slightly, from many years earlier who had also lived in Tower Hamlets, and a former university lecturer who I had spoken to once. Through these people I hoped to set in motion 'neighbourly snowballing', approaching women either by being introduced or simply by using (with permission) the name of the person who had mentioned them. In retrospect it proved to be an over-optimistic, if not naive, ambition since it provided me with only half a dozen other women happy to talk to me. Others I gathered through very tenuous connections such as, for example, one whose door I had once knocked on to enquire about broken Victorian tiles in her garden, a couple of women I had met twice through attending a neighbour's book club, and one with whom I had a nodding acquaintance. As I was not a complete stranger, it was perhaps cool rather than cold calling.

Having formerly rejected Miller's criticisms of my planned method for not being inclusive (Miller, personal conversation, 2009), I found I would need to take the more impersonal route of putting letters through letterboxes and knocking on doors. Miller had said one should always knock on doors so that all residents have an opportunity to participate. I however had wanted to engage in the social mapping of my neighbours. Who would introduce me to whom? Did people know many others? How ethnically mixed would the introductions be? My lack of snowballing success must surely reflect a lack of connection in the street. The 80 or so letters (Appendix III) I duly put through letterboxes generated three direct responses and one indirect; one woman I met at a local meeting who on hearing my name asked if I was the one doing 'the research', she had seen my letter but had not got round to contacting me. Knocking on doors to follow up the letter initially appeared to be positive; a number of women assured me they would definitely be in touch, but despite further attempts to engage them, no-one came back to me. Over the next months I continued to talk to people about participating by following initial contacts made, chatting to women in passing as they worked in their front gardens, telephoning those who had given me their numbers.

My pilot project involved about 40 conversations with different women. These led to 14 long preliminary interviews in which I outlined my research, trialled some initial questions, took handwritten notes and learned something of my potential interviewees which helped to inform research questions. It also led me to others living in the neighbourhood with differing local knowledge such as a local vicar and a local historian. The women were a widely varying mix of nationality, ethnicity,

class and generation, not by design, because I was talking to anyone who would talk to me, but due to the multicultural and class mix of the area. But, despite positive interest shown in my project, of the original 14 who talked at length with me, only six women agreed to participate in recorded interviews.²⁰ People's lives did not stand still; a university student in her early twenties left the family home to move elsewhere; a young single mother was re-housed from a flat to a house in a different borough, a woman in her late 70s suffered a stroke and sadly later died. The transient nature of people's lives inevitably shapes and transforms my research.

The range of women talking to me included those who were young and older, mothers and not mothers, tenants and owner-occupiers, those earning and not earning. Significantly, the women who chose not to participate in recorded interviews were mostly, though not exclusively, South Asian women and white British tenants. The latter included a woman in her late 60s who had witnessed 47 years of the comings and goings of life in the street and who no longer felt she belonged here. I visited her a few times, she told me of her illnesses and memories of the street and how it was so different now. She said she was thinking about doing an interview but when it came to it, would not. So too an unpublished writer who had been friendly and open when I first talked with her but later kept me on the doorstep and was absolute, she, 'would prefer to keep her stories private'. The preliminary conversations included 15 Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Indian women, some briefly 'on the doorstep', a few for some hours, however only one British Bengali woman eventually undertook a recorded interview (this issue will be discussed further in the following section). South Asians constitute over one-third of Newham's population (Great Britain. ONS, 2012) and while I am not at all attempting to provide statistically representative numbers of varying ethnic groups, with only one South Asian interviewee my research cannot be deemed characteristic of the Hollybarn neighbourhood.²¹

20 Ifekwunigwe (1999, p. 45) also found that people were very happy to talk to her, but were not prepared to be interviewed.

21 The London Borough of Newham has the lowest white British population in England and Wales of 16.7 per cent, and as stated previously nearly 36 per cent of the population is South Asian or South Asian British. The borough has a mix of all 94 ethnicities recorded in the 2011 census (Great Britain. ONS, 2012). While it is not possible to give any precise ethnic breakdown of the Hollybarn population, to some degree it does reflect the ethnic mix of the borough as a whole. It seems obvious living here that South Asians and white British are the two largest ethnic groups living in the street and therefore the dearth of South Asian participants in this study is a significant absence. Given the ethnic diversity of the street, indeed its super-diversity (Wessendorf, 2010; Vertovec, 2007), it would seem pertinent to discuss the nature of women's experience of belonging specifically in relation to that diversity with reference to debates on ethnic mixing (see for example, Bridge *et al.*, 2012; Butler and Hamnett, 2011; Finney and Simpson, 2009; Hickman *et al.*, 2008; Phillips, 2005). However no formal question about diversity and belonging was asked of the interviewees though a few mentioned a lack of ethnic interaction, as was found by Butler with Robson (2003, p. 92). With the limited data in general and particularly the lack of South Asian participants, it was not possible to have an adequate discussion on the potential complexities of this issue. Limitations of space in the thesis also guided the choice to leave this issue until a future opportunity when it could be researched more thoroughly.

The 14 women who finally agreed to interview are a diverse assortment.²² An Australian, a British Bengali, a British mixed-heritage Indian-Scot, a Chinese Malaysian, five white British women including one Scot and one English-French mixed-heritage, a Nepali, a Pole, a white (British) Rhodesian, a Trinidadian, a Ugandan (Appendix II). They range in age from mid-20s to mid-70s and have lived in the street from just a few months to 30 years. Two are students, four are full-time mothers, five are in full- or part-time employment and three are retired. Ten of the women are mothers, seven with children still living at home. None of the women were born in the area and only one had spent part of her childhood in the street. Their first interviews averaged just under three hours in length, the shortest being just under an hour-and-a-half, the longest nearly five hours. The actual time spent with the women was often much longer than the interview itself with preambles, breaks, and 'postambles' extending the exchange. Second interviews were formally undertaken with some of the women as a means of following up issues and exploring ideas that arose from the reading of interview transcripts (Squire, 2008, p. 49; Andrews, 2007, p. 69). As I got to know the women better, more informal conversations took place through occasional impromptu meetings in the locality or over a cup of tea in their or my home. With their permission I took notes of such encounters and consider them as adding perspective to our recorded discussions (Andrews, 2007, p. 69).

Reflexive contemplations

As a post-positivist narrative researcher and feminist the issue of reflexivity is paramount in my thinking and my practice. Reflexivity offers an ethical stance where, as interviewer, I am reflecting on my own role in the research process, remaining aware of how I might affect, influence or portray participants, and how they might perceive me. (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Andrews, 2007; Elliott, 2005; Riessman, 2008, 2005; Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002; Plummer, 2001). Disassociating her own positioning from positivist scientific objectivity, Riessman wrote about the need to place herself emotionally in her research, '... typically stripped from the social scientist's account' (Riessman, 2005, p. 24), highlighting the centrality of reflexivity to feminist methodology (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Elliott, 2005; Etherington 2004; Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002; Roberts, 2002;

22 I interviewed all the women who had agreed to participate, turning no-one down. I had been concerned about not finding enough people to participate (Baker and Edwards, 2012). Could 14 interviews offer a 'real' understanding of the experience of belonging? Given the broad range of the women's ethnicities and differing life experiences, and choosing to consider all the women's experiences throughout the thesis, rather than concentrating on a few lives, enabled a reasonably broad and deep exploration, though given the quantity of data much more could have been included. The thesis criteria however restricted how much I could do; having many more participants would have resulted in a rather different project.

Plummer, 2001; Andrews, 1991; Gluck and Patai, 1991). Reflexivity involves recognition of potential power imbalance in the interviewer-interviewee relationship, allowing, if not equality, some redressing of such imbalance (Elliott, 2005, p. 155; Riessman, 2005, p. 24; Etherington, 2004, pp. 32-33; Ramazanoğlu with Holland, 2002, pp. 118-119; Andrews, 1991, pp. 52-63).

'Dear Neighbour' (Appendix III) was my approach in seeking participants, appealing to our shared residency, but however exciting and interesting I imagined the research, there was no rush of neighbours banging on my door. Who was I to them? A stranger above all. But who knows – interfering busybody? Social security spy? Posh woman from a university? At the least a white, middle-class, middle-aged British woman. Certainly not my own perception of myself as a somewhat academically insecure first-generation British Jewish student who was wanting to explore the notion of belonging because she had never quite felt she belonged. How would I be perceived asking them about their belonging? Was it inevitable I would be deemed higher status in the hierarchy of belonging (Wemyss, 2009, pp. 133-140; 2006)? How might the research process be affected by their perceptions? With interviewees of widely varying ethnic backgrounds, of assorted ages and with very dissimilar life experiences to my own, being reflexive is crucial in facing the potential culture clashes of meaning both when the story is told in the dialogic co-construction of the interview (Phoenix, 2008, pp. 64-77; Salmon and Riessman, 2008, pp. 78-85), and through my world view in the interpretive process (Josselson, 2011). Despite living in the same street, how 'other' might I be considered by some of them, as Andrews found (albeit she was 'abroad') when East German interviewees believed that as a westerner she could not possibly understand their situation (Andrews, 2007, pp. 21-25). The tangled mesh of all the perceptions, and all the realities, demand a reflexive consciousness to create, negotiate and be open to renegotiating the continuing research relationship (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2007; Plummer, 2001).

An insider/outsider dilemma

The street being an expedient if novel framework to study the experience of belonging of a diverse range of people does not present a simple and uncomplicated research situation. In fact, living on the same street as my interviewees has raised ethical and relationship concerns which, despite some anticipation on my part, deepened as the research process continued. What contextual meaning does the relationship have with regard to Plummer's 'continuum of involvement' of stranger, acquaintance, friend and lover (Plummer,

2001, p. 209)? My interviewees were mostly strangers, a few acquaintances (definitely not lovers, nor even friends) and the closeness and distance of those associations do not encompass the level of neighbour. Being a neighbour and researcher brings a complexity of being physically the closest one might be to interviewees who are also strangers.

The ambivalence of this relationship relates to the insider/outsider issue long debated within ethnography. On a very simple level, ethnographers may define themselves as insiders if they share such notions as nationality, ethnicity or religion with their interviewees, outsiders if not. This does not of course necessarily mean researching in one's own country, as Ergun found as a Turk interviewing Azerbaijanis in Azerbaijan where due to Azerbaijani identification with Turkey, she was treated more an insider than outsider, while Erdemir, a secular Turkish Sunni, found his republican values and US home gave him a level of insidership with his Alevi interviewees in Turkey (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010, pp. 21-23). Such examples make clear the complexity of the relationships in which shared commonalities can create insidership despite critical differences (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010). Studying queer culture, Taylor's interviewees included close friends and her own partner, a situation in which she defines herself an 'intimate insider' (2011, p. 9). Irwin (2006) also describes the intricacies of being the friend, girlfriend, wife and ultimately ex-wife of a member of her research field of tattooists. All of these researchers in some respect were interviewing in circumstances that could be described as 'their own backyard' but none are quite the same as researching the residents of one's own street. The nearest I have found to that is Miller's (2008a) work on how people express themselves and their relationships through their possessions. He tells of his research collaborator (Fiona Parrott) moving to their research area and becoming a neighbour in a shared household. Miller describes their spending much time with interviewees including going to the pub and popping in to their homes for tea but there is no reflexive account of relationships between Parrott and her neighbouring interviewees, nor whether she remained living there after the research was complete.

To me, being a neighbour is central to my research yet paradoxically I have seen very little of my interviewees. Mine is not an ethnographic study following the day-to-day lives and experiences of my neighbours, but a life history study in which I am exploring the experience of a concept and am including a number of unrelated strangers who happen to live in the place in which I have chosen to focus my research. Where then, do I fit, in the insider/outsider role? Taylor's (2011) and Irwin's (2006) respective societies of queers and tattooists provided situations

where they were clearly insiders or even 'intimate insiders' as Taylor (p. 6) suggests. My neighbourly society provides me with no particular community in which to be an insider. Yet, being a neighbour somehow also counters the notion of me simply being an outsider. Ergun and Erdemir discuss issues of the researcher being an insider in a foreign land and an outsider in one's own land with neither position necessarily bringing inclusion nor exclusion (Ergun and Erdemir, 2010, p. 34). I have the strange feeling of somehow being an inbetweenener in no-man's land, or perhaps in contrast to Taylor's 'intimate insider', a 'distant insider'. Or, in the context of locational proximity, perhaps being a 'close outsider' would be more accurate?

The question of proximity in all its forms of space, time and relationship, is an issue arising from doing research in my own street. Ethnographers spend weeks, months, perhaps occasionally years, living amongst the people they are interviewing, sharing their lives; after which they leave, and go home. I am neither following my neighbours' day-to-day experiences nor sharing their lives, but I am living amongst them – this is home. And it is being at home that is the critical locus. There is nowhere to go from here. My enthusiasm for using my own street as my research area has always been very real but it has also been tinged with a niggling concern about the future. I am well aware of ethical lines that must be drawn regarding what is told to me as a researcher and what is said to me as a neighbour, but my personal liability in being both is disquieting. What might I say that might offend? What might I inadvertently divulge? How intrusive might my research be or become in their lives? These may be usual concerns for a researcher. But for me, these are not issues that can be distanced by leaving the research behind and going home at night. I am at home, these are my neighbours. If I mess up, it could create problems for my research – permission to use their interview data may be retracted. But, more importantly, what will it do to my neighbourly relations?

Am I being overly sensitive and worrying about circumstances that may never arise and will actually remain figments of my imagination? Some people have divulged very personal things in their interviews of which they rarely speak. Will these women who have so generously opened up to me, later feel comfortable about what they have told me, or regret their loquaciousness and resent having spoken to me? These women may be able to retract their permissions but they cannot retract the knowledge about themselves that they have given me, a neighbour, nor how I have used their words.

Crucially, these dilemmas do not end with the interviews but are carried forward into the realms of the written thesis and beyond, where my analysis of my neighbours' words exist in black and white. All the women were given their interview transcripts that I so carefully spent months transcribing, hoping to ensure I would be representing their interviews as they remembered them. But what about the analysis? How might my perception of their lives be received? I bear in mind a 'shared authority' process (Frisch, 2003, 1990) I undertook with my mother regarding a paper I had written about her. Her response to my paper highlighted that I had inadvertently diminished a time-span that was emotionally important to her and had imposed on her '... the experience of being [...] reduced in some way to what the words contain' (Josselson 1996, p. 62). She felt 'I had concertinaed her significance into meaning-less words' (Samson, 2008b, p. 7). At another point, a précis of mine had eradicated the 'thickness' (Yow, 2005, p. 7) of her story, the essence of it, without which for her, '...it [didn't] sound real' (Samson, 2008b, p. 9). It is, Josselson (1996, p. 65) says, 'narcissistically wounding' when an interviewer fails to impart the importance of something an interviewee has said. I am reminded of Andrews' (2007, p. 43) deliberations on whether to deliver a seminar paper that she was planning to give, on discovering that the interviewee prominently featured in the paper, was to attend. This issue is considered further under the section *Ethical interpretations* (p. 65).

Reconfiguring the insider/outsider relationship

As the research process continued so the relationships forged inevitably changed and developed. I did not see my interviewees often but occasionally there were chance meetings in the street, and I did visit them if only to deliver transcripts, collect them, undertake second interviews and complete a brief questionnaire I developed after the interviews to explore their local involvement and their use of local services (Appendix IV). We had a cup of tea, we chatted, and began to discover a little more about each others' lives. A recurring theme was the deliberation as to whether my research might be a catalyst for residents to engage more with each other. If only for reasons of continuing proximity the nature of my status as researcher/neighbour put me in a similar position to the ethnographer, and I was aware of Tamboukou and Ball (2003, p. 11) highlighting the '...tension between involvement and distance, stranger and friend, 'being there' and standing back' in ethnographic work. I was also conscious of Grills' (1998, p. 13) warning that the 'relational complexities' between the researcher and the researched becoming friends, can become troublesome. However I also increasingly felt that I

should do something to bring people together, though that was never explicitly expressed by them.

On a summer day I held a garden party for interviewees and a couple of still-potential participants. Nearly half of those invited turned up, filled their plates with salads and cakes I had made, pulled the chairs in the garden into a circle and talked for a good two hours. Six of them had lived in the street for 20 years or more but apart from a couple of immediate neighbours, they had not previously met each other. Toward Christmas time on a whim I decided to email asking if any of them would like to join me in singing in the street. To my surprise, on a beautifully sunny December Saturday we became a group of about 15, adults and children, and joined by a couple of unknown-to-us neighbours as we went, we carolled our way along the street, kept in tuneful line by my trumpet-playing son and ending with seasonal refreshment in my house. Another day, deep snowfall found my daughter and I wistfully reminiscing about childhoods' past, and we ventured into our front garden to build a snow-woman. Before long we were a group of around 10, a couple of close-by interviewees who had seen us from their windows, and their families and friends. A six foot snow-woman decorated with findings from various front gardens and named after the street, stood for some time, bringing smiles and conversations with passer-by neighbours that had never before happened (and reminiscent of Probyn's original contemplation of the 'outside belonging' she sensed in Montreal (1996, pp. 3-5)). These events have developed a little more connection between interviewees, one has invited others to her charity coffee morning and her annual party, another has held jubilee and Easter gatherings in her own front garden, delivering invitations to the street. I have also been invited to an engagement ceremony and a regular gathering of women friends.

Not wanting to become too close to the women while still deeply involved in my research, I have not purposefully pursued individual friendships, though a couple have developed. Through these shifting relationships I am continually 'reconfiguring the boundaries' of insider/outsider, 're-inventing' myself as neighbour, researcher, friend (Tamboukou, 2010, pp. 53-54). Irwin discusses ethical issues of friendships that develop through the research process, questioning whether they are real friendships, or inauthentic false friendships made purely 'to obtain rich data' (Irwin, 2006, p. 158). She also highlights concern about the imbalance of power in such relationships, but concludes that the relationships she formed were as genuine as any in her life (Irwin, 2006, p. 170). Questioning my own developing friendships for their veracity, I realise that while still in the midst of the research it is hard to entirely unravel feelings of friendship, researcher and neighbourly duty, but whichever way,

being only too aware of the many hours these neighbours have spent giving me their stories, should I not reciprocate? One woman wrote thanking me for the 'precious and treasured' time I gave her on the few occasions I visited the central London hospital where she was staying with one of her children through months of leukaemia treatment. I had been feeling guilty about the paucity of my visits and offers of support. Another woman whose partner was in hospital became very ill herself and needed support, which over the next weeks I gave, from initially helping her to be admitted to hospital, and then visiting and dealing with matters at her home. We have developing relationships, despite our very different experiences and beliefs, but where does neighbourliness end and friendship begin? Let alone researcher responsibility? I am mindful of Andrews' experience when a participant asked of her, 'Are you done with me now?'. She urges caution in considering what good, or harm we may be doing to our interviewees, and how we should continue the relationships (Andrews, 2007, p. 42-43).

The tensions and dilemmas illustrated within this interviewee/researcher relationship are continuing and are ultimately unresolvable. The ambivalent predicament of the researcher/interviewee relationship is clearly compounded by the added element of neighbour. Complicated by muddled and muddied feelings and notions of closeness and distance, the relationship matters matter because of the locational proximity we will share, long after the research ends. Am I insider, outsider, inbetweener? Who knows, but I hope I do not have to move house.

Ethnic positionings

As has been made clear, my interviewees are an assorted ensemble of women embodying a diversity of ethnic background, class, age, sexuality, religious affiliation, able-bodiedness and family make-up (as some of their differing positionings). There are however two main ethnic groups of people for whom the street is currently home. Without intending to reduce them to less than their intersectional wholes, they can be described as white British and South Asian. It is the latter group this next section is concerned with because they are largely missing from this thesis. As stated previously (p. 54) I talked with about 15 South Asian women about my research but only one British-born Bengali woman recorded an interview with me. Of the South Asians, who included Bengali, Pakistani and Indian women, at least nine initially agreed to undertake interviews. These were women mostly in their 20s and 30s who were all employed or were studying, and two who were older with adult children; all spoke English well. Despite their offers to interview some never made specific plans to meet with me;

when I phoned them they were busy, if I went to their homes they were out or unavailable. A few did arrange interview dates all of which were later cancelled or simply did not materialise. It became obvious that my being a neighbour was not of positive significance for these women. I was most definitely an outsider. I knew very few of any of the women I eventually interviewed, and none well, but perhaps differences with these women were both cultural and political. In her East London research with Bengalis, Fenster has said that:

From conversations with them I understood that for the Bengali men to allow their wives to meet an 'outsider' is probably something that threatens the patriarchal norms in their society.

(Fenster, 2004, pp. 251-252)

It is the case that when I came across husbands, brothers, sons or fathers when attempting to organise interviews, the men were always polite but not encouraging, giving reasons why it was not then possible (for example the women being out or ill). Wilson (2006) also reflects on the oppression of women within their historic South Asian patriarchy, discussing belonging in terms of women having the protection of the men in their families and communities and, paradoxically, being considered their possession (Wilson, 2006, pp. 9-10). Bangladeshi friends have said that because I was a neighbour, out of politeness the women would never refuse, but my friends were not surprised that interviews never came to fruition.²³

With interviewees of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds, there is a compelling need to be sensitive to cultural norms (Riessman, 2005). However it is also argued that it is impossible to understand and interpret another's story whose origin is so different (Atkinson, 1998, p. 64). Bhopal (2001) further argues that being a woman is not enough to overcome ethnicity issues in interviewing where being white in itself brings advantage and power, and a lack of appreciation of being racialised on a day-to-day basis. Where I have in the past argued that an interviewer of different ethnicity might also allow feelings or insights to be revealed that would be unthinkable in the interviewee's own cultural setting (Samson, 2007), the events of the past decade have perhaps made it more difficult for a white woman, and maybe particularly one ethnically Jewish, to interview some Black and Asian women.

A young British-born Pakistani woman and her Pakistani-born mother separately talked to me at length during my preliminary fieldwork and initially seemed happy to participate in recorded interviews. After answering all my questions the daughter asked why I was interested in the subject of belonging. I had always believed that if I expected others to share their stories and very personal information with me,

²³ See also Phoenix (1994) regarding the intersections of 'race', class and gender in interviewing.

ethically I should be prepared to do the same, indeed in previous research had used my own background as part of my introductory explanation (Dahl and Thor, 2009). I also shared Portelli's view that the disclosure of relevant information by an interviewer can enhance the interview and help develop a 'self-reflexive thick dialogue' (Portelli, 1997, p. 12). I therefore told her something of my own background. I was never able to learn from them what changed their minds but neither daughter nor mother interviewed with me. The daughter did not answer calls from me, eventually refusing, saying she was too busy. The mother made four or five arrangements with me, none of which materialised. It has been suggested to me by other South Asians that there was 'no question' that the women's decisions related to my being Jewish.

Self-disclosure to my neighbours therefore raises issues 'much closer to home' in my insider/outsider dilemma. How I am perceived and who I believe myself to be, are critical. My outward appearance as a white middle-aged, middle-class British woman provides me with the usual hegemonic power and opportunity such status brings. It belies however the simultaneous outsidership I feel as a second-generation Jewish refugee, and the lack of belonging I experience in the former power-laden category. Haynes (1999) describes how she assertively if not aggressively brandished her Jewishness to make certain her sense of self was unapologetically known. As my adulthood brought me more security about who I was, I too became more open about my Jewishness. However, the context of 21st century politics, not least the police raid of a North Newham Muslim family and the Israeli bombing of Gaza which took place around the time of my preliminary fieldwork, shifts my sense of comfortable disclosure.

Ethical interpretations

A long, long time ago in my few years training/working as journalist I despaired at the all-too-frequent disregard for people about whom stories were alternatively storied to encourage newspaper sales. Those memories have been a constant influence in my determination to behave ethically in my research but my greatest concern is whether my attempts to be ethical can really be actualised. I have followed standard ethical procedures (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Bhattacharya, 2007; Elliott, 2005; Plummer, 2001); the thesis proposal has been approved by the University of East London Research Ethics Committee (Appendix V). I outlined and discussed the planned research and potential future use of recordings with all interviewees, making clear verbally and in writing that they could withdraw from the research at any point, including the withdrawal of their transcripts, and gained their

written consent (Appendix VI). All interviewees were offered their transcripts for reading, commenting on, and amending as they felt appropriate (Andrews, 1991, p. 48). A few women did respond with some typographical corrections, none suggested they had any further concerns. Participants were asked where they wanted to be interviewed, wherever they would feel most comfortable, and the majority initially chose their own homes, though some chose to come to my home for follow up interviews. Critically, I have been open about what I am doing, making it plain from the outset that I am engaged in an academic research project.

So far so good, but how does the messiness of reality fit with my resolve to behave ethically? There are a number of issues within the realms of ethics worth pondering, not least anonymity, consent, confidentiality, trust and interpretation (Josselson, 2011; Riessman, 2008, 2005; Squire, 2008; Andrews, 2007, 1991; Bhattacharya, 2007; Elliott, 2005; Plummer, 2001). Elliott writes of the complications of being ethical, particularly when using the more open approach of narrative interviewing, which due to its less structured questioning can prove harder to explain precisely to participants what is required from them (Elliott, 2005, pp. 141-142). Issues of anonymity and confidentiality are of concern to all research projects but the added element of neighbour poses particular challenges. Squire argues that confidentiality can be guaranteed with the loss of '... some of the data's richness' (Squire, 2008, p. 51), and Josselson states she '...forcefully advocate[s] disguise so that anonymity and confidentiality can be preserved' (Josselson, 2011, p. 37), but here it is difficult to see how that could be entirely achieved. Interviewees who know each other will undoubtedly be able to identify one another, and while names can easily be changed (all names are pseudonyms chosen by the interviewees), people's language, ethnicity, colour, nationality, relationships, etc., are *integral* to this particular project. I did discuss (and put in writing) the impossibility of guaranteed anonymity with participants, prior to consent being requested (Appendix VI). Miller (2008a) states that he changed all details to protect anonymity, including the name of the main street, but does not elucidate on the issue of participants being identified by neighbours.

Participants trust that we as researchers will do right by them as we re-negotiate our insider/outsider relationships, but how can we be sure we are doing so (Bhattacharya, 2007, p. 1097)? How can consent be truly informed when it is gained at the outset of a research process, before it is known how data will be used and what interpretive meanings will be made of them (Back, 2007, p. 98)? And as Josselson puts it:

The concept of '... 'informed consent' is a bit oxymoronic, given that participants can, at the outset, have only the vaguest idea of what they might be consenting to.

(Josselson, 2011, p. 47)

The consent form cannot do justice to the realities of interpretive meaning. My being asked by participants to be given the submitted thesis to read is both flattering and unsettling for me, what will they make of it? I am only too aware of the potential to compromise a participant's sense of self (Elliott, 2005, p. 141), and '... remake others' experiences in our own image ...' as Andrews suggests of Borland (1991) in the latter's portrayal of her grandmother's story as feminist (Andrews, 2002, p. 66). As Andrews says, researchers '... need to tread cautiously with other people's lives' (2007, p. 17).

I take some comfort that I am not alone in my concerns. Riessman (2005) tells of a participant being very upset with what was written about her, reading it years after the interview took place. Reay fears she has misrepresented her working-class interviewees because of class differences and power imbalance in her interpretation (Reay, 1996). Josselson finds it '... narcissistically difficult to manage' the '... mixture of dread, guilt, and shame which goes with writing about others and then encountering them afterwards', feeling she has betrayed her relationship with her participants for a relationship with readers (2011, p. 45). Her own ruminations lead Josselson to accept that however conscientious the researcher, it is rarely possible to write what may be accurate for the participant because:

... we are not speaking *for* our participants. Rather, we are speaking *about* the texts we have obtained from them .

(Josselson, 2011, p. 39, emphasis in original)

As Josselson makes clear, the analysis is my interpretation reached through a restorative hermeneutic stance (see p. 34) arising from my meaning-making positioning. It is my narrative created from the co-constructed narratives of the interview and, '... the meanings we derive from a text were not always already there in the participant' (Josselson, 2011, p. 39). She adds:

... our task is not biographical. Rather, it is to mine some understandings about general human processes from a meticulous and intensive reading of a particular person or several people's storied experience.

(Josselson, 2011, p. 46)

Research participants are therefore a channel through which wider social practices can be understood, and the researcher's writing is one layer of interpretation which itself will be differently interpreted through the positioning of its readers (Ricoeur, 1991a, p. 26).

Josselson's suggested means of alleviating participant concerns, is more fully to expose and explain the processes of interpretation that are to be used (Josselson, 2011, p. 48-49). My unease is perhaps that I did not convincingly do this at the outset, but I also wonder if I had, would it make much sense to interviewees *until* they had seen the outcome of my interpretive thinking. Frisch's (2003, 1990) theory of 'shared authority' is most apposite in this context but my high ideals of offering my interpretations for discussion with my interviewees remained just a high ideal. In the reality of producing a thesis, undertaking this sensitive process with 14 individuals proved impossible due to its complexity and time constraints. Many oral history shared authority processes have been undertaken with groups engendering social change (see for example Kerr, 2003; Rickard, 2003; Shopes, 2003). Fewer are undertaken in individual life history research, which, as I found on a small scale (Samson, 2008b), and Sitzia found on a large scale (2003, 1999), is very challenging. Re-interviewing participants to find out their views on my interpretations, would have to be done as it was by Josselson (2011), at a later stage and as a separate project.

Data processes

In addition to the recorded interviews, I kept a journal for writing 'field notes', which included pilot interviews, notes from later recorded interviews, and notes of unrecorded conversations with interviewees and other residents. It was also used to record my progress in recruiting participants, and for my thoughts, questions and ideas throughout the research process to inform my analysis. I listened to the recorded interviews from start to finish twice, the first time mostly listening, the second time transcribing and noting themes, contradictions, anomalies and initial analytic thoughts (Plummer, 2001).

Ah, the transcribing. Writing the above makes it sound so simple, even to my own ears, but memory jolts me into recalling that transcribing 40-plus hours of interviews was the most arduous, challenging, frustrating and often mind-crunchingly-boring process ever. And yet it was simultaneously immensely complex and hugely exciting; a consummate meaning-making task. For this is not simply transferring audio into written text, but engagement in a critical interpretative act fraught with differing conventions over what should or not be included (Good, 2006, p. 363): Plummer stating the decision is dependent on how the transcript will be used, and what forms of analysis will be undertaken (Plummer, 2001, pp. 149-151); Finnegan recommending removing hesitations and false starts as well as common interviewer interjections enabling a more readable document (cited in Plummer,

2001, p. 150); Samuel arguing that text is distorted even by removing hesitations and repetitions and that, for potential future use, the transcript should be left intact (Samuel, 1998, pp. 389-392), and then Frisch (1990) suggesting that literal transcription can detract from understanding meaning. Riessman informs that thematic analysts often exclude interviewer input because their interest is purely in content (2008, p. 57-58), but others find it crucial to include the interviewer's voice to ensure an understanding of the interaction (Portelli, 2006, p. 39; Riessman, 2008, p. 40).²⁴ Poland (2001) reinforces the significance of the whole task declaring that the, '... multiple interpretative acts that constitute the transcription process ...' are indivisible from theoretical and epistemological issues. In other words, do not for one moment think transcribing is merely the practical part of narrative inquiry, for its very construction informs the evolution of the analysis.

Although my analysis would be focusing primarily on content rather than form I chose to include my own voice as interviewer, and interjections, hesitations and part words in the transcription because I did not want to limit my interpretive options, now or later (Samuel, 1998). In reality the content element of my analysis dominates the thesis, with detailed attention to form just too much to deal with in this project. However even without the concentration on form, I believe the detail of the transcript adds to understanding the content. Being intricately involved in the substance and process of the research, I also locate myself clearly in the transcription to make transparent 'the co-construction process' (Riessman 2008, p. 32). I did not intend to undertake linguistic analysis of my data, and was therefore unlikely to need every 'um', 'er', 'kind of', 'sort of', 'like' and 'you know' that unwittingly infiltrate day-to-day speech. Again, I was concerned to keep all options open, and most of my transcripts therefore incorporated not only such 'filler' words but also dots representing each second of every pause, hyphens for interruptions and capitals where words were emphasised (Poland, 2001, p. 641). In latter transcriptions I did limit the 'ums' and 'ers', etc. Apart from the vast amount of time it was consuming to transcribe, once a person's speech patterns were made clear, it added little to continue including all filler words.

As my interview questions (Appendix VII) were themselves themed, my completed transcripts themselves provided a first means of coding. (I made no use of computer software for coding.) I created new documents, *joint analysis transcripts*, each relating to the questions I had asked, into which I copied the responses of all 14 interviewees. Using notes made during my second listening alongside reading

24 For further thinking on transcribing see also, for example: Silverman (2011); Andrews, *et al.* (2008); Thomson and Perks (2006); Elliott (2005); Etherington (2004); Mishler (2003); Kvale (1996).

through the complete transcripts, I marked up other data relating to my questions which had arisen elsewhere in the interview and added it to the appropriate new document. I created a few further documents for themes that had arisen about which I had not specifically asked, for example, *diversity*. This process created 25 files, each containing themed data of all interviewees. I read through print-outs of these data marking them up with further notes. Based on this reading I distilled passages, notes and first analyses into further new documents, *notes and quotes*, each relating to different subjects. This distillation process helped clarify similarities and differences in the women's experiences and prompted the first thoughts of chapter and section development. As I continued this process I also began putting information into charts which, as I added more detail and got to know the data better, helped to gain further understanding and nuance from the women's words. Through these successive data processes, the substance of my sections and chapters gradually evolved.

Conclusion

This chapter has established that narrative inquiry undertaken through an intersectional lens is unquestionably an appropriate methodology to explore subjective belonging. Narrative is an approach that considers life stories as meaning-making processes which can be explored in both time-and context-specific terms, and which enable understanding through the interpretive analysis of the hermeneutics of restoration (Josselson, 2004). Such an approach encourages and enables understanding of the complex nature and multiplicity of people's lives, and, as this research will show, reveals the discrepant, conflicting and often ambiguous nature of subjective belonging. As Andrews *et al.* (2008) explain in their introduction as to their motivation in developing narrative research, '... [through narrative] we are able to see different and sometimes contradictory layers of meaning, to bring them into useful dialogue with each other, and to understand more about individual and social change' (Andrews *et al.*, 2008, p. 1).

The chapter has also argued that as no knowledge comes from nowhere (Haraway, 1988), all narratives are situated within the individual's positionings, and therefore an intersectional approach encompassing multiple social locations is crucial to understanding my interviewees' lives within their social contexts. I have emphasised the pivotal importance of a reflexive approach which situates myself firmly in the research, and embraces awareness of my own and others perceptions in shaping it. I have also unequivocally situated the research in the specific context

of my street and in my role as neighbour and researcher drawing out some of the ethical dilemmas and power imbalances in the insider/ outsider relationship.

Chapter 3

Childhood and origins

Introduction

The impact of my childhood experiences on my sense of belonging and not belonging led me to reason that it would be important to consider my interviewees' lives from their early years. This is not to suggest that belonging or not belonging are fixed in childhood, but that stories of childhood may reveal issues of belonging that have meaning throughout people's lives.²⁵ What then are the factors that influence a sense of belonging in childhood? How significant are one's family and peers? What relevance do ethnicity, religion or school or language have? How much do the political, social and economic contexts of the period percolate into a child's subjectivity? The women I interviewed all live in one street now, but they all have very different backgrounds whether they are from Britain or other parts of the world. How do their childhood experiences and origins inform their sense of belonging or not belonging as adults in East London, and influence how they relate to any form of community²⁶ in their lives today?

This chapter draws together themes of people, place and time of childhood through exploring the women's stories of where and with whom they lived as children, and what conditions created for them feelings of belonging and not belonging. The importance of place in childhood belonging will be traced as a grounding for mapping belonging through the women's lives, and ascertaining whether the primary places of childhood remain sites of belonging throughout the life course as Antonsich argues:

... the place where a person was born and has grown up often remains a central place in the life of that individual. [...] The continued presence of family members in that place, as well as memories of one's ancestors, also contributes to feelings of place-belongingness.

(Antonsich, 2010, p. 647)

The chapter will explore differences in these women's childhood experiences that gave or did not give attachments to place, and what circumstances of childhood

25 None of my interviewees are Jewish, and I am not attempting to reproduce other experiences from a position similar to mine. I have explored this issue in my unpublished University of Sussex MA Dissertation, *'If it hadn't been for Hitler I wouldn't have been born': second-generation Jewish refugee women in East London reflect on their belonging.*

26 I use the term community to mean a group of people who share particular commonalities, or, when others describe themselves as being part of a community, not simply people who coincidentally live in the same place. The issue of what constitutes community is discussed in Chapter 6.

were catalysts for their sense of belonging or not belonging. The chapter broadly comprises three sections. The first considers the stories of generally established childhoods in which there was not only little physical change of place, but also relatively stable circumstances. The second section explores stories of geographical and personal dislocation. Discussions in each section consider the effects of such differences on their sense of childhood belonging. The third section goes beyond their childhood to locate the women as adults in Britain. The first part considers the migrant women's motivations and intentions for coming to Britain, the second part establishes the British-born women's British and/or migrant family backgrounds.

Setting the childhood scene

As a starting point to discuss the interviewees' childhood experiences of belonging it is probably helpful to anchor the women's early lives in their places of childhood. Seven of the women grew up mostly in Britain, two in London: Jessica in the east, in Tower Hamlets and from the age of 10 years, in North Newham; Peigi in the north-west borough of Harrow after her family moved from South London when she was three years old. Sarah was born and grew up in South Essex, and Monique, born in Brunei, lived in Nigeria from a few months old until she was six years when her family moved to a Cambridgeshire village. Samina was born and grew up in Luton. Julie was born in Manchester, lived in inner city Liverpool from the age of one to 11 years when her family moved to a Lancashire village. Julie remained in the village to complete her 'O' Levels when her parents returned to Liverpool, joining them when she was 16 years old. Elaine was born in Glasgow and moved to wherever her father worked as an electrician. She lived in Dover as a toddler, in London during her very early years and moved back to Glasgow with her family when she was about five years old. When she was 14 years old she spent a year in Kuwait with her parents, lived another three years in Glasgow and at 17 years old she re-joined her parents who by then had moved to Northern Rhodesia.

Seven women grew up entirely in other countries. Agnes' childhood was spent in a tiny coastal village in North-east Poland; Angelique from the age of one year lived with her grandparents in a residential area of Trinidad until she was around 11 or 12 years old when she moved to her mother's home in a fishing village some 45 minutes drive away. Frederica was born in Malaya and had three childhood homes there, a traditional compound shared with around 30 families until she was about 10 years old, a few years in a brick house in a community where homes were separately fenced and gated, and as an older teenager in a wooden Taoist temple

of which her parents were caretakers. Imogen's childhood was split between many different places in Northern Rhodesia and South Africa, moving around the copper mines in which her father worked. Similarly in Australia where Mary was born and grew up, her family made homes in small country towns in different parts of the country where her father worked in the dairy industry. Meena spent her whole childhood in the same suburb of Kathmandu, 'which was like a village but with the facilities of the city'. In stark contrast, Tendo's Ugandan childhood shifted not only from city to village, village to city and back again twice, but also between different relations as family circumstances fluctuated.

Stories of community and belonging

This very basic information about where people grew up gives cogent indication of the complexity of the women's early lives which I will map out in this section. There are, unsurprisingly, both many similarities and many differences between these childhood experiences and there are some very clear distinctions between stories revealing a sense of belonging and stories of not belonging. I will initially focus on a number of women who experienced a strong sense of belonging in what they describe as the close communities of their early childhoods, which they talked about in response to my questions of where they grew up and whether they would describe their environment as a community. The stories discussed are those of Agnes, Angelique, Frederica, Monique, Meena, Peigi and Sarah, whose early years are variously extolled as beautiful, idyllic, free and happy. Summarising their stories and using extracts from their narratives, I will first depict the lives they describe, after which I will discuss some emergent themes.

Angelique

Brought up by her grandparents in a beautiful, upper middle-class area of Trinidad with streets named after precious stones and large houses with lawns and verandas, Angelique describes a fairy tale, idyllic young childhood in a paradise of sunshine and flowers where the children picnicked under coconut, orange and mango trees dripping with fruit, and where 'there were no strangers [...] everybody knew everybody' and where neighbours near and far were like extended family. Angelique could not imagine having a greater belonging than she had:

N: You did mention that you felt it was a real community, erm, where you grew up and the people you grew up with, how did you feel then as a child then in terms of your belonging? Did you have a sense of belonging there?

A: [overlapping] Oh yeah. Even now, even now on Facebook we're part of the Emerald Hollow group because we're all in our 40s, 50s and we KNOW that was us, that, the Hollow belonged to us then, it's not what it is now, we could never be part of what it is now .. because that sense of community, that sense of belonging, that sense of familiarity . has gone.

Her response is a striking example of Brockmeier's autobiographical time shifting between past and present (2000). And within her vivid memories Angelique yearns after such a childhood for her own son:

I wish I could do the same for my son, I wish they could have that sort of childhood, that, that .. that feeling of community and that sense of . camaraderie and friendship . and love, there was something really embracing about the whole area.

Agnes

Agnes remembers the belonging she felt in her Polish, Baltic-coast village spending 'her whole life' with her friends, siblings and cousins in the pine forest, carefree days playing, bike riding and hunting for gems on the amber strewn beaches. She recalls the hour long, five-kilometre steam train ride to school which in winter could not breach the two-metre snowdrifts, providing them with long unintended holidays.

Frederica

In Malaya²⁷ Frederica was the fourth of five children in a Chinese family who lived in a traditional 'rambling sort of compound' comprising a long attap roofed²⁸ wooden building divided into separate homes with three detached houses at one end. A central communal area provided space where all the children, regardless of age, played together, and which also housed a makeshift badminton court and a water pump where women who had no water supply in the long houses did their washing. Not as large as a village but home to about 30 families, it was a happy place providing a childhood that was 'quite idyllic'. Of their own home in one of the detached houses in which Frederica's mother ran a number of tontines²⁹ Frederica recalled:

27 I am referring to both Malaya and Malaysia as and when Frederica does. Malaya is the name Frederica mostly uses when talking about her life there; she was 11 years old when the country was renamed Malaysia in 1963 (see Chamberlain, 1999, p. 32).

28 A form of thatch made of palm leaves.

29 Frederica described the tontine as a common institution amongst Chinese women, a form of co-operative credit union through which women saved money, not least to help their husbands with their businesses.

We had no gates in my childhood home. We had er, because our house was large and had a big yard, there wasn't actually a front door that I remember. It's, it's so . you know, we walk in through this big yard and there was a big open space, it's like a veranda, and there were no railings of any kind, it was a just big open cemented floor, and then beyond that were the rooms and, then you had the door. So I remember this big open space, it's open to the air, it's not like a sitting room or anything, it's just a big space, and the village women would come and sit on the floor and play cards. And to this day I like gambling. I'm not very good [laughter] and that's where I learned to count, because I'd sit by my mother's side and help her count. You know, like the points and the cards, this game that xxxx. And count the pennies that they played with. I suppose in a small way it was like the social centre for this little village.

Meena

The Kathmandu suburb where Meena grew up with her mother and brother evokes a utopia where one could not but belong:

I grew up in community, not separately, joined. And everything, everything, each and everything we shared to each other, family, neighbourhood, and my friends from different castes and different, different houses. Same community, not separate.

Peigi

Peigi, the daughter of a Hebridean mother and Indian father, grew up in Harrow, Northwest London, within a community that was not one particularly of place but of her parents' social network, a close group of friends from their university lives in Glasgow, most of whom had come to London, and her paternal uncle's family. They were mostly Bengalis from Kolkata in West Bengal. Peigi had one good primary school friend but significant friendships were within this network of friends, which included other children around the same age. Open house was a norm for the friends and socialising together was a core part of their lives:

Yeah, I think, I mean home was home in Harrow. I think, what I think of when think about belonging probably is birthday parties, and kind of family functions, we used to have a quite a very social, as I say every weekend we'd be out to one place and someone come over another day. And we'd all, it was all very, it felt very much that it was kind of our own small little community. Like you would, people would come, and they would end up having lunch and dinner, and, and it wouldn't be an issue, you wouldn't have to be invited somewhere, it was, you just turn up. And if you were going out doing some shopping somewhere you'd pop by and end up spending whole day there.

Having described Harrow as predominantly white, Peigi says it was relatively multicultural compared to other places which is why she felt comfortable as a child.

She felt more Indian than she did Scottish because they were with Indian friends or family most weeks, while she saw her Scottish cousins only once a year.

Monique

Monique has little memory of her first six years of life in Nigeria other than a big house with servants and a very social life with lots of people always coming and going. In the Cambridgeshire village thereafter she recalls 'a very strong sense of community' where their home was the centre of a similar social life, an open house with many friends around. There were whole family friendships, peer group and mixed generational friendships, people in and out of each other's houses, unlocked doors, long summers and much freedom for them as children, with little sense of danger or control.

Sarah

In South Essex Sarah grew up in the town her mother had always lived, where she knew many people and was comfortable in the familiarity of the area. She says, 'I felt a part of things at primary school. I had a group of friends I felt part of. I felt part of where I lived. I knew people'. My questions elicited few graphic memories of her early life and her recollecting invoked many thoughts of family, particularly her mother about whom it was joked that it took her an hour just to buy a newspaper because she met so many people she knew en route to the shop.

Localities of belonging

Such musings could be dismissed as opaquely remembered childhoods, cuddly-blanket wrapped memories of distant past lives holding at bay adult realities of responsibility, jobs and motherhood in the urban dullness of East London's grimy streets and tightly closed doors. But these women's stories of childhood highlight striking similarities in very different situations that created a sense of community and a sense of belonging for them as children. Whether it was Sarah's 1960s Essex housing estate, Frederica's Malayan traditional compound, Angelique's glittering Trinidadian valley, Agnes's Baltic-coast village, Meena's Kathmandu suburb or Monique's Cambridgeshire village, they are all a combination of relatively small numbers of people in a clearly defined setting. Peigi is the only one from a large city and the only one whose West Bengal community is less delineated by place, more by a network of people.

Three common themes arise from the stories of the women and the places of their childhoods. First, these were places where people knew and engaged with each other. Frederica's words speak for most of the women when she says, 'So there was this, you know, communal thing that everybody knew everybody ...'. This notion of everyone knowing each other was reinforced with depictions of shared living spaces; not simply that there were communal spaces but that the doors of their separate homes, if there were doors at all, were left open for people to come and go; where connection and friendship across generational boundaries were shaped. The notion of everyone knowing each other was furthered by a repeated perception of there being no strangers. This apparent absence of strangers suggests the women experienced a sense of safety and security in their childhood areas.

The second theme that emerges from these women's stories of childhood is that of freedom and peer friendships. In addition to the freedom mentioned above of going in and out of each other's homes, they experienced freedom to 'do their own thing', to go off with friends. They express ideas of openness and space into which they can disappear for hours at a time, on their bikes, into countryside, forest or beach. The women portray both times and places of play and enjoyment where they felt confident and happy, being themselves. Even where there were no idyllic landscapes pictured, having friends and spending time with their peers was a dominant element of these stories. Sarah, who describes none of the places she spent her childhood, shows the deeply felt significance of her friendships, in her words, 'I had a group of friends I felt part of. I felt part of where I lived. I knew people'.

The third theme is in some respects a consolidation of the first two. It concerns the familiarity of the people and places in the women's young lives and the attachments they formed as children to those people and places. It is precisely this familiarity and the attachments made that created their childhood places as particular communities of people in particular places, to which they experienced a sense of belonging, and which I will term a 'locality of belonging'. As described above, the actual childhood homes were all very different as regards country, environment and size. It is not these broader aspects of their childhood homes that provided a sense of belonging but the relationships that developed within the localities of people and place. That is, they found a sense of belonging in an individually defined locality of people and place which may or may not relate to formally mapped boundaries but are meaningful to their experience.

My analysis is of course of adults' stories of their childhood. How would it compare to studies exploring how children themselves experience a sense of belonging? Scourfield *et al.*'s (2006a) study of children aged between eight and 11 years ('middle childhood') is primarily focused on exploring their identification with nation but they devote a chapter to discussing '... children's imagery of their locality [...] their emotional attachment to place and their perception of quality of life in their community' (2006a, p. 84) which clearly links to the stories I was told. The authors establish that children predominantly defined where they lived by talking about the immediate localities that were most vivid to them, particularly where they played, walked and cycled, and found that '... locality is more significant to children in their everyday lives than other dimensions of place and space', including the larger perspectives of town or district (Scourfield *et al.* 2006a, pp. 85-86). This clearly resonates with the stories told to me by adults. Perhaps particularly significant to my research was Scourfield *et al.*'s finding that it was the people in the places that ultimately rendered the places important. It was the attachment to others and the interpersonal relationships that children formed that defined their relationship to place (2006a, p. 97). Also, the absence of strangers identified by my interviewees as a positive element of their childhood places, is perhaps comparable with Scourfield *et al.*'s finding that children made a distinction between 'nice' and 'nasty' people, and the children's boundaries of locality tended to be delineated by notions of where those different people were (2006a, pp. 89-90).

Of my interviewees in this section, all lived in their countries of origin and most in small settings, only one lived in a city. Den Besten's (2010) study of 'local belonging and 'geographies of emotions'' focused on 10- to 13-year-old immigrant children living in Berlin and Paris. Her research participants were therefore children not in their lands of origin and living in large cities, yet, primarily through the subjective maps drawn by her participants, den Besten concluded that it was undoubtedly children's emotional attitude to their peers and neighbourhood that gave them a sense of local belonging (2010, p. 191), much as my research suggests. Indeed, she noted that communal spaces widely stigmatised as disadvantaged and violent were emotionally significant to the children who played, rode bikes and hung out with friends there (den Besten 2010, p. 188). Bannister (2012) also found that young people, often marginalised, find a belonging in a very small demarcated territory which may be seen as a negative space by others, but a place of very strong attachment and belonging to the young people themselves.

The sense of local belonging that I found in my interviewees stories is also reflected in hooks' (2009) adult search of a place to live, somewhere she could find

a sense of belonging 30 years after leaving her childhood home. She recalls the 'internal landscape' she held of that early home, '...where I felt the deepest sense of freedom in my girlhood was the site I returned to in my imagination to restore my soul as I lived a life of exile far away from the only place where I had felt a true sense of belonging' (hooks, 2009, p. 58). hooks emphasises the significance of attachments to place in forming childhood belonging and the power that they hold in adults' memories. This concept of people carrying their belonging with them and within them through their lives is also evoked in Nicola McClelland's (2011) sculpture, *Internal Geographies*. In a series of 15 small, differently sized pieces, the flowing contours of maps arise sail-like out of solid wax vessels, provoking images of the ebb and flow of people moving through their lives and across worlds, taking their internalised belonging with them.

Diversity in childhood localities

I have stated that it is the relationships that developed within the localities of people and place that were significant in these women's childhood belonging. From the glowing extracts presented above it might be assumed that most of the women grew up in monocultures where people's lives were untouched by difference. In the lives of most of these women however, this was certainly not the case. I will discuss five women in this section, Agnes from Poland, Angelique from Trinidad, Meena from Nepal, Frederica from Malaya and Peigi from Britain.

Agnes

Agnes' 1970s childhood cannot be appreciated without some contextual sketch of Poland's historical boundaries, where the movement of borders and peoples determined changing populations, practices and politics. The Pomeranian coastal village in which Agnes was born was variously positioned over centuries in the land of the Slavic Pomeranians, Royal Prussia, Germany (Pomerania), post World War I as the Free City of Danzig, and post World War II, in Poland (Wandycz, 1993). After the post World War II expulsion of Germans (Lieberman, 2006, pp. 219-235), under Soviet control the village was repopulated with Poles from various parts of the country (Lieberman, 2006, p. 238-246). Agnes describes how her father had 'escaped' to the north from the Polish-Ukrainian borderland to avoid being relocated in the then Soviet Union, while her mother's family from Warsaw was resettled in the north. Agnes' village community of 700 people was therefore a post World War II construction which had no unifying identity of its own. The multiplicity

of peoples in the village were highlighted by Agnes in response to my asking if she had any sense of community when growing up:

Oh yes, yes. However everybody came from different parts of Poland because there used to be [a] German area and then when Germans left, people came to live, so they came from all different areas, everybody had different traditions for Easter, for Christmas, everybody had different meals. We were arguing, I remember my mum arguing with others, 'No, we have THIS soup for Easter', because she came from Warsaw, someone who came from Vrostrom or somewhere, different part of Poland, 'No, no, no, no, we are doing traditional Polish, [it] is this one'. So everybody had tradition[al] Polish food, but everybody had different food [laugh]. So there was no such a tradition like folklore or like you have in Krakow, you have this folk, folk clothes and songs and erm . accent, you can recognise that somebody come from Warsaw, Krakow, or you can recognise somebody come from Poznan, but from Gdansk and this area you can't recognise that we come from this area because these people come from different parts of Poland. And the accent is, is mixed, and there's actually NOT, there isn't any accent from this area because people come from different parts.

Her first words here suggest both the existence and the contradictions of community; as a child she had a feeling of community from all the children playing together and it being a safe and secure place where people trusted each other, yet she was also conscious of the historical context and the aspects that separated them, not only tradition, food and language of which she speaks above, but also religion. She tells of the Catholic Church being a powerful force in their lives and one that divided them. Roman Catholicism dominated and prejudice against others was apparent, not least within her own family in which her maternal grandparents refused for many years to accept Agnes' Greek Catholic father and his children, Agnes and her siblings. Though she happily played with her cousins with whom she was very close, she was sensitive to the valued place the cousins held in their shared grandparents' lives, while she and her siblings were estranged from them.

Angelique

Angelique had been telling me about living with her grandparents with whom she lived between the ages one and 12 years, whom she loved dearly and with whom she completely belonged. In answering my question of whether she had any sense of being different to others, she responded by talking about the ethnicity of her neighbours, saying:

A: NO, not at all. Not at all. It was just, it was . it didn't, it REALLY, I mean I, I can, I can see differences now. The [neighbours] Indian, the [other neighbours] they're white. . But it, it wasn't anything then.

N: It didn't mean anything to you as children?

A: Didn't mean anything, nothing, nothing, [...] we all played together. All of us, we all played together. . It wasn't anything.

N: And so you weren't as you grew up erm, aware of any differences that an older generation felt, either?

A: No, no. I mean . the only differences, and I say it and I smile, is that houses smelled different. That was it, it was just . what people cooked, that was it, that was the ONLY difference.

In considering her childhood Angelique shifts between the then and now of knowing and not knowing about difference and its affects. Recalling food as the one difference she was aware of at the time, she remembers the variety of available food as a positive, as an opportunity to savour so many alternative things to eat; the 'Trinidad pot' of assorted foods of the Trinidadians' mixed-heritage that Mills suggests inspires 'passionate nostalgia' (Mills, 1975, pp. 191-192).

Meena

The difference that Meena notes of her childhood is that of caste. She emphasises that people lived together as a community without separation and talks of her friendships with people from lower castes in whose homes she was allowed spend time and whose food she would eat. However, she is also very aware that those lower caste friends were not welcome in her home. She sees this as a generational issue, a difference in attitude between her and her mother who Meena says is old³⁰ and who believes in and fears upsetting their ancestors by ignoring caste demarcations.

Frederica

Living in Malaya, Frederica had little direct connection with Malays before going to secondary school. Chinese and Indian families shared life in the compound, and the brick housing estate she later moved to was home mostly to Chinese people with a few Indian and European families, but very few Malays. The greatest diversity she experienced was in being sent by her Taoist parents to a British convent school where nuns from England, Ireland and France taught Chinese, Indian and Malay girls of various faiths.³¹ Apart from Muslim girls not attending Mass or saying the Lord's Prayer, Frederica experienced little difference or conflict:

30 Meena has much older sisters and her mother is potentially older than her peers' parents though she does not actually state this.

31 Spreading the use of the English language and the British education system was fundamental to British imperialist expansion from the early 19th century, and Benson notes that, '... English remains [...] very much an everyday language of the large [Malaysian] cities' (cited in Phillipson, 1992, p. 24).

I, we weren't MADE to do anything .. went to a convent school, I went to Mass every week [laugh]. [...] I said the Lord's prayer every morning at school . it was just erm .. you know, what you did in school, and then you went home and you . burnt incense when your parents told you to and .. it, there wasn't a huge conflict. .. [...] ... I had friends from different races while I was in school. Malay friends, Indian friends, obviously mostly Chinese because there were more of us. But er, yes, everybody seemed to get on WELL ...

Peigi

Peigi speaks more of her schooling than her British childhood area. She developed a very strong belonging to her private secondary school in Central London which gave her a real sense of achievement, confidence and independence. The school was very ethnically and socio-economically mixed, and much more so than her primary school in Harrow. As a young child she recalls hearing the term 'half-caste' but not knowing what it meant. Being mixed-heritage was never an issue for her, though she thought it was more an issue for her sister who was darker skinned:

... everyone kept asking me what it was like to be of mixed race and I kept thinking I don't really know what people mean by that 'cause I am who I am. It doesn't really, I actually feel quite lucky that I have two different, erm that my parents come from two different places.

In the contexts of these very differently mixed communities, difference itself appears to have had little impact on the lives of these women in childhood. Their experience suggests that it is possible for children to grow up in mixed settings, conscious of diversity but with little sense of division, and their sense of belonging intact. Their experience contrasts with my own childhood during junior school years³² where I experienced a very marked sense of difference. Clearly the contexts of each of the lives discussed were different in time and place. Unlike the others, my childhood place was not, as I described above of most of the women, a particular community in a particular place, nor was it noticeably culturally or ethnically diverse, which is perhaps why I felt my difference more acutely. And, although Peigi and I both grew up in North London boroughs, being of German Jewish extraction in early 1960s Hornsey without being part of such a community, was probably very different to being of Indian Scottish origin in mid-1980s Harrow with a strong sense of belonging to a West Bengal network of friends and family. Large-city boundaries of community are no doubt drawn in very different ways in particular periods of time. These issues raise questions of particularly how and

³² Junior school equates to Key Stage 2, ages 7-11 years, similar to the 'middle childhood' studied by Scourfield *et al.*, 2006a; Scourfield *et al.*, 2006b.

when children develop awareness of and/or become affected by social difference, where they may come to see themselves as insiders or outsiders in any given setting (Scourfield *et al.*, 2006a, p. 45).

Not only are these adult memories of childhood, but a number are also migrant adult memories of childhood. Such aspects raise questions about the relationship of these adult memories to the realities of their childhood. Could these be mythological migrant memories conjuring up distanced recollections of longed-for homes; idealised portrayals of countries of origin (Taylor, 2009a, p. 138; Brah, 1996, p. 192)? Am I as interviewer being positioned as a representative of a hegemonic host for whom it is necessary to build a defiant image of their childhood homes as 'other' being as good, if not better, than where they now find themselves? Could it be that my questions to them – whether they would describe the environment in which they grew up as a community, and what belonging they felt as children – are heard as requests for community and belonging with which they want to comply? Angelique for example is adamant that there was no ethnic tension in her childhood community in Trinidad. She acknowledges now, in hindsight, that difference existed, though she does not appear to recognise ethnic tension within that difference. Her acknowledgment is perhaps a partial realisation of what Freeman calls the narrative unconscious, the '... culturally rooted aspects of one's history that remain uncharted and that, consequently, have yet to be incorporated into one's story' (Freeman, 2010a, p. 96). Hodge, however, writing during Angelique's childhood, discusses the 'Racial rivalry and disaffection ...' that was widespread amongst Trinidadian peoples at the time (Hodge, 1975, pp. 31-40). Could it be argued, therefore, that Angelique is glossing over realities of 1970s Trinidad in a memory brushed with a rose-coloured tint of intervening years, or indeed is projecting a positive image of Trinidad to a white British interviewer? Or was Angelique oblivious to these tensions as a child, for whom these differences simply did not matter?

There are of course various responses to these questions, a number of which I will address here. First, it is evident that despite the glowing portrayals of childhood idylls presented in the stories of many of the women, such representation is not the only perception they have of their childhoods. As previously shown, Agnes not only acknowledges the cultural differences between Poles in the village who came from various regions of Poland, but also the antagonism between Greek and Roman Catholics which clearly impacted on her own life with regard to her grandparents' estrangement of her. Second, I should emphasise that I am seeking subjective truth in these women's life stories. There is no reason to doubt for example, that Hodge's

(1975) knowledge of racial disaffection in 1970s Trinidad is anything but accurate, but there is equally no reason to doubt the subjective reality of Angelique's more harmonious memories. Linden asks whether '...the 'problem' of memory's veracity is really a problem?' (Linden, 1993, p. x), and Thomson argues that:

By listening to the myths, fantasies, errors and contradictions of memory, and paying heed to the subtleties of language and narrative form, we might better understand the subjective meanings of historical experience.

(Thomson, 1999, p. 33)

What these women's childhood stories reveal is the subjective reality of their sense of belonging, rather than historical accuracy of events.³³

My third response to the questions posed is that it is significant that of the seven women discussed thus far, four of them are migrants, but the other three, Monique, Peigi and Sarah, grew up in Britain. That is to say, these stories encompass migrant and non-migrant childhoods. The latter three women may not be able to recall a paradise of sunshine, amber and exotic sounding fruits but, like the others, they do have strong memories of friendship and freedom and a sense of their particular communities of people in particular places. As Hage states, '... nostalgic feelings abound not only in migrant life but in everybody's life' (Hage, 2010, p. 420). I would suggest that these stories coated with warm memories are not nostalgia for a lost homeland but nostalgia for the lost localities of childhood belonging. And such nostalgia is reflected in both the migrant and non-migrant yearnings of Angelique and Monique on behalf of their children. They each lament the lack of freedom that they now afford their own children; they regret changes they perceive in society that they believe do not allow their children the safety and security they experienced themselves, and they grieve for the lack of particular communities of people in particular places their children do not have.

Finally, as I will go on to discuss in detail in the next section, it is significant that the early belonging experienced by most of these women was disrupted as they grew older. For the migrant women, ruptures took place mostly years before they left their countries of origin. The strong sense of belonging that they had as younger children dissipated as they got older, which I argue has more to do with children beginning to grow up than with migrant myths or idylls. Sarah encapsulates elements of this notion in her words:

33 On memory and meaning in narrative and oral sources see also, for example, Sacks (2013); Freeman (2010a, 2010b, 1993); Brockmeier (2009, 2002); Perks and Thomson (2006); Yow (2005); Plummer (2001); Portelli (1997, 1991).

You're not always happy with the things that are happening to you, I mean in your life, at that early age, you know, you, you, it's just, it's just a beautiful innocence about it. You just take what you're doing as normal and that's the way things are and you really enjoy it. It's when you start to have choices that you can start to be happy or unhappy.

As children get older, they naturally tend to become more aware of the complexities of life they are living. It is of course possible there are elements of idealisation in the women's recollections, and there can be no definitive answer to the questions. But the ruptures in some of the women's sense of belonging which they experienced as they got older would seem to corroborate that these issues have relevance to the nature of young childhood. Such ruptures will be explored in the next section.

Ruptures in glowing childhoods

As stated, the pictures painted of childhood have been overwhelmingly positive; communities of people and place where children have found little that complicates their strong sense of belonging. As the interviews continued however, so ruptures in that belonging began to appear, though not necessarily on a dramatic scale. The stories I will now look at to highlight those shifts in belonging are those of Angelique, Frederica, Agnes, Monique and Sarah.

Angelique

Ethnic difference may not have been an issue in Angelique's childhood but she has a clear awareness that her schooling was:

Things changed for me when I went to a different primary school. I was sent to a Catholic primary school. Very GOOD primary school. . That was the problem, it wasn't in our area. Everybody else stayed local.

With those few words Angelique introduces four issues relating to her changing sense of belonging, those of time, religion, place and class. She explains that while she continued to see her friends out of school, for the formative phase of primary school she was separated from her peers. Most children who did not attend local schools changed when they began secondary level, but she was distanced from the age of about five years. That she was sent to a Catholic school was not the choice of her grandparents with whom she lived, but the decision of her parents, enabled by her 'father [having] contacts'. Her parents' social capital (Jenkins, 2002) and desire that Angelique attend Catholic schools intensified Angelique's alienation from others. When she moved aged 12 years to her mother's home in a more working-class district, she was sent to a predominantly middle-class Catholic

secondary school, where she was nicknamed 'Bourg' which she much later understood to mean bourgeois.³⁴ Her locality of belonging was very clearly disrupted in her younger childhood, and even more so later when she was with her mother, where she was 'maybe a bit of a snob', living without the earlier sense of security and safety, and where 'everybody there was a stranger'.

Sarah

The move from primary to secondary school and a corresponding shift from the eight to 11 years of middle childhood (Scourfield *et al.*, 2006a), to 12 years upwards, gives some credence to a notion of age-related belonging in childhood. Though Sarah's responses were sometimes ambiguous, she does present an image of changing belongings through her years of education. The sense of belonging she felt in primary school disappeared during her secondary school years which she 'hated'. Yet a strong sense of belonging she developed with sixth form college friends dissipated when she chose to leave to study at university and the friends stayed at home. As she came and went according to the academic calendar, she believes her friends were unforgiving of her 'picking people up and dropping them', which, 'If they'd gone to university as well it wouldn't have been, it wouldn't have FELT like such a betrayal'.

Monique

For Monique, after the freedom, fun and close friendships of her childhood years, her teenage years were more troubled. Her locality of belonging was ruptured with being sent to a distant private Catholic school which took her largely away from her village friends, and she had a sense of not altogether belonging in her family being quieter and more reserved in their very outgoing and social life. She says:

I know as a teenager I struggled . and I suffered from depression and I did a LITTLE bit of self harming but nothing major, and I kind of grew out of it, and I think that was all part of whatever was going on in my head and erm, I guess it was part of who I was and where I belonged but, and, it was a way of drawing attention to myself, I'm aware of now, in a way that I wasn't aware of at the time.

Agnes

As she grew older Agnes became aware of the class disparities that existed between her family and other villagers. She was the daughter of a former

³⁴ In her interview with Kathleen Balutansky, Merle Hodge refers to the divisiveness of the Trinidadian school system of the time (Balutansky, 1989, p. 656).

communist regional government official who became a wealthy entrepreneur after creating a holiday resort in their coastal village used exclusively by government officials and media people. Her father's situation and wealth gave his offspring status in the village:

I was treated more kind of, er . no I didn't feel more important than other children, but other children treated us that, that way, that we are . from the, because we were wealthy [we] had everything.

With a sigh, Agnes acknowledges that she was 'quite different' because they had material goods before others, but that her father's position also enabled him to support the whole village through measures such as getting the telephone system installed and providing jobs, which were scarce. She was aware that some people were envious and jealous; they made comments and called them Greek Catholics. She laughingly denies that such intended abuse affected her, answering that when her family attended church, it was a Roman Catholic Church.

Schools were some distance away, and from 14½ years old Agnes started attending a weekday boarding school. Coming home at weekends opened her eyes to other aspects of village life. The place where she spent the 'careless years' of childhood where 'everybody could trust each other' and which had given her a sense of safety and belonging, she now began to see as claustrophobic and parochial, where people knew you 'more than you knew yourself'; a place whose lack of other amusement ensured villagers spent their time 'observing and watching other people'. Agnes found little belonging in the village as she grew older. Drinking and discos were the only teenage entertainment; there was no work to be had and no future there. She is grateful that her father pushed his children to become educated which gave her a route out.

Frederica

Frederica's locality of belonging was altered in manifold ways as she grew up. She describes the sense of belonging she experienced in the open, gateless community of her first home:

... [the] communal thing that everybody knew everybody . [...] I was there 'til I was .. about ten . and then we moved to a new housing estate, brick houses, [...] a proper housing estate with new houses, pretty much like this, terraced houses and then, then . you know, you didn't know anybody, it's like here pretty much.

Frederica saw the 'fences and high gates' that 'everybody had' as a 'psychological barrier'. Thus the new brick home, deemed to be a better class of housing and

gained, she assumes, through her father's improved business, represented for her a loss of the life she experienced as 'quite idyllic', rather than a positive step forward. And her life was to change again when due to her mother's sense of moral obligation to the other women in the tontine after one of them stole all the funds, the brick house was sold to repay them. The family moved to a wooden Taoist temple of which her parents became caretakers.

Frederica talks of having been a secure and happy child but as she grew older she questioned her life and clearly no longer felt the belonging she had experienced when she was younger. She believes her British education instilled expectations and values of democracy which she came to feel were at odds with the Malayan society she found herself living in:

... [it] gave us high ideals [laughter] about . you know, values, about democracy about what we should be expecting, and also being a teenager I think, the usual . rebelliousness, you know, to, to live in a country where you couldn't say anything, all the papers are censored. To this day they are censored. . It wasn't . satisfactory to ME.

In fact the diversity without division that she experienced in her British school was to be ruptured by the mounting tension and discord outside the school gates. She states:

A lot was happening politically. In my last year at school we had riots, HUGE racial riots, which the western world doesn't know much about because . there was a total clampdown on news. .. To this day the government doesn't want to talk about it. . It's, a very, very sensitive matter.

It was because her school friends all got on so well that 'the race riots came as such a shock. It was a shock to everybody':

And this was the time when we lived, we were living in the second wooden house, when we were poor again, at the temple, and it was terrifying. This, this house was on the main road to the capital, you would see the army trucks going up and down, full of soldiers, you could hear gunshots in nearby places so it was quite scary. And I felt very, very vulnerable in this little wooden house.

The helplessness and exposure that Frederica expresses about being in this wooden house without neighbours, without a community to share the experience, is a palpable transformation from the close warmth of the locality of belonging she felt in her first compound home and from the diverse community at her secondary school. Through Frederica's growing consciousness of the harsh reality of ethnic division, and her foreboding awareness of being unable to live and speak freely, her sense of belonging was inexorably altered. She says:

... towards the end of my time in Malaya I did feel, perhaps I don't belong, not necessarily because of anything in the era's family set up, it was more . I didn't feel I fitted in, in myself. Politically I certainly didn't fit in . and at that point I thought I . might go and see the world.

As these stories amply demonstrate, these children experienced ruptures in their sense of belonging through very ordinary, day-to-day life changes associated with growing up; such as changing schools, moving home, and becoming teenagers. As they grew older they became more conscious of social divisions, and events in their wider societies impinged on the small localities of belonging they experienced as young children.

Stories of dislocated belongings

In this next section I consider the stories of the other seven interviewees. Unlike the first seven women who speak of experiencing very positive young childhoods and distinct localities of belonging, these women – Elaine, Imogen, Jessica, Julie, Mary, Samina and Tendo – all found themselves in circumstances that did not allow them the continuity of relationships with particular people in particular places that gave them a tangible sense of belonging. This section will also differ from the first in its structure precisely because the stories of childhood are not located in the same way as the first seven. I will begin by considering the stories of Elaine, Imogen and Mary who were born and grew up in, respectively, Britain, Southern Africa and Australia.

Nomadic childhoods

There are commonalities in the lives of Elaine, Imogen and Mary which to a greater or lesser degree impacted on their childhood belonging. While their lives began in very different places of the world, all were part of the British Empire. The three women were all born between the mid-1930s and mid-1940s and were in their 60s and 70s at the time of the interviews. Quite how much the places, the period and colonialism created similarities in their childhood lives is difficult to evaluate without going into a deeper historical investigation of the time, which is beyond the remit of this thesis. However, one common element of all three lives that had significant impact on their sense of belonging was that all three led nomadic childhood lives. That is, their families frequently moved home to wherever the father of the family was posted or found work.

Elaine

Elaine's father was an electrician, employed by a company who posted him to work on projects in various places. Her family was from Scotland which was where she was born and spent her first 10 months of life. By the time she was six years old Elaine had spent some years in Dover and London and was back living in Glasgow. Even there the family moved from house to house, living in seven different places in eight years: '...we never had a proper home of our own, we were always lodgers in other people's houses'. No doubt due to her early years living in England, Elaine's spoken language developed with an English accent which as she graphically describes, caused her to be rejected by her peers at school. She remembers:

And the other children accused me of being English. Now I say accused because that's what it was. Being English was a terrible thing to be. And erm, I asked my mother, 'Am I English?' and she said, 'No, you were born in Scotland, your dad and I are Scottish so you're Scottish'. So I told the children I was Scottish. Oh no, that wouldn't do. Not only was I English, and lying about it [laugh]. That made it even worse. So I was not popular [laugh].

Elaine's words keenly express how alienated she felt by this accusation. In discussing their research on English-born adults living in Scotland, McIntosh *et al.* (2004) suggest that Englishness is the 'other' against which Scottishness is defined. They found that being perceived as different for speaking in an English accent was 'a very common and central experience' of their interviewees, and that not speaking with a '... recognizably 'Scottish articulatory style' can be a profound barrier for English people to overcome' (McIntosh *et al.*, 2004, p. 48). Much the same could be said of Welsh children, who also clearly defined Englishness as being 'other' (Scourfield *et al.*, 2006a). The distinctions between people that the children mostly referred to were related to how people spoke. That is, the others' different accents (Scourfield *et al.*, 2006a, p. 120). The strategy used by some of McIntosh *et al.*'s (2004, p. 51) adult interviewees of avoiding social situations where they would be identified as not belonging was not of course available to Elaine as a child. Her main detractors were her school 'mates' and not attending school was not an option for her. McIntosh *et al.* also state that people were '... constantly being positioned as English', and were 'continually reminded that they were not Scottish' (2004, p. 51). For Elaine to be positioned in such a way was not only ironic but must have been particularly painful since she was of course Scottish, but was perceived not to be. As she says:

I never did regain that ground. I never became er one of the children at school. You know, I was always a kind of outsider.

Elaine often needed coaxing to relate stories of her life so it was intriguing that one of the stories she did tell was of a seemingly insignificant episode, a story of how she had not been allowed to participate in a children's game:

It was that I couldn't find a way to get in, I couldn't find the way in. There was a game that they used to play, a very simple game which involved the whole, this was in junior school at age about nine ten, that sort of age, nine I think because yeah. Erm, it involved all the girls against all the boys and they would . catch the members of the other gender and put them in a kind of gaol and some would guard this gaol and others would try to release their prisoners by running through the gaol and . everybody joined in, all the girls and all the boys. and I asked, 'Can I play?' and the girls said, 'Yes of course you can, you just join in'. So I did. I caught a boy and he said, 'Oh no, I'm not caught 'cause you're not playing'. And there was nothing I could do about it. They wouldn't let me. I couldn't play.

Not being allowed to play in that one game has remained in Elaine's memory for nearly 70 years. Of course, the story was prompted by me trying to establish how she felt she did not fit in with other children, it was not perhaps in the fore-front of her mind, yet it was important enough to have stayed with her for so long. Elaine assured me it had nothing to do with other children, as described above, saying she was not Scottish; that it was three years later and these boys would not have known about it. But something remained with her of feeling rejected, of not belonging, of not finding a way in. Despite this inability to break down the barriers that she experienced between herself and others, she had little sense of being different. Her nomadic childhood seemingly aggravated, if not caused, her sense of alienation from others. Notwithstanding she also accepted a role of being an outsider and a feeling of not belonging begun at school stayed with her all her life.

Imogen

Born in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia), Imogen spent her whole childhood moving around Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and South Africa, following her father's work as an organic chemist on the copper mines. From the beginning of our interview Imogen depicted a life of disjuncture and disconnection. Due to her father's peripatetic work life her schooling was disjointed and community was 'unnatural', 'unbalanced' and 'peculiar' because it was purely mining families – there were no old people, and people talked to each other simply because they were white. In addition she felt she did not belong in this 'peculiar' community because her father, a white South African and democrat who 'came from a very poor family', made his children clean their own shoes and bikes, did not permit them to ask the house servant to do anything for them, and outlawed their using 'anti black' language, all of which singled out Imogen and her brothers from

their peers. An enduring memory is of her brother's heartfelt desire to be like the other children.

Imogen found herself not belonging from an early age to a society that was in general a fit and sporty one while she '...had asthma from the age of two, [...] was very weedy, [...] couldn't run fast [...] couldn't swim well and all the rest of it'. She was not comfortable with who she was a child, recollecting that, 'I was often very unhappy' and that she '... really didn't have a strong . feeling of self'. The loss of a best friend was devastating for her:

... when I lost my best, well one of my best friends, well I had two friends, and when that friendship ceased it was a TERRIBLE loss because . there was nothing else THERE.

She clearly recalls the unbearable feelings of continually changing schools and thereby always being the odd one out. When she was in her teens, her teacher's high hopes of Imogen gaining a Latin distinction was used to persuade her father to let her remain and live with neighbours, when her parents yet again moved on.

In all her memories the only period that Imogen remembers feeling 'at home' was when she was not at home but in a boarding school with various displaced children:

There was only one time when I really did feel at home. I think when we were in South Africa, and my asthma was very bad, my mother was working, and, I can't remember if my father had got a job at that time because he had a lot of ill health with erm, he had stomach ulcers so he had really grim health at times. And so my mother couldn't look after me at home so I went to er, er, a boarding school in the Karoo, a very CHEAP place obviously, I mean they couldn't have afforded anything grand, and there, there were a lot of kind of outcast children. They were children of divorcees, there were some disabled children, and I felt part of that strange little community. Well I was only eight years so you know, you would. But, that I did feel a part of and I still remember all those girls and, I was only there for about 18 months but it made a big impact on me.

At one point Imogen recites a few lines from the Sir Walter Scott poem 'The Lay of the Last Minstrel' (Scott, 1805), which her father used to read, 'Breathes there a man with soul so dead, who never to himself has said, this is mine own, my native land!', against which she appraises herself:

And I used to think well that's me, I can't really say this. Because of having drifted about so much . and sort of not fitting in very much with other white children, erm . I, I couldn't feel that I really belonged.

She also states that she, '... felt more an OBSERVER of what was going on than actually part of it'. As can be seen from the extracts of Imogen's story, her memories are strewn with childhood not belonging, of outsidership, of

disconnections and detachments. She herself acknowledges the many and varied ways in which she found little belonging and was not comfortable with who she was a child. Her health singled her out, as did her relationships with her peers in the disjointed communities in which she lived. Numerous moves to different places and changes of school gave her little sense of belonging in the landscapes of her childhood. The separation between her and other people and places is forcefully invoked by her memories of the Walter Scott poem. Where her father found belonging, she experiences estrangement. And in her vivid stories of the community and belonging she found at boarding school, compared to her otherwise lack of place and friendship, Imogen illustrates the very essence of what provides or denies a locality of belonging.

Mary

As an only child, Mary also led a nomadic life, moving with her parents across Australia's south-eastern states to the small country towns where her father obtained work as a bacteriologist in the dairy industry. Her abiding memory of her childhood is that of continuously being an incomer in small, established communities in which she repeatedly found herself an outsider. The differing education systems she encountered in the various states made her school learning difficult and contributed to her being:

... fairly lonely as a child. Erm, I was a bookworm so, you know, I got into books as much as I could, but I can remember long hours of boredom and things. I was fairly over-protected and wasn't allowed out a lot. Erm, so, you know, yeah, it was, it was just fairly lonely, childhood I think.

In 1960 when Mary was 14 years old the family moved to Sydney where they bought a house with an inheritance from her grandmother. Though she lived there for nine years until she left Australia, she experienced no real sense of community in Sydney. As a teenager she hung around with a group of girls but she was not particularly close to them because she always experienced 'that outsider kind of thing'. Mary had few stories to tell about childhood and expressed little sentiment other than lack of connection and loneliness. Her peripatetic life up to the age of fourteen meant she made no deep or lasting friendships and she had little connection to any particular place.

Tendo

Like Elaine, Imogen and Mary, Tendo's childhood in Uganda was subjected to a number of changes of place. Unlike them, however, her moving around did not involve a cohesive family unit following employment opportunities, but involved

shifts in family circumstances that forced not only change of place but complete change of lifestyle and adult carers. These are the words with which Tendo begins telling of her childhood:

I was born in Uganda and I was born in 1974, I remember bits of erm going to nursery. And at the time the country was having some conflict going on, and it used to be, you go to school and then in the night-time it was hiding out, well low lights out, well switch lights off, and hide under the table, don't speak, really. My mother and father were together at the time, then grandfather died and my father became the heir 'cause he was the oldest son, and then I think from there they, they separated, my mother and father 'cause my father went to live in the village and my mother did not want to live in the village. Er then, I think I must have been six, then I lived with my father...

In this short extract Tendo conveys something of the breadth of disorder in her young life; her country's political situation³⁵ and its fearful effects, death and cultural norms of accession, the separation of her parents and fragmentation of her family, and the move from city to village – a story of overwhelming disruption and fracture. After living with her father in his village for three years she was taken back to live in the city with her mother with whom she stayed until her mother's death, when Tendo was 13 years old. She believes her mother died of HIV/Aids but no-one has ever spoken of it.³⁶ Tendo stayed in her maternal grandfather's village for a few months after her mother died until she was taken to live in the city with her mother's half brother, and his wife, a close friend of her mother's.

The complexity and level of disruption in Tendo's childhood is hard to comprehend. She says:

And people, die, were dying nearly everyday. There was death everywhere. Now, now that I'm here looking back from when I was little, to then, 1986, there has, there have been death, all around. If you were not killed by the bullets, then HIV/AIDS came and took you. Really. So it was, a, a, a period of death.

Such bewildering upheaval in her childhood was compounded for Tendo in an apparent complexity of difference relating directly to herself, perceptions of difference that challenge simplistic notions of tribal and colour belonging. My asking whether she had any sense of belonging or not belonging as a child brought the following response:

35 1970s and 1980s Uganda was in an unstable state of flux under the dictatorship of Idi Amin, war with Tanzania, the second tenure of Milton Obote, and the Museveni-led National Resistance Army guerrilla war against Obote (Chamberlain, 1999, pp. 47-49; Leggett, 2001, pp. 20-25).

36 The National Community of Women living with HIV/AIDS (NACWOLA) in Uganda has for some years been challenging the African tradition of children not being told of sensitive issues relating to their families, leaving them '... in the dark to worry by themselves' (Leggett, 2001, p. 41). See also Witter (2004).

That is interesting. Erm, how do I answer that? I remember from when, I remember this from when I came, even in the village actually, I used to be the different one, 'cause I remember one time when my friends said that this person, we shouldn't talk to them because they're from a different tribe. So I said to them, 'No you can't do that. Speak the language we understand. If they want to be a part of us, they are a part of us'. So [laugh] then when I went, that was in the village, that is my father's village, then I went to the city and when I arrived in, in primary school aged ten, everybody want to touch my hair. They thought my hair was different. [...] I used to be much more paler than I am today so, er that attracted attention and everybody used to touch my hair, but it was strange. [...] And I was so different that my grandmother, my poor grandmother from my father's side, went and dug roots, boiled them, gave them to me because I was too pale. Er I wasn't as dark [laugh] as everybody else so she fed me these roots, well the water from the roots, erm so that my hair would change [laugh] and my skin colour would [laugh] change. [...] So when I went to the city it was the same thing so I was . different.

Tendo therefore speaks of being different for repudiating the tribal exclusivity her friends tried to maintain through limiting who one could talk to, and in addition, describes how she was perceived to be different by others because of her different hair texture and skin colour. She both challenged others for their narrow perspective of who could be seen to belong, and was challenged herself as someone who could not belong. The notions of belonging and not belonging here are both intricate and convoluted. She detaches herself from others' sense of who could belong, and is deemed not to belong by both her childhood peers and family, and she finds herself distanced by others both in village and city. A further complication in this labyrinth of belonging and not belonging can be seen in Tendo's recollection of a conversation about herself with 11-year-old school friends in the city, and her analysis of it:

What are you talking about, YOU are not Umganda'. And I'm like, 'Well I think, well, that's all I KNOW, that is WHAT I am', and it, it was like I had to prove myself that I was Umganda and I hadn't been to this other tribe that they said that I was. If I had, I think it would have been ok but I hadn't. And so that was erm, kind of er, me being different, or, thinking that I belonged but did not belong. But inwardly I did not feel that I did not belong, yeah.

Again Tendo is being charged with not being 'one of them'. She reflects that she could accept not being one of them, were she not of the same tribe. But while she believes herself to belong, she is not being allowed to belong. Despite others' judgements of her status, she determinedly clings to her deep feeling of belonging. This is surely an example of Yuval-Davis (2011, 2006a) three facets of social location, emotional identification, and norms and values, converging and crashing headlong into one another creating confusion and insecurity.

Finally, an aspect of belonging that should also be considered concerning Tendo's childhood is that of the cultural perspective. When I asked if she had experienced any sense of community in her childhood she responded:

Yeah, I did. Erm, so when I was in the village, it IS a village, so you really, belong to the house you're in. So it's not a problem.

Tendo told a long story about children going to the village school and passing a house where people had measles, and about the tasks people undertook in the village. But how did this story relate to my question about community? And what relevance were the tasks she talked of? It took careful and repeated listening on my part to realise that *everybody* had to pass the measles house because there was only one road to go to school. And everyone doing the same activity or work informed community and communal life. The climate and the workload – digging the crops, collecting coffee beans, fetching water, avoiding snakes – characterised community. The nature of living, of survival, created their community, there was no personal choice of community, or belonging to it, as by default one belonged. The actuality of all the children going down the one road can be seen as a metaphor for how their lives were played out as a community. Western sensibility suggests the idea of 'community' is infused with a warm gentle glow of positivity (Bauman, 2001). Is that a reality here? Is it a desired community or belonging for Tendo, or is it assumed, thus giving meaning to her words at the beginning 'So it's not a problem'? And her words at the end of the extract, 'The person you knew, they knew somebody and that way everybody knew everybody', suggest neither positive nor negative memories of community and belonging. For her, it is just so.

Alienated childhoods

The three women I will now introduce, Samina, Jessica and Julie, were all brought up in England. I include them in the second part of the chapter under the general heading of *Dislocated belongings* though the dislocation in their cases has less to do with physical displacement than those of the women discussed so far. These three women's childhoods were more geographically settled, but while quite distinct from one another, they all faced issues that contributed to experiences of belonging being alienated or disrupted in some form or other.

Samina

Samina's childhood was the antithesis of the nomadic experience of those childhoods just explored. The middle child of five, 25-year-old Samina is the only daughter of her Bangladeshi-born parents, and spent her whole life in the same

house in Luton until after her marriage at the age of 20. She presents a somewhat contradictory, rather despondent picture of her childhood in an interview dominated by her persistent reference to how difficult life is for girls and women. Her first language is Bengali, the language her parents spoke with her, but Samina mentions little of her young childhood. She states that her early school life was very busy but that she lacked confidence and was scared to talk to people. Although she says she 'enjoyed every moment' of her secondary school, Samina also says that she found it difficult to make friends because people had their 'own little gangs'. The friends she did have were all Bangladeshi and Pakistani, as there were very few white or black children in either school. She met a wider circle of people at sixth form college but left early finding 'A' levels too difficult.

Restrictions, lack of freedom and scarce social life are dominant themes Samina repeatedly refers to regarding her childhood:

I did manage to go out with my friends but just house to house. We weren't able to go out for like [a] party, or you know, walk around with friends and watch movies, restaurants, never then. I wasn't even [allowed to] go to cinema. [... life] was very restricted. It was very restricted.

Her whole thinking appears to be consumed by and revolve around the little she was allowed to do as a girl. Yet Samina also gives an impression of being in an incessant internal tug or war, yearning for the independence to lead a life of her own choosing, and simultaneously believing that she probably would have abused any such freedom permitted by her parents. Even as a child she was conscious of the contradictions which she could not resolve:

N: Yes, ok And erm .. did you feel, when you were a child, did you have these feelings about what you've been talking about, about being restricted and not being able to-

S: Yes, I did. LOT of thinking I did. Lot of question I asked myself but, I can't answer it, I can't answer. Because I think I took question that I can't find answer for myself.

She describes her family treating her 'like a princess', being seen as precious, being served and looked after, with nothing demanded of her, the irony being that she also suffered the perils of being a princess, that of being locked up in an ivory tower where she felt she was not at liberty to make her own choices and experience the freedom she longed for.

Samina does not have a 'language' of belonging. It is not a concept she relates to. She implies that she has an assumed belonging to what she describes as 'her community', that is, a Bengali community, while also feeling constrained by its

culture and traditions. A number of my interviewees stated they had never really thought about belonging but Samina's, and indeed Tendo's, stories of childhood are markedly different, in that belonging is a given. It is not meaningful to question, it is simply being part of the community of people they grew up with. Such a perspective is perhaps illustrated by the words of Husna, a Bangladeshi neighbour who declined to be interviewed. She said to me:

I don't really understand what this belonging is about. You grow up, get work, get married, get a mortgage, just get on with life.

Jessica

Jessica's sense of her childhood focuses largely around her having brittle bones and being mostly confined to a wheelchair. She states that she enjoyed her childhood and describes having had 'quite a normal childhood' apart from the many operations she underwent, but also says:

I don't think I was particularly happy at, at that age. [...] I don't know, I guess . I don't know, I didn't, yeah, I didn't really feel like I fitted in, particularly. And I think part of that probably was my disability and just 'cause I was in a wheelchair like it was quite hard for me to exercise and stuff, so I was quite overweight and I think I found that quite difficult as well. ..

She also remembers not feeling comfortable with who she was as a child:

Erm, not as a child . I don't think. Erm, I think I was . a bit confused about being disabled and like, being different and . I don't know, having to be more careful than other people 'cause . if I fell over or banged myself I could end up in hospital. So I guess that was quite, that was like the main . thing that made me feel like I didn't belong.

Jessica makes it very clear that does she not want to be pigeonholed as a disabled person. While her stories reveal there is far more to her life than her disability, her own words also show that her disability was central to her childhood sense of not belonging. As she was predominantly wheelchair-bound until she was 16 years old,³⁷ physical structures of her childhood, particularly home and school, were perhaps inevitably shaped by her disability. She says little about her first 10 years living in a neighbouring borough though she experienced more a sense of community there, a place where her family had friends. Jessica believes the family moved because of her:

³⁷ Jessica was 24 years old at the time of the interview.

I didn't want to move here, I didn't want to, I loved my old house but it had stairs going up. It was like quite a tall, thin building, like it wasn't good for me but I didn't want to leave and I kind of felt like I was the reason why we were leaving and yeah, I didn't really want to live here.

Having brittle bones was not only disruptive in itself, but Jessica also believes it caused the disruption of leaving the home she loved and moving to one that has given her little sense of belonging, where she made few friends and had little connection. She had to travel out of borough to secondary school as there were no local, wheelchair accessible schools. Her teenage years at school were not particularly happy and Jessica felt alienated by the school's attitude. She was assigned teaching assistants whose help she did not believe she needed and were, she thought, a barrier to her making classroom friends. She also railed against the expectation that pupils with disabilities should and would want to spend break periods together:

I didn't want to be associated with other disabled people. But, what would I have in common with, like just because you're disabled doesn't mean you have anything in common.

She rebelled and was naughty, normal, she says for kids of that age, but being in a 95 per cent Asian school she also found it difficult to develop an out-of-school social life with Asian girls who were not usually allowed out to meet friends. It was in her later teens when Jessica's life began to change, when she finally left school to go to sixth form college which she loved because it was so ethnically mixed, when she had a major operation that enabled her to walk, and when she became a practising Christian. It was through these events and activities that she eventually began to experience belonging other than the strong sense of belonging she had always felt in her immediate family.

Julie

There is a continuous thread throughout Julie's portrayal of her childhood of herself as an outsider; in school, amongst her peers, and even within her family. Disruption also appears as a significant force in her early life. Born in Manchester in 1949, Julie lived with her family in Liverpool between the ages of one and eleven years, 10 defining years for her. With a brother many years older than her, Julie was subject to the disorder of the period – a post-war child who was left to her own devices to play on bomb sites and wander the streets while her parents lived in a world of their own, attempting to re-establish their relationship. Also experiencing the isolation of being the child of an alcoholic parent, Julie felt an outsider within the family, and found at school that her very small stature and dyslexia created differences and difficulties that singled her out. The violence of teaching staff who

caned even very young children, and violence on the street amongst children, added to her seeking refuge in her own company. Not joining a gang meant she spent '... most of [her] childhood trying not to get beaten up' through religious and educational divisions which brought conflict onto the streets:

I, I think I was always a loner. Always very much a loner. Always an outsider because . I was . VERY little and .. there was that dyslexic erm ... mismatch between probably what you were interested in and the educational environment that you were in.

When Julie was 11 years old the family moved to rural Lancashire which they all hated. She felt conspicuous with her Liverpoolian accent and 'like a fish out of water'. She clearly recalls feeling:

... very much erm a child of the city, a child of Liverpool. I'm comfortable and knew how to navigate . my way around a city, and how to operate . within a city. And didn't within a country environment.

After three years her parents no longer found rural living bearable, particularly everybody knowing everyone else's business, and decided to return to Liverpool. Unbeknownst to them, Julie had by that time decided she wanted to study art and had battled her way into the exam stream at school which she was not prepared to give up. She persuaded her parents to let her board with neighbours until she had completed her exams.

Julie's is a survival story, a 'battling against the odds' story. As a child Julie walked the Liverpool city landscape alone, rode the Mersey ferry back and forth only having to pay for a penny ride if she did not alight, exploring, observing, seeing her way into the artist she would become. She returned to Liverpool after gaining the 'O' Levels required for art school and in her late teens was awarded a place at Liverpool Art College. She said:

I think I had very much a sense of belonging to a city. I think I always felt very much an outsider, I think in a way that lots of artists do.

Nomadic and alienated belongings

In this section I have concentrated on looking at the childhood belonging of women who experienced some form of dislocated belonging. Reasons for such dislocation are varied and I considered them under two main headings of nomadic and alienated childhoods. The *Nomadic childhoods* I defined were experienced in families that mobilised to transfer to wherever the father of the family secured employment. In the lives of Elaine, Imogen and Mary this involved a number of

moves to distant places throughout their childhoods. Moving was a defining feature of the not belonging they experienced but not the only aspect. Tendo, who experienced a series of moves to different relatives determined by family circumstances, indicated an assumed belonging to her community amongst whom she also experienced denial of her belonging. Under the second heading of *Alienated childhoods*, Samina, Jessica and Julie describe the diverse ways that disruption in their childhoods affected their sense of belonging.

It is evident from these stories that alongside moving home, perceived social difference is the major force behind the women's sense of not belonging as children. This not belonging manifested in various forms of non-conforming to expected social norms most notably in the realms of language and accent, ethnicity, skin colour, segregation, disability, and generally in the women seeing themselves, or being seen by others to be outsiders. The women's stories show how they variously dealt with their situations, sometimes accepting not belonging, sometimes refuting and rebelling against not belonging, and seeking ways of finding different belonging. What is important to note is that the contexts of these women's childhoods were utterly diverse, all seven women experienced singularly different lives in varying times, countries and circumstances. Regarding age and place, Jessica and Samina are the most similar being much the same age, growing up in Britain in the 1980s and 1990s, but Samina in a British Bengali family in a large town and Jessica in London of British origin with a major physical disability. Ten years older, Tendo spent her childhood in Uganda. Mary, Elaine, Imogen and Julie were all born between 1939 and 1949 and grew up respectively in Australia, Scotland, Southern Africa and England. The most unifying aspect of their lives was the disruption and varying levels of not belonging they experienced.

The journal *Childhood* has recently published a series of research papers exploring childhood migration, mobility and belonging. In the introductory article (Ní Laoire *et al.*, 2010, p. 156), challenge what they see as an assumption '... that children have a natural need for stability and security which can be provided by the domestic and familial environment'. What is more, they argue that this is a western assumption and therefore culturally essentialist. They expressly argue that while the domestic arena of home may offer belonging, it is absolutely not the only social or locational area of belonging and that children's 'fluidity and flexibility' enable them to renegotiate belonging in migratory and mobile lives, as they are '... subjective beings and are actively involved in shaping their own sociocultural worlds'. This concurs with my own research insofar as I have found that children find belonging in social locations beyond, as well as within the familial home, in emotional

relationships that children form to particular communities of people in particular places that were meaningful to their specific experience. This I have called a locality of belonging. A theoretical example I have used is that of den Besten (2010) in this same series of research papers, who finds that migrant children's relationships with their peers in a particular part of their new local neighbourhood gives them a sense of belonging.

I argue however that my research suggests that children who did have stable lives also did appear to have a greater sense of belonging in general than those who moved home. Even for those who only moved once, and only a negligible distance, such as Angelique and Frederica, the change in lifestyle, people and type of home all contributed to disruption and loss of belonging. This was emphatically more so in the case of those who moved more often and further distances including Mary, Elaine and Imogen, where repeated moving appeared to intensify both their lack of and loss of belonging. Ní Laoire *et al.* (2010) are pointedly fore-fronting migrant lives above those of fixed locations of home. They state they are deliberately taking a poststructuralist, anti culturally essentialist position to counter prevailing assumptions, to consider the effects of migration above those of the fixed home. Significantly, what is not addressed or revealed through this perspective are the issues of loss and disruption of belonging. Through my fore-fronting belonging above all, such issues become apparent. Children are adaptable, find ways of coping with the situations they find themselves in and can develop new belongings. Notwithstanding, the stories discussed in this chapter demonstrate that the women's memories of childhood belongings, in hindsight, remain significant to them as adults, wherever they were on the continuum of belonging and not belonging with all its ruptures, disruptions and dislocations.

Coming to and being in Britain

Exploring the women's reconstructions of their childhood belonging in this chapter enables an investigation of the implications of childhood belonging in their adult lives in later chapters, specifically regarding their ethnic belonging and their attachment to place. To make sense of that however, the adult women must first be located in Britain, which the following section establishes.

As previously made clear, of the 14 women interviewed for this study seven grew up mainly in Britain and seven in other countries. While perfectly accurate, this statistic might suggest the research participants presented a straightforward

division of seven British and seven non-British women. Such a representation would however constrain them in simplistic, indeed virtually meaningless categories, belying both the women's intersectional individuality and the intricate actualities of their lives. As a means of clarification this section therefore explains and explores their backgrounds under the headings of *Women who moved to Britain* and *Women born British*. These two headings are however not mutually exclusive and therefore two women, Elaine and Imogen, are discussed in both.

Women who moved to Britain

Six of my interviewees were not born British and came from what appears to be a disparate collection of countries of many parts of the world: Agnes from Poland, Angelique from Trinidad, Frederica from Malaysia, Mary from Australia, Meena from Nepal, and Tendo from Uganda. My research, it seemed, included an extraordinary range of people who had not only come from various regions of the globe, but also happened to be living in one street. But how random were these countries? And how coincidental was the diversity in the street? It was some time before I gave considered thought to my observations about the women's first home countries and then of course realised that all the women bar Agnes came from countries that had all at some point been under British authority, either as part of the Empire (Trinidad, Malaya, Australia, Uganda) or, as Schmidt (1995, pp. 14-142) explains in regards to Nepal, as a quasi British Protected State. The clichéd notion that the world was in Britain because Britain was there undoubtedly epitomises the reality in the examples of these women. The British connection, whether in the distant or recent past surely contributed to, if not explicitly influenced, their decisions to come to Britain.

In addition to these six women, two others will also feature in the following elucidation of the reasons why women moved to Britain. Elaine, though British-born-and-bred, will also be included here because she moved to Northern Rhodesia, part of the British Empire, as a 17-year-old and lived there until her early 30s. Imogen, a British citizen from birth but who was born in Northern Rhodesia and lived in Africa until she was 30 years old, will also be included. Although they have British national origins, they are also migrants, in the sense that they have moved from one country to another. Their stories are salient to the discussion, unlike Monique's who, though born abroad a British citizen, came to England as a

young child, and remembers very little of her first few years in Brunei³⁸ and Nigeria.³⁹ She will therefore not be included in this section.

In telling these 'coming to Britain' stories of the eight women, my ultimate motive is to consider what bearing the circumstances of their coming have on their sense of belonging, both regarding the homes they left, and making new homes in Britain. What was their purpose in coming in the first place: how important was it that Britain was the destination, or could it have just as easily been elsewhere? To what extent was it a deliberate choice to make a new life here or was it for a particular purpose and time-bound period? Or, was their staying here just happenstance? Without wanting to fix people into hard and fast categories I am going to consider the women's situations under the loose notions of: those who came without intention to stay, Agnes, Meena and Mary; those who had no choice in the decision to come, Angelique and Tendo; and those who saw no future for themselves in their homes of the time and made purposeful decisions to leave, Frederica, Elaine and Imogen.

No intention to stay

Agnes

Agnes came to London for a year to improve her English, necessary for the PhD in politics and international law she was expecting to start in Warsaw. As this was some years before Poland joined the EU in 2004 she came on a student visa. During her stay she met Jimmy, an East Londoner with whom she agreed to go out on a date if he helped her with her English exam revision. She passed the exam, married Jimmy and has lived in London ever since. Agnes clearly had no intention of settling in London. While she no longer felt she belonged so much in the village of her childhood, she was resistant to leaving Poland where she was happy, comfortable and had friends. Falling in love with a British man, subsequently having two children and knowing that Jimmy's employment prospects in Poland were virtually non-existent have kept her in London, though her links to Poland remain pivotal in her life.

38 Brunei became a British Protectorate in 1888 and remained under British authority when other Malay states became a federation in 1963. It became fully independent only in 1984 (Saunders, 2002). Brunei remains a member of the Commonwealth.

39 Nigeria was colonised by Britain from the mid-1800s. Nigerians were actively demanding independence in the 1950s; it became an independent state in 1960 and a republic in 1963. Nigeria remains a member of the Commonwealth (Olaniyan, 1982).

Meena

Of the countries with historical links to Britain, Nepal⁴⁰ had the most tenuous connections. Britain was also not Meena's first choice of place to study. Initially intending to go to Australia, she and her husband applied for visas for Britain only after new Australian immigration rules rendered them ineligible for entry there. She believes the British government were encouraging foreigners to come to Britain to study to help reduce its economic crisis and was lured by the promise of being able to get a British higher education and the opportunity for both herself and her husband to work. However with current proposed law changes regarding foreign students and dependents she fears they will not be able to stay longer term. Meena has been in Britain about a year and is nearly halfway through a two-year diploma course. She also works three days a week as a care assistant and her husband works full-time. Meena hopes to continue studying to master's degree level but is awaiting government decisions which, if they forbid her husband from working, would render them unable to afford to stay.

Meena's reason for leaving Nepal was to gain a western education in an English speaking country to enable her and her husband to raise their standard of living, as she says, '... to earn the money and to set up the life style, to set up the life style status'. She has found herself at the mercy of both the Australian and British immigration and economic policies, now leaving her in a constant state of insecurity. She abandoned plans to visit her family in Nepal for fear of finding herself unable to re-enter Britain, and continues her studies and care work on tenterhooks, unsure of her future.

Mary

Mary, whose family emigrated from Britain to Australia⁴¹ some six generations ago, was undertaking a typical young Australian person's world tour at the height of Australians coming to the 'mother country' in the late 1960s (Bouwman, 1993, p. 83). She was 23 years old, had been working and studying for some years after

40 The British authorities in India fought the Nepalese over jurisdiction of two border areas in what became known as the Anglo-Nepalese War 1814–1816. Losing control of various territories under the subsequent Treaty of Sagauli, the Nepalese were forced concede to the stationing of a British Resident in Kathmandu. In later years the Nepalese supported the British in restoring control in India (1857–58) and thereafter in all but name Nepal became a quasi British protectorate, gaining independence in 1924 (Schmidt, 1995, pp. 140–142).

41 As a former British colony and dominion of the British Empire, Australia had become a commonwealth in its own right in 1901, though constitutional links with Britain ended only in 1986, leaving the British monarch as the only formal remaining connection between the countries (Chamberlain, 1999, pp. 65-67, Bouwman, 1993, pp. 80-87). Australia remains a member of the Commonwealth with continuing vestiges of British influence on many aspects of Australian life (Malouf, 2003).

leaving school and had decided it was time to see something of the world. Within days of her arrival in England in 1969 Mary met Laurence and has remained in London with him ever since.

Mary had never lived anywhere other than Australia but led a very peripatetic and somewhat lonely existence there as a single child with her parents. She appeared to have few strong connections with friends or family in Australia apart from her parents. While she undoubtedly had not envisaged meeting someone in England with whom she would spend the next 40 or more years, it is perhaps also not entirely surprising that finding a compelling connection to someone should keep her wherever he was, in this case, London. The Commonwealth association of the time also meant there were few restrictions on her staying in this country. She managed to gain indefinite leave to remain because she had lived here for three years before the more restrictive 1972 Immigration Act came into being.

No choice in the decision to come

My second grouping is of two women, Angelique and Tendo, who were both in their late teens when they came and had no say in the decision to come to England.

Angelique

Angelique was 18 years old when her mother brought her from Trinidad⁴² to East London to enter into further education and stay with the man she grew up believing was her father⁴³ who had been enticed to London by British post-war migration opportunities from the Caribbean (see for example, Chamberlain, 2005; Levy, 2004; Fraser, 1993; London Transport, no date; Webster; 1998; Phillips, 1985). Her mother had made the arrangements with him believing that Angelique would have a better life than she envisaged in Trinidad (see Reynolds, 2006, p. 10). She imagined she would stay for about five years:

My mum saw that as . . . as a step forward [...] for me to do something different, not to get [...] what she would term middle-class mediocrity. You know, get married, have children, if your husband wants to sleep around, you put up with it, if he wants to beat you, you put up with it, that's, that's what my mum didn't want for me.

42 Trinidad was taken over by the British in 1797 and, with Tobago, became a British colony in 1889. Fought over by Europeans for hundreds of years prior to that, the island saw a massive influx of slaves, then freed slaves and later Asians, all of whom provided cheap labour to work the land. Decades of campaigning for self-representation came to fruition in 1962 when the islands gained full independence under Prime Minister Eric Williams (Ottley, 1975, pp. 24-30). Trinidad and Tobago remains a member of the Commonwealth.

43 Angelique was brought up by his mother and step-father, who she knew as her grandparents, but she only later found out that he was not her biological father.

The women's visions were short-lived. Angelique's mother enrolled her in a course and, soon after, believing Angelique to be settled, returned to Trinidad. Within weeks her father asked her to leave and Angelique found herself homeless and without support:

I was on my own, it was horrible [...] I was let down in a big way coming here 'cause there was no love, there wasn't just the coldness of the weather but there was a coldness to the people.

Angelique continued with her studies, found herself a part-time job in a bingo hall and after moving between homeless hostels was eventually offered a one-bedroom council flat in the street we both now live, not very far from where her father lived. Wanting to please her mother who she knew hated her being 'too needy', Angelique stayed in England. Her life in East London however focused primarily on Trinidad. As she relates:

... my three luxuries in life were to have a phone so that I could always call home, to have heating so that I would not feel the cold, and to be able to go home. Those were my three luxuries, for 12 years. Those were the ONLY things that mattered to me.

Angelique's resilience is evident; a young woman making her way in a foreign country with few resources and where she had little wish to be.

Tendo

Tendo was born only 12 years after Uganda⁴⁴ gained its independence from Britain, which had ruled the Ugandan kingdoms for nearly 100 years. Since her mother died when she was 13 years old she lived with relatives. After three years with an aunt and uncle, her aunt came to England for a wedding leaving Tendo with her uncle and cousin in Kampala. A year later in 1991 when Tendo was 17 years old and still at school preparing to take her 'O' Levels, she was told that the three of them were going to join her aunt who had stayed in London:

Why did we come, I've gone over that and I've been asked by people why we came and I've said I don't know the answer to that. It's a bit like why was I born [laugh]. I haven't got an answer to that, I never planned really, well I don't know, maybe I planned, if I'm a spiritual person, in being here [laugh], but I never planned to be here but I, I was born and here I am, so that was the same thing for me. I can't tell you that it oh was because of the war or because my mother had died or because we're poor.

44 Uganda was central in European imperialists' wrangling over the dividing up of East Africa between them. Having been under the administration of the British East Africa Company since 1888, Uganda became a British Protectorate in 1894 and remained in British control until 1962 when it finally became independent under Milton Obote (Chamberlain, 2010, pp. 64-67; 1999, pp. 47-48). Uganda remains a member of the Commonwealth.

It is apparent from her words above that Tendo was neither told why they were coming nor for how long, and that she had no choice in the matter. She lived with her aunt and uncle and did as her elders said. Hers was not a position where she could ask questions or defy decisions made, despite wanting to stay in Kampala to complete her exam courses. She had to start her 'O' Level courses again in London. The subject of why they came over and whether they were always intending to stay in Britain has never been discussed and Tendo has been reluctant to ask.

Choosing to live in Britain

Frederica, Elaine and Imogen make up the third group of women: all left their homes in Malaysia and Africa with the purposeful decision to live in Britain.

Frederica

As we have already seen in the previous chapter, Frederica grew up within the British education system taught by European nuns and looked to Britain as a seat of democracy and high ideals, in contrast to the Malaya⁴⁵ she was experiencing as a teenager. The increasingly fragile political situation which involved ethnic minority attacks on Indian and Chinese temples frightened Frederica. Her concerns were not only for her physical safety. She feared her inward rebelliousness would eventually cause her problems:

I was very rebellious. Not, not in an open way, in my head. And I, I think I thought that if I stayed I would get into a lot of trouble. And I thought I, you know, it might be interesting to see the big world, to see what England is like that we learned so much about. . That, that was the main thing, to get away.

Frederica was also finding that the close community she so warmly remembered of her young childhood began to intrude on her experience as a teenager. She describes how the intimacy of extended families and near neighbours can also be too claustrophobic and 'create a LOT of emotional unhappiness. I've seen it first hand':

... I would feel . very claustrophobic and I think . that might be why I came as well, a second reason apart from the politics. 'Cause life can be very, very . closed in, in a close community.

45 In 1957 Malaya became an independent nation and member of the Commonwealth but for the previous nearly 200 years it had been under British colonial rule in which time English law, government and aspects of lifestyle had been adopted (Andaya and Andaya, 1984, cited in López C., 2001, p. 15).

At the age of 20 years Frederica left Malaya for Britain to study and begin to see the world. She completed her three-year training programme in Britain but could not afford the next step of gaining a degree.

Elaine

Elaine had lived in Scotland, England and Kuwait⁴⁶ with her parents before joining them in Northern Rhodesia⁴⁷ when she was 17 years old. Having learned shorthand and typing in Glasgow she worked as a clerk in the copper mine where her father was an electrician, for the mineworkers' trade union and thereafter joined the police force. After some years she rose to the level of inspector and being in the police was the nearest she had felt to being part of a community in Northern Rhodesia though she says she was:

... a bit of an outsider as well. Being a woman, you don't feel completely totally accepted as one of the boys [laugh] ever...

However after independence in 1964 Elaine believed there would be few opportunities for British emigrants in the new Zambia:

There wasn't going to be much future for expatriates after independence [...] It was obvious that any . advancement and promotion was going to be accelerated promotion for local people ...

Already in her early thirties, Elaine decided it would be a good time to return to Britain as she was young enough to take up a new career and in 1966 she did so:

I chose to come to London rather than Glasgow because I hadn't got any relatives in London [laugh]. I didn't want to get back in with the family [laugh] [...] .. I just wanted to be independent, I wanted to be free, I didn't want, I didn't want them telling me what I should be doing [laugh].

Elaine and Imogen had known each other for some before Elaine left for London, having met at a mutual friend's party. They had discussed their future lives and decided they would live together in London. They agreed Imogen would move once Elaine was settled with a job and had found somewhere to live.

46 Kuwait was a British Protectorate from 1899 until it became an independent emirate in 1961 (Casey, 2007).

47 Under the auspices of the British South Africa Company (BSAC) led by Cecil Rhodes in the late 1800s, Barotseland, renamed Northern Rhodesia, and Mashonaland and Matabeleland, renamed Southern Rhodesia, were annexed by the British originally as protected states. Northern Rhodesia became a crown colony gaining independence under the new name of Zambia in 1964. Southern Rhodesia was a self-governing colony and was known simply as Rhodesia after Zambian independence. It's government declared unilateral independence in the face of black African demands for majority rule which was supported by the British. The Rhodesians eventually surrendered their position in 1979 and after elections based on universal suffrage, Rhodesia, under its ancestral name of Zimbabwe, gained independence in 1980 (Chamberlain 1999, pp. 33-56; Chamberlain 2010, pp. 69-78). Zambia remains a Commonwealth member; Zimbabwe left the Commonwealth in 2003.

Imogen

Moving around the copper mining areas of Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa,⁴⁸ Imogen and her parents eventually settled in Northern Rhodesia where she was born and where she continued to live with them until she left for England. As a 20-year-old undergraduate studying history, Latin and English literature, Imogen had intended to become a teacher and possibly work in the United States but an accident, in which she broke her back and became wheelchair bound, forced her to change her plans. She remained in Northern Rhodesia until she was 30 years old but says she felt no loss when she left for England. She had been writing stories for some time and was excited about the opportunities she thought London would bring:

I was looking forward to the future you see and thinking oh, I'm going to do this, that and the other, and I'm going to write and, thought, you know, when I come to London, of COURSE I'll get published and all this, but of course you don't. Because I'd met other erm ex whites from there and they say, 'Oh yes, there's more opportunities here', but there's much more TALENT here as well too, to work against or work with, yeah.

Imogen came to England in 1969, three years after Elaine.

Intersecting motivations

As demonstrated in the above stories the women's reasons for coming to England were diverse and complex. Whilst I chose to consider them within three groupings such analysis, as might be expected, gives only partial perspective on the multifaceted realities of their coming and/or staying. Inevitably there are different intersecting factors that either brought them initially, or kept them here in the longer term. Frederica for example came to England not merely due to the political situation in Malaysia but also because of the intersecting dynamics of her English schooling and her desire to travel. Romantic liaisons in London utterly transformed Agnes' and Mary's lives, given neither of them had any long-term intention of remaining in Britain, and the opposing desires to be home in Trinidad and fulfil her mother's wish for her to better herself in London, shaped a twelve year hiatus for Angelique. What impact did such happenings have on the sense of belonging these women had in the homes they had left and in the new ones they had made? Did those who made a choice to come to Britain develop a stronger sense of belonging here, and therefore conversely, did those not choosing for themselves retain a

48 Southern African Cape states were annexed by Britain at the end of the 18th century and the British continued to colonise the region throughout the 19th century. The Union of South Africa was formed in 1910 but it remained within the British Empire until 1961 when it became a republic and left the Commonwealth (Chamberlain 1999; Thompson, 2001).

stronger sense of belonging to their former home? And not least, given that many of the women have now been in Britain many years, how much has time altered how or where they feel any sense of belonging? In the following chapter the experiences of the women's coming to England and the questions they trigger will be used as a basis to explore their sense of belonging relating to their ethnicity and citizenship, and what meaning, if any, national belonging has for them. As women who grew up British in Britain obviously also have ethnic origins and potentially varied citizenships, their stories too will be explored.

Having considered above the reasons why the migrant women came or chose to stay in Britain, it is also essential to briefly consider the background of the women born British. It would be naïve to imagine that the women born British needed no such introduction because they were simply homogeneously British. In fact their backgrounds as British women are multifaceted and complex, as the next section depicts.

Women born British

Although my interviewees are neatly, if coincidentally, grouped into seven who grew up in Britain and seven who grew up elsewhere, the first statistic that immediately controverts any straightforward division of them is that in fact eight of them were British citizens from birth. Of the eight, only five were born and grew up solely in Britain. And only three of these five, Jessica, Julie and Sarah, were brought up in England, and had parents who were also born and brought up in England. They would probably be included in what Skey (2010) refers to as the 'ethnic majority'. Of the other two British citizens who lived solely in England, Peigi's parents were from the Hebridean Islands and India, and the predominant social circle of her childhood comprised the West Bengal family and friends of her parents. Samina's parents were from Bangladesh. She grew up in Luton, home to a large Bengali and Pakistani populations. Her school peers were mostly Bengali and Pakistani and her family's social circle was Bengali.

There are three others who were British citizens from birth. Elaine, born in Scotland of Scottish parents, grew up in Scotland, England, Kuwait and Northern Rhodesia where she joined her parents when she was 17 years old. She lived in Africa with them for about 15 years before moving to London in the mid-1960s. Monique was born in Brunei to a French mother and British father. As a baby of six months, Monique moved with her family to Nigeria where they spent the next six years before coming to England where Monique has remained, unlike most of her family.

Finally, Imogen was born and grew up in Africa; a white Rhodesian with a British mother and South African father and who lived variously in Northern Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia and South Africa before moving to Britain, aged 30 years.

These brief sketches of eight women born between the mid-1930s and mid-1980s very clearly depict the multifarious nature of being (born) British, over a 50-year span of the 20th century. Of the eight women, half of them have at least one non-British parent. Two, Peigi and Samina, who were brought up in England, spent much of their childhoods in very non-English, -Scottish, -Welsh or -Northern Irish cultural milieus. In addition, a number of their life histories clearly exemplify aspects of British colonialism and illustrate migration to and from Britain, Asia and Africa. The diversity of the young lives of Elaine, Monique and Imogen is particularly pronounced. Being British for them included living in a number of countries which although markedly different to Britain, were all under some form of British authority during the period of the women's lives there. Two of the three women had mixed-nationality parentage and, just as Peigi and Samina above, could therefore not simply be said to have experienced a singularly 'British' heritage and sensibility, if indeed such a thing exists.⁴⁹ Similarly, Elaine, with two Scottish parents also had a distinctly Scottish rather than a generically British cultural heritage and, as previously discussed, had at a formative age experienced discrimination for supposedly being English. It is manifestly clear from this very cursory biographical peek at these eight lives that 'being born British' had the potential for incorporating widely varying cultural and national influences under the rainbow umbrella of a British label. These women's situations clearly provide a challenge to any simplistic notion of what it means to be born a British citizen.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the childhood belonging of all the interviewees, all but two of whom grew up in the countries in which they were born.⁵⁰ The women's childhood belonging has been considered from two specific perspectives, those of migrant and non-migrant women who had predominantly stable childhoods, and the

49 There has been much government, media and academic discussion about the nature of Britishness, see for example: *Make Bradford British* (2012); Easton (2012); Cameron (2011); Modood and Salt (2011); Modood (2010); Calder *et al.* (2010); Pinson *et al.* (2010); Goldsmith (2008); Ware (2007); Ethnos (2005). In addition see: the Academy for the study of Britishness (2008). The British art establishment has also contributed to the debate with the mounting of the Tate Britain (2012) exhibition, *Migration: journeys into British art*, which demonstrates that British art has been shaped by centuries of immigration (see also Allsopp, 2012).

50 Those described as migrants became so only later in life. Imogen did move with her family back and forth between South Africa, North and South Rhodesia but as the places were similar settings I am not differentiating between them.

migrant and non-migrant women whose childhoods were conspicuous for their disjuncture and dislocation. The chapter has argued that the first women discussed, who lived in widely assorted places though most were smaller scale settings, had for the most part very stable childhoods and formed close attachments to particular people in particular places that were meaningful to their experience. I have termed this childhood sense of belonging the 'locality of belonging'. Significantly, the chapter demonstrated that it was the people in the places that ultimately rendered the places important. These women's early lives were not wholly without some element of diversity or rupture but it was concluded that this was primarily due to growing up, moving from childhood into the teenage years.

The second section of the chapter explored the lives of the women whose childhoods I delineated generally as dislocated, and further identified in two classes of nomadic and alienated childhoods. Two very different forms of nomadic childhood were discussed, that of three women of similar older age who in different British colonies experienced repeated moves to new places, who all saw themselves as outsiders, found it difficult to relate to their peers, and had little sense of childhood belonging. The fourth woman's nomadic experience was quite different, her sense of belonging an intricate web of not belongings disrupted by an assumed belonging to her family, village and tribe. For the other women deemed to have had dislocated childhoods, the chapter illustrated that their lack of childhood belonging was not due to geographical displacement but issues in their lives that alienated them in a variety of ways. Perceived social difference was highlighted as a foremost influence on the women's sense of not belonging.

These findings establish that childhood belonging cannot be simply defined as 'place-belongingness' (Antonsich, 2010) as the childhood belonging found here is closely bound to attachments to people within their immediate environment. While Antonsich acknowledges the role of social relations his definition privileges place in a manner that excludes non-place-based belonging. Moreover, my findings suggest that belonging in childhood is not universal and is complicated by the children's social positionings and circumstances. I have argued that in exploring childhood, fore-fronting belonging, rather than migrancy which highlights how children adapt (Ní Laoire *et al.*, 2010), offers a broader understanding of childhood belonging and not belonging. Additionally the chapter has demonstrated that differential understandings of belonging and not belonging can only be understood through applying an intersectional approach to the analysis of the women's narratives.

The third section has revealed the manifold complexities of migration and ethnic origin in these women's lives, reflecting characteristics not only of the globalised and mobile late 20th century, but also effects of earlier British colonialism. As has been clearly unveiled, there exists a multiplicity of backgrounds, places and statuses in the lives of most of the women, in both those who are not, and those who are British citizens, indicating that the intricacies of the women's family heritage, places of home and citizenships are integral and crucial to the contextual understanding of their sense of belonging at different times of their lives. It has been shown that major changes in many of their lives have taken them from their childhood localities, whether of belonging or of dislocation, raising questions of what belongings they may carry forward from childhood, and what new belongings they experience as adults. To develop a deeper and more nuanced understanding of these complex, interweaving strands, the following chapter will explore the women's belonging relating to their ethnic origins and their citizenships, sections that will also incorporate aspects of the women's national belongings.

Chapter 4:

Discombobulating ethnicity and citizenship

Introduction

The previous chapter suggests that childhood localities and dislocations of belonging, places of home, family heritage and political contexts are all implicated in the complex and multi-layered particularities of ethnic belonging. But what has not become apparent from the earlier analyses is simply, what is ethnic belonging? Is it a significant concept, or merely a form-filling 'tick box' exercise? How do people make sense of their ethnicity? Is it more meaningful in its formal manifestations of categorisation and citizenship, or in the everyday cultural practices of people's lives? In the following two chapters the women's stories will be used to unravel these questions. The current chapter concentrates on the more formal aspects of ethnic categorisations, and citizenship and national belonging, and the following chapter considers more informal everyday practices of ethnic belonging. Ethnicity and citizenship are therefore being discussed as separate but related categories.

The first section of this chapter explores theoretical issues pertaining to ethnicity, identity and belonging and provides the principal theoretical argument informing both chapters. In attempting to uncover how best to understand ethnicity I discuss questions of boundaries and content, and groups and categories. Different perspectives of identity are also briefly considered as a basis for elucidating my own differentiation between identification and belonging, which is of central significance in the development of my thesis. Having considered the theory, the chapter goes on to explore the interviewees' stories, interpreting what meaning they make of their ethnic belonging. The second half of the chapter investigates citizenship as the formal marker of national belonging to discern what meaning citizenship holds in the women's lives. A brief theoretical background precedes an exploration of what citizenship means to the women and, for reasons that become clear in the section, focuses far more on their differing status positions than on the political aspects of rights and responsibilities. A focus on four migrant women's narratives explores how issues of citizenship shape and reshape their affiliations and attachments. Finally, citizenship and belonging are discussed from the perspectives of the politics of belonging and the interviewees' situations.

Theorising ethnicity

Boundaries and content

The notion of people existing in natural, biologically distinctive and culturally uniform groups, was influentially challenged by Barth's conviction that ethnicity was in fact socially constructed (Barth, 1969, p. 9-15). In arguing a constructionist approach, he also firmly stated that ethnic groups are defined less by their culture than by the boundaries created by the groups' organisation. Culture is more a consequence of ethnic groups than a defining factor, and the unstated rules which groups lived by have greater influence in perpetuating their separateness. Cultural features such as, 'dress, language, house-form, or general style of life' may be used as signals of ethnic difference but do not cause difference, rather, the maintaining of ethnic boundaries that differentiate groups, produces shared culture within each group (Barth, 1969, p. 14). However, Barth's theoretical perspective gives little scope for understanding how people themselves experience the meaning of culture as related to their ethnicity. From a perspective of subjective experience it is arguable that while boundaries undoubtedly impact on people's lives, the cultural content that personalises that experience has crucial significance in giving meaning to their lives.

Barth (1994) later acknowledged that he had overstated the lack of importance that culture held in defining ethnicity. Reviewing his ideas 25 years on, while not altering his argument *vis-à-vis* boundaries, he argued that the definition of what constituted culture had evolved and that culture now was understood to exist in a state of flux, contradiction and incoherence, and was person-specific (Barth, 1994, pp. 11-32). He recognised that the experiences that form ethnic identity must be taken into account, and 'it is not enough, as one thought with a simpler concept of culture, to make a homogenizing inventory of its manifestations' (Barth, 1994, p. 14). Jenkins (2008) endorses Barth's social constructionist approach and his concern not to reify ethnicity, but goes further in emphasising the relevance of subjective meaning in the construction of ethnicity. He states:

'... neither culture nor ethnicity is 'something' that people 'have', or, indeed, to which they 'belong'. They are, rather, complex repertoires which people experience, use, learn and 'do' in their daily lives, within which they construct an ongoing sense of themselves and an understanding of their fellows.'

(Jenkins, 1997, p. 14)

Jenkins' social anthropological approach, focusing on people constructing their lived ethnicity through very ordinary day-to-day practices, very closely corresponds

to the narrative approach I am using in understanding how women make meaning of their ethnic belonging in their everyday lives.

Groups and categories

In as much as Barth (1969, 1994) and Jenkins (1997) have argued against the reification of ethnicity, Brubaker (2002) has questioned whether ethnicity should be thought of at all as discernible groups. He argues that ethnic groups do not exist as homogeneous entities though they are spoken of as such, and is concerned that the notion of groups encourages analytic reification. Thinking of groups in a more fluid form of 'groupness' allows ethnicity to be understood as a process, rather than fixing people as members of bounded groups (Brubaker, 2002, pp. 166-168). He further argues that categories are a more appropriate means of considering ethnicity which avoids the erroneous belief that ethnic groups exist in actuality. He says, 'Ethnicity [...] exist[s] only in and through our perceptions, interpretations, representations, categorizations and identifications' thus it is 'not [a] thing *in* the world, but [a] perspective *on* the world' (Brubaker, 2002, pp. 174-175, emphasis in original). It is difficult however to understand a real distinction in his separation of groups and categories, as the latter also pigeonhole people into being bounded entities rather than enabling the multiplicity of being that the term 'human' encompasses. As Anderson notes of the colonial census makers who sought, '... completeness and unambiguity. Hence their intolerance of multiple, politically 'transvestite', blurred, or changing identifications' (Anderson, 2006, p. 166), ethnic categorisations are often arbitrary divisions which have little relevance to people's lives. Like Barth, Brubaker's approach undervalues the significance of subjective understanding and meaning in people's day-to-day experiences of ethnicity.

A more valid approach I would argue is that proposed by Jenkins who contends that groups are not necessarily definitively bounded, homogeneous and differentiated but in reality are often more unfixed, changing and loosely constituted than Brubaker suggests (Jenkins, 2008, pp. 10-12). Jenkins argues that:

A group is a collectivity which is meaningful to its members [...] a category is a collectivity which is defined according to criteria formulated by the sociologist ...'

(Jenkins, 1997, p. 54)

In Jenkins' view, small informal groups are an aspect of everyday reality:

Whether they are families, peer groups or friendship circles, our own experience tells us that groups are real [...] These small local groups are embedded within, and help to produce and reproduce, larger groups.

(Jenkins, 2008, p. 11)

In the same way, ethnic groups can be thought of as real, if on a much larger scale. Contrary to Brubaker, Jenkins states that while '...groups may be imagined, [...] this does not mean they are imaginary' (Jenkins, 2008, p. 11). This argument has relevance for second-generation Jewish refugees as I discussed in my MA dissertation (Samson, 2008a). Hoffman (2005), (following Anderson, 1993), argues that '...the 'second generation' does constitute a recognizable entity' if only as an 'imagined community' with meanings, symbols and literature in common '...that enable its members to recognize and converse with each other with a sense of mutual belonging' (Hoffman, 2005, p. 28). As such, even for those people who do not participate in any formal group, a clear sense of second-generation identity exists for many of them.

The small informal groups mentioned above also relate to Jenkins' (1997) ideas on how ethnicity may be internalised in early life through ethnic markers, '...such as language, religion, non-verbal behaviour etc...', as well as to my own theory of localities of belonging discussed earlier. He states:

In a social setting where ethnic differentiation is sufficiently salient and consequential to intrude into the world of children, ethnicity may be acquired in this way, as an integral part of the individually embodied point of view of selfhood.

(Jenkins, 1997, p. 47)

I would agree that the embodiment of ethnicity takes place in childhood but that it would not necessarily have salience at the time and therefore would not be apparent. For example, as I have highlighted (p. 83), Angelique experienced no difference between herself and her peers as a child. As an adult in England however she differentiates herself as Trinidadian not only from black people in general, but also from British-born Trinidadians who she contends have a qualitatively different approach to being Trinidadian, even when they were schooled in Trinidad. This narrowing down or rationalising of how one is Trinidadian and who can be Trinidadian incorporates both the content of ethnicity and the boundaries that include and exclude others (Barth, 1969). Furthermore, the meaning of being Trinidadian to Angelique derived from the small and informal groups such as family and friends, as Jenkins suggests and as I argue, are the attachments and relationships that are created with particular people in particular communities that constitute a person's locality of belonging. How ethnic markers as suggested above, such as food and customs, provide a continuity between childhood locality

of belonging and what I call adult ethnic belonging will be demonstrated in Chapter 5.

The salience of Angelique's adult ethnic awareness and issues of sameness and difference have relevance within the vast and diverse debate on identity, most pertinently with reference to how, where and when ethnicity, identity and belonging become meaningful issues (see for example, Frankenberg (1993) on Jewish women; Hickman *et al.* (2005) on British-born Irish people). In a field that is very complex and highly contested, I focus my discussion on my own differentiation between identity and belonging to elucidate what I mean by ethnic belonging.

Identity perspectives

The identity debate has embraced a pervasive theme of identity understood as a changeable and changing process, which, rather than preserving fixed cultural, geographical and historical attributes, is a mutable, shifting medley in progression. In Hall's words:

... identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation.

(Hall, 1996, p. 4)

Within this debate there are of course varying perspectives. Jenkins, for example, asserts that there are '*primary identities*' such as kinship and ethnicity that are more durable than other identities, and that while, '... change and mutability are fundamental to identification, some identities are more changeable and mutable than others' (Jenkins, 2008, p. 41, emphasis in original). Bauman argues that identity can have very different meanings dependent on, '... the position from which people speak: the practicalities of their lives will inform their attitudes' (Bauman, 2008, p. 92), and he also maintains that the notion of identity as flexible, or hybrid, is less available to the majority than those with power.

It is precisely the breadth of meanings that 'identity' invokes ranging between essentialising assumptions of identity politics and the insubstantiality of flexible postmodern identity thinking that has prompted Brubaker and Cooper (2000) and Anthias (2008, 2002) to suggest that the word has been rendered theoretically inadequate. Anthias proposes that focusing on identity 'sets us on a false trail' by retaining elements of essentialisation (Anthias, 2008, p. 7), and proposes instead a

concept of 'translocational positionality' combining 'social position' (social structure) and 'social positioning' (subjective processes and meaning) and incorporating movement and change in 'translocational'. Referring to women and Europeanness, Passerini also argues that '... identification, belonging and allegiance' are more useful than 'identity', providing greater understanding of their contribution to the 'construction of feelings' (Passerini, 2007, p. 265). Yuval-Davis (2011, 2010, 2006a) argues however that identity remains a useful concept – as long as it is defined in terms of 'narratives of identity', that is, stories people tell about who they are and who they are not. These stories must be understood as a continuous process of unfolding meaning that is provisional, multi-layered and never complete (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 14; 2010, pp. 266-267). Indeed, narrative theorists would concur with such a statement, if also from diverging perspectives. Ricoeur (1991b) differentiates between two definitions of identity, one based on sameness, the other on a continuing self which he terms narrative identity, which is formed through telling stories and is neither unified nor unchanging. And while McAdams (2003) argues that '... identity is an internalized and evolving life story' which brings coherence to people's lives (McAdams, 2003, p. 187), others challenge the notion that narrative provides coherence, arguing that narratives are often broken and fragmented and deal with '... discordant aspects of acting and suffering' (Hyvärinen *et al.*, 2010, p. 8).⁵¹

Distinguishing identity and belonging

In her tripartite framework of belonging Yuval-Davis sets out one facet as 'identifications and emotional attachments' (2011, 2010, 2006) and in that she does not differentiate between identifications and belonging. It is this relationship between identifications and belonging that I wish to problematise. Obviously there is a very close connection between identity and belonging, that is, in what one identifies with and in what feelings of belonging one has, no more so perhaps than in relation to ethnicity. Indeed, I do see both identification and belonging as having emotional elements, but I also see a distinction between them which is crucial in how I define ethnic belonging. There are theorists who have touched on this issue, if not explicated in any great depth. Antonsich (2010) for example suggests that belonging is too often used as a synonym for citizenship and identity, particularly national or ethnic identity (Antonsich, 2010, p. 644). Probyn (1996) talks about the polarising nature of identity that defines, divides and fixes people in categories and

51 For further debate on narrative identity see also, for example, Taylor, (2009b); Bamberg *et al.* (2007); McAdams *et al.* (2006); Mishler 2004; 1999); Fivush and Haden (2003); Brockmeier and Carbaugh (2001); Holstein and Gubrium (1999).

denies the opportunity for more fluid and shifting attachments which she argues can be better met in the notion of belonging (Probyn, 1996, pp. 9-10). Anthias (2008) does make a clear distinction between the two. She states:

Identity involves individual and collective narratives of self and other, presentation and labelling, myths of origin and myths of destiny with associated strategies and identifications. Belonging on the other hand is more about experiences of being part of the social fabric and the ways in which social bonds and ties are manifested in practices, experiences and emotions of inclusion.

(Anthias, 2008, p. 8)

I see the 'social bonds' Anthias speaks of as closely related to the attachments to people that I argue are central to belonging, and her 'practices' as the performative element also central to belonging. Indeed, Anthias adds:

To belong is to share values, networks and practices and not just a question of identification.

(Anthias, 2008, p. 8)

For me the crucial difference between identification and belonging is performativity which is embodied in everyday practices. It is in this I differ from Yuval-Davis who does not differentiate between performative and non-performative identifications in her facet of 'identifications and emotional attachments'. In discussing performativity I draw on the work of Bell (1999) and Fortier (1999) who argue that belonging is achieved by the repeated performance of ritualised practice. I have already clarified (p. 16) that I apply a broader interpretation of performativity than they do, extending to more informal everyday practices. However I also depart from them in my distinguishing between identity and belonging as they use the terms interchangeably. Fortier, for example, speaks of rituals as cultivating 'a sense of belonging', revealing the extent to which 'cultural identity is embodied', and how actions are *'lived as expressions of a deeply felt sense of identity and belonging'* (Fortier, 1999, p. 48, emphasis in original). My argument is that identification alone, without the 'social bonds' that are embedded in practice, does not provide belonging. Belonging develops over time and requires reiterated performative practices to do so.

My own story comes to the fore again as an illustration of how I differentiate between identification and belonging, arrived at because of the dilemma I have experienced in attempting to understand my own relationship with my Jewishness. I have always identified as Jewish. I have, as many others have attested to about

themselves, always known I was Jewish.⁵² It is not something I, or they, have any memory of being told, it was always there, part of who we are. As Freeman (2012) suggests, 'stuff seeps into our knowledge', we absorb information that metabolises and becomes part of our 'narrative unconscious', and at some later point becomes part of our told story (Freeman 2010a, p. 105). This identification as Jewish is for me more than a thought, more than a simple belief. It is felt emotionally as part of who I am, it rationalises my existence, but it is at the same time, intangible and amorphous. There was no overt cultural or religious element to my upbringing. My family did not engage in any Jewish religion, customs, traditions or rituals, and as assimilated German Jews, spoke no Yiddish. The food that helped delineate us as not English tended to be more German and Italian than it was Jewish. Consequently there was little substance to which my sense of being Jewish could be attached. And with no active past or present engagement in any form of being Jewish, and being '...on the margins of Jewish life' as Cooper and Morrison (1991, p. 94) suggest, I have little sense of belonging to any manifest Jewish actuality, despite my identification. Performativity is pivotal in explaining this difference. A sense of belonging is not simply achieved through understanding or belief, nor by claims of membership, affiliation or attachment, however real or significant they may be, but by the active participation in and reiteration of the norms of custom and tradition (Fortier 1999, p. 43). Ultimately I argue that the emotional attachments that create belonging are more than emotional identification because they are embodied in everyday practices that actualise their significance.

My use of 'ethnic belonging' therefore refers to attachments to an ethnic grouping that are enacted in day-to-day life, in a performative embodiment that reinforces the sense of attachment to the particular ethnic grouping. I propose that this enactment of emotional attachments in everyday practice can provide a continuity with childhood localities of belonging and to practices passed on within families. My study explicitly focuses on women's experience of belonging, as expressed in their narratives. How they experience their ethnic belonging is therefore explored through questions specifically relating to ethnic markers and performative practices such as customs and traditions, food, language and religion. It is not in any way intended that these four areas alone define ethnicity but are everyday features in life that can portray features of ethnic belonging which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

52 See for example, Samson (2008a); Hoffman (2005, 1991); Seidler (2000); Karpf (1997); Epstein (1988); Jewish Women's History Group (c.1983).

Questions of ethnicity

Aspects of my interviewees' ethnicity naturally arose in their stories of childhood, but to understand any sense of ethnic belonging they had as adults, I needed to specifically bring in the notion of ethnicity. I had therefore planned an interview section to begin with the question, 'What does being [ethnicity] mean to you?'. Upon analysing the responses I was also forced to analyse the actual questions asked, for it became obvious that that I had not always asked the question as I intended. This mismatch of intention and execution is a perfect example demonstrating the unique co-construction of every interview (Riessman, 2008, p. 23) and the influence the interviewer has on the nature of the discourse and the stories told. In this case the methodological issue of questions being worded differently clearly led to significant variances in the substance of the interviewees' responses. Specifically, in some instances I asked what an interviewee's ethnicity was, rather than what meaning it had for them, and the contrast in the answers is palpable. The former allows little more than categorisation and subsequently reveals little about those women. The latter however encourages more reflection on aspects of who they understand themselves to be and their reasoning behind that understanding.

As instances of closed, categorical questions, I initially asked two women (Elaine and Monique) whether they had always been British, basically allowing them only yes and no answers, and another two (Mary and Imogen) how they described their ethnicity, giving them little encouragement to reflect on what it meant to them.⁵³ For example, faced with the question, 'How do you describe your ethnicity?', Imogen responds:

Very difficult. I used to put white African. [...] I just put UK now, it's so much simpler.

Her understandable answer only hints at her being born British in Northern Rhodesia of South African and British parents, and more importantly does no justice whatsoever to the reality of her feelings and insecurities revealed later, in a second interview. Here Imogen disclosed that as a child she had been taunted with the derogatory term 'kaffir' and learned of rumours that she was mixed race. Everyone knew, she said, there were mixed race children with white parents,⁵⁴ which she links to her knowledge of there being a deeply held secret in her father's

⁵³ Taking into account how these four women, Elaine, Imogen, Mary and Monique, generally talked about their ethnicity, as opposed to how they answered the actual question, for the purposes of further analysis I did assign them all under the *equivocal* heading.

⁵⁴ See thesis p. 27, Sandra Laing's experience of having mixed antecedence in South Africa (Stone, 2007).

estranged family. It is transparent that her insecurity about her ethnic origins is disquieting for her:

I think I would feel very much easier if I knew about my antecedence, if I definitely knew that I had an African antecedence. That would make a tremendous difference to me. It sounds illogical, what difference is it going to make now if you had a great, great grandfather or a great, great grandmother who was black? But it does make a difference to me. I would like to know. It feels important to me.

The very dissimilar responses from Imogen, faced with different questions, illustrate that thinking of ethnicity as categories, which Brubaker (2002) suggests is more appropriate than groups, gives neither the breadth nor depth to the meaning of people's lives. While potentially useful statistically in areas such as policy and planning, categorisations cannot reflect the realities of subjective ethnic belonging.

Unequivocal ethnic belonging

Of the 10 women who were asked the direct question of what meaning their ethnicity had for them, only three in fact answered with straightforwardly unequivocal responses expressing strong ethnic belonging. Agnes' words:

I think I'll be, I'll ALWAYS be Polish. Because, because I am Polish and whatever I would do or wherever I LIVE, I will not change myself.

suggest she is irrefutably secure in her sense of her Polish ethnicity. Meena tells of her pride in Nepal and being Nepalese, and speaks of her belonging to the Chhetri caste, though she distinguishes herself from older generations who live strictly by the hierarchical caste system. Angelique's heartfelt description of Trinidad's many settlers gives a historical perspective to her potent sense of her ethnic belonging as a Trinidadian. She says:

To be a Trinidadian [sigh] is to . I think being a Trinidadian is, is . or acknowledging that you're a Trinidadian is knowing how rich you are in heritage. . To know, to know . how many races and cultures that contributed to my being, that's a wealth, that's something to be proud of. And I am proud. I am proud to carry myself and say, I am a Trinidadian.

Her being born in Trinidad is fundamental to her ethnicity which she categorically differentiates from being a British-born Trinidadian who might call themselves black British, a label she would never give herself with her birth grandparents a mix of Indian, Portuguese, Chinese, Venezuelan and Carib Indian. Angelique states that Britain:

... was such a culture shock for me. Because I have never been so stereotyped and so compartmentalised and so, shoved into a grouping, in my life, EVER. . . This is not me. I have always been a being, something that embodies so much history. . I could never be one thing, apart from being a Trinidadian. And that is a HUGE thing.

The pride of being Trinidadian is she says, '... not a NATIONAL pride, it goes deeper than that, it's a pride of being'.

Contradictory ethnic belonging

Despite the more open question of what meaning their ethnicity held for them, most of the women asked did not find it a simple question to answer. Luton-born Samina gave perhaps the most contradictory response which also revealed the reflexive process she was working through as the interview progressed. My first question was to establish her ethnicity, and her fitting categorical response firmly described her as British Bengali:

I'm living in England, I'm living in British country and where I'm born and brought up. I was thinking myself, I'm British Bengali.

My following question asked what meaning being British had for her to which she replied, 'British means NOTHING to me at the moment. I would say British means nothing'. But she continued, uninterrupted, by comparing the restrictive attitudes of many Bengali people with what she saw as a British outlook permitting more freedom and mixing of different people and cultures, stating, '... that's the thing I like about British'. She then said that being British, '... means, yeah it means, it means a lot of things to me'. A little later Samina reveals that she thinks of Bangladesh as home, though she has never lived there:

Because it's my background. I'm Bangladeshi and I'm, my family's from there and sometime[s] there are small things that sort of pulls you back. You can't ERASE them [for the] rest of life [laugh]. If you was, [it] would be easy, but you can't.

These words define what she surely understands as the inescapable embrace of her ethnic origins to which she is irrevocably linked, not only from the past but through continuing attitudes and practices that she experiences in Britain (see Haw, 2011; Gardner and Shukur, 1994). However her ethnic belonging does not extend to her sense of physical belonging in Bangladesh where she has only spent a few brief holidays. Were she to have spent more time there she '... might feel then that I belong to my own country'. From her initial certainty of there being no incongruity in her categorical ethnicity, as she begins to reflect on its meaning Samina reveals

the paradoxes and tensions of her ethnic and geographic belonging, and how they interweave and diverge in her everyday life as a British Bengali woman.

Equivocal ethnic belonging

In their deliberations on what their ethnicity meant to them, most of the other women also gave somewhat equivocal replies, illuminating both the lack of consideration they had ever given the subject, and the difficulty they then had in knowing how they wanted to answer. East London born-and-bred Jessica said, 'I don't really know [laugh]. Erm . I guess, to be fair, I see myself, I identify more with London I think than with Britain', while Tendo responded:

[Laugh] Good question, yeah [laugh]. I, I, after being so different, then when people seeing my appearance and then coming here and people who don't know anything about me telling me I'm not Ugandan, so, what is being Ugandan? Actually, not living there, am I Ugandan? It's just Ugandan by birth I suppose, that is it, for me. It's really just being Ugandan by birth.

Julie tells of her family background of Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish, Yorkshire and Lancashire, and her memories of the ethnic, cultural, religious and political mix of her post-war Liverpool childhood in answer to what being British means to her, and Frederica, the child of Chinese parents in Malaysia, speaks of being a '... much watered-down, wishy-washy person between all these cultures...' She thinks of herself as a member of '...this human race community' and feels oppressed by what she remembers from teenage years as claustrophobic ethnic communities.

Peigi repeatedly spoke of what boxes she indicated on formal documents rather than what meaning it held for her. Eventually realising my question sought the significance it had to her, she unhesitatingly replied, 'half-Scottish, half-Indian', perhaps still in categorical terms but using ethnicities which directly reflected the dual influences on her life, rather than the more bland 'white Asian' of the tick box. Born and brought up in England and growing up amongst Indian family and friends she thought of herself more as Indian than Scottish and she has '... never, ever said [she] was English...':

'... I do feel like I'm from London, that's probably the place I identify with the most. 'Cause I don't think I actually would feel like I was Scottish if I went to Scotland or Indian if I went to India because I don't think I'd, I'd, I wouldn't feel, I wouldn't fit in, so to speak'.

Sarah, in answering me with, 'Well that's a really good question [laugh]. .. It's part of who I am', deliberated out loud at length, on whether she was British, Scottish, English or European, finally arriving at:

... I feel, I actually feel more a, like a Londoner than anything else if you ask me, to be perfectly honest, yeah, yeah. That's what my feeling is, that I'm a Londoner rather than that I'm English or, or British or European or anything like that, you know, the actual, the thing that makes the, the, the thing that makes me FEEL, the one that I FEEL, is that I'm a Londoner. Which is interesting actually because I wasn't born here or grew up here. [...] That's the nice thing about London, you don't actually have had to have been here for more than five minutes to belong. I know people from other countries who are Londoners.

It is notable how, as detailed here, Jessica, Peigi and Sarah all specifically talked about their ethnic belonging in terms of their geographic belonging as Londoners; so too did Mary, Julie and Frederica. While it makes little sense to equate a place with an ethnicity, it is interesting to consider whether a multicultural, multi-ethnic city such as London provides today a more meaningful marker for people with a less strong sense of ethnic belonging. Such an attachment to a 'nation of Londoners' by 'hybrid non-belongers' has been discussed by Nava (2007, p. 162) and Benedictus (2005), and as Alibhai-Brown says of London in ending her book, 'The city where no one belongs is where I belong' (Alibhai-Brown, 2010, p. 426). For my interviewees such a belonging to London appears to apply regardless of their ethnic origins, whether they were mixed-heritage or not, or where they grew up, for the six women mentioned above were a mix of white British, mixed-heritage British and migrant women.

Connecting childhood and adult ethnic belonging

My analysis of the women's responses to my question about ethnicity points to particular connections that can be drawn between the women's childhood belonging and their adult ethnic belonging. I believe it is significant that of the four migrant women who I portray as having childhood localities of belonging – Agnes, Angelique, Frederica and Meena – all but Frederica also experienced a strong sense of ethnic belonging as adults. On the part of Agnes, Angelique and Meena, their childhood locality of belonging was very clearly sustained in their adult lives in Britain in their assiduous relationships with the people and places of their early lives. Just as these three women experienced localities of belonging and a strong sense of ethnic belonging, the four migrant women who experienced as children what I term dislocated belonging – Elaine, Imogen, Mary and Tendo – show little evidence of a sense of ethnic belonging in adulthood. Their nomadic young lives gave them no locality of belonging as children; the first three all describe themselves as outsiders as children, and their connections as adults with their early home countries are minimal.

Given these connections, it is notable that Frederica's experience is singularly different and does not follow the pattern of the other seven women. All the women who experienced a locality of belonging as children also experienced some rupture in that belonging such as moving home, changing communities, and particularly in their altering perspectives as they became older teenagers. What in Frederica's experience was both additional to that and seemingly highly significant in her later sense of ethnic belonging was the emphatic effect on her of political upheaval, racial conflict and lack of freedom of expression in Malaysia. Frederica made a purposeful decision to escape a repressive regime, if not necessarily to stay away the rest of her life, and it would seem that this decision was a major element in her later lack of ethnic belonging. Reasons for coming to Britain were also significant in the adult ethnic belonging of other migrant women. It is notable that Agnes, Angelique and Meena with their still very strong sense of ethnic belonging, had not come to England with the intention of leaving their homes long term. The connections between coming to Britain and having less adult ethnic belonging are not as identifiable for Elaine and Imogen who were both British citizens, or for Mary, although she did come without intention of staying in Britain. For Tendo the links are complex; the dislocations of her childhood are compounded by her being brought to Britain without choice, and for reasons unknown to her.

In response to the question on ethnic belonging, the British women were more ambivalent and they appeared to find it difficult to articulate any strong sense of ethnic belonging. Monique, Peigi and Sarah who all experienced childhood localities of belonging, also all expressed equivocal adult ethnic belonging. It could be seen as significant that the first two women also had mixed-heritage. The same rationale cannot be afforded to Sarah who has a multi-generational British background, but she is perhaps characteristic of a majoritarian culture that ethnic belonging is more generally taken for granted than an ethnic minority culture. In Skey's words, the majority culture represents '...the 'norm' or default category against which other more visible or mobile minorities are defined' (Skey, 2011b). The other three British women – Jessica, Julie and Samina – were the only three of all 14 women who conveyed having alienated childhoods. Like the three women above, Jessica and Julie also expressed equivocal ethnic belonging. First-generation Samina repeatedly indicated contradictory feelings about her ethnic belonging as a British Bengali woman.

Perceptions of citizenship:

'This is so HARD, I didn't think about this.' (Agnes)

This half of the chapter considers the relationship of citizenship and belonging in everyday life. A short introduction provides a background to debates linking citizenship, gender and subjectivity. The section then considers issues arising from the women's responses to my question about citizenship, most of which relate to citizenship status rather than to wider political citizenship issues of rights and responsibilities. I then briefly sketch the responses from the British-born women, before focusing on Agnes, Frederica, Mary, and Tendo, four migrant women chosen specifically to illustrate their differing experiences of becoming a British citizen, acquiring dual citizenship, and remaining a non-British citizen. This exploration illustrates how citizenship impacts on their belonging and how that belonging is affected as their circumstances alter over time.

Citizenship, gender and subjectivity debates

Citizenship and its relevance in women's lives has been a matter of debate at least since the late 1700s, when Mary Wollstonecraft demanded that men should 'snap our chains' enabling women 'to participate in the inherent rights of mankind' (Kramnick, 1978, p. 296). The last three decades has seen the debate grow exponentially in relation to citizenship and gender and certainly since Pateman's (1988) book *The Sexual Contract* outlined the continuing economic and political subjugation of women. The gendered nature of citizenship is discussed in broad terms of social and political engagement rather than simply of formal national passport-holding citizenship,⁵⁵ and Yuval-Davis in particular locates her constructions of citizenship squarely in a framework of the politics of belonging (2011, 2007, 2006a). But within this burgeoning area of work there has been little empirical research using narrative inquiry to look at how citizenship relates to women's subjective feelings of belonging in their everyday lives.

Research on citizenship and subjectivity (for example, Passerini *et al.*, 2007; Canning and Rose, 2002) mostly refers to the process of women becoming agentic subjects in their claims for citizenship, rather than exploring women's subjective emotions of how belonging relates to their citizenship, though Canning and Rose,

⁵⁵ See, for example: Yuval-Davis (2011, 2007, 1997), Munday (2009), Voet (1998), Lister (1997), Walby (1997), Pateman (1989).

in quoting Cott, recognise that citizenship confers 'an identity that may have deep personal and psychological dimensions at the same time that it expresses belonging' (Canning and Rose, 2002, p. 6). More recently in her study of Turkish women in Britain and Germany, Erel (2009) uses a life story approach because, as she says, how people experience events is important for 'exploring the links between subjectivity and social structures' (Erel, 2009, p. 5), and in their book investigating the impact of immigration policies and asylum discourse on the education of school student asylum seekers and refugees in Britain, Pinson *et al.* (2010) explored through focus groups and some individual interviews, how young people related their sense of belonging and their citizenship status.

Answering the citizenship question

To concisely summarise the citizenship status of the 14 interviewees: eight had always been British citizens; six were originally not British citizens. Of these six, four had been Commonwealth citizens with Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) in Britain. Three of the four – Angelique, Frederica and Mary – had been granted British citizenship prior to their interviews. Angelique and Mary had acquired dual citizenship, Frederica had relinquished her original citizenship to become British. The fourth, Tendo, had been refused British citizenship. The other two migrant women – Agnes and Meena – had never applied for British citizenship. They, as well as Tendo, were therefore the only non-British citizens at the time of interview.

My question to the women, both British and non-British, was what meaning their citizenship had for them. Their immediate responses revealed that they all found it difficult to express any particular significance in citizenship relating to their everyday lives. Although as Yuval-Davis (2011, p. 46) notes, national citizenship is still the most significant formal identifier of people's belonging, it seems that citizenship is not something that stimulates association with their own lives when asked directly about it. Peigi, a woman of mixed-heritage, responded thus:

Erm .. I . suppose because I was born and brought up . here that erm, erm ... erm .. I suppose it, erm is important that I do feel like I'm British, erm and . a British citizen. And with respect to queen and country, I don't think I really have strong kind of, for some reason that came into my head, the monarchy, but I don't feel any strong allegiance to that. Erm, I, I don't, I don't, I mean I don't, that sounds very, I don't, I feel that's how it is, that's who, that's, you know, what I, I, I am and I don't think much of it in any other way.

Her very hesitant response could be said to illustrate the difficulties people find in answering direct questions about citizenship, as Passerini (2007, p. 255) notes

about questions on belonging, and as Anthias (2008, p. 7) argues about identity questions. Additionally it may be that citizenship, much as subjective belonging, is not generally considered until it is threatened or disrupted by change or loss (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p10; Samson, 2007, p. 3), or perhaps when gaining a desired new citizenship is simply not within reach.

It is also notable that the women almost all answered my question solely in terms of citizenship status. Angelique was the only person who related citizenship and being a 'good citizen' in the wider sense of active social or political engagement. Her answer was initially similar to the others but she then immediately talked of her involvement in the local area:

N: So what meaning does that citizenship have for you?

A: Nothing other than I don't have to, I can go out of country for longer than two years at time.

N: Which you wouldn't be able to if you only had-

A: Residency. That's it. ... That is it. I mean I have tried to make a difference in the community. I've been involved with the local councils, I've been involved with the residents associations ... the councils drag. They drag their feet, they don't do what . they ask you to tell them to do. And it, it, it, it, it, it becomes a drain emotionally.

It is interesting that Angelique was the only person who responded to the question by referring to a notion of rights and responsibilities, especially given that Mary, whose life revolved around her politics, or Imogen and Elaine who have for years been active in disability and gay rights, did not. One explanation could be simply that the broader definition of citizenship as civil, political and social rights is less common in everyday thinking of citizenship, and perhaps, as Yuval-Davis argues, has been eroded by neoliberal globalisation (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 51). Should my question have been phrased differently to draw out different responses? Having deliberately designed the questions to elicit the broadest of responses, this question plainly did not achieve that. However, the stories that some migrant women went on to tell revealed much about how their sense of belonging related to issues of citizenship status. Before engaging with those migrant stories, I will first briefly outline the responses of some British-born citizens.

For many of the British-born citizens amongst my interviewees, appreciating the freedoms they were able to experience was the foremost issue that arose for them in answer to my question, much as was found by the Ethnos study into Britishness (Ethnos, 2005, p. 25). This subject was spoken of with reference to their experience

of other countries. It included freedom of speech which Imogen understands in contrast to her first 30 years lived in what was then Northern Rhodesia; and for Samina the freedom Britain affords to women generally, which she compares to the lack of freedom she experiences within her Bengali communities in Britain. Samina paradoxically also values what she sees as the freedom Britain offers to migrants in allowing them to live according to their own cultures. Jessica appreciates freedom of speech and the rights she has as a British citizen with a disability, having realised the exclusion and second class status experienced by people with disabilities in Romania. Elaine also speaks in comparative terms having lived many years in Africa, of the freedom of having a more if not fully equal society. Despite appreciation of their freedoms and rights however, none of these British-born women specifically express particular belonging attached to their British citizenship itself, which may be understood as their naturalising of their British status (Yuval-Davis, 2011; Skey, 2011a), or as suggested above, the nature of citizenship being a so-called 'difficult question'.

Citizenship stories

It is important to emphasise that four of the six migrant women were Commonwealth citizens when they arrived in Britain. Despite not having British passports, they had all at some point gained ILR and were not disadvantaged electorally as they had full voting rights, unlike other migrants, including EU citizens. This could perhaps explain why most of these women did not believe having British citizenship would make any particular difference to their everyday lives. Indeed, the overwhelming reason given for wanting British citizenship was a passport to gain freedom to travel. As Yuval-Davis states, '...western passports [...] can almost always guarantee their carriers the right of free international movements...' (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 75).

The following four sections each focus on one migrant woman's experience; the four have been chosen to illustrate their different experiences regarding citizenship in Britain. The four positions are: relinquishing citizenship; acquiring dual citizenship; not seeking British citizenship; and British citizenship refused. Of the other two migrant women, Angelique was able to gain dual citizenship without problem and said little about it. Meena has not been long in Britain and has a student visa.

Dual citizenship: Mary

The effects of dual citizenship, particularly notions of allegiance, membership and belonging to countries of origin and countries of settlement, has been given greater consideration in recent years (for example, Vera-Larrucea, 2012; Dahlin and Hironaka 2008; Bloemraad, 2004).

Mary is an interesting example of a Commonwealth migrant who has acquired dual citizenship. An Australian by birth, Mary is in her mid-60s and has lived in London for 40 years, most of her adult life. She has no close family left in Australia and she has not been there since her mother died some years ago. Yet for 35 years she would not countenance taking British citizenship because she would have had to relinquish her Australian citizenship. She took steps to formalise her relationships with Britain only to realise specific gains, for example, when pregnant, she established that for her child to be a UK citizen she would have to marry her long term partner, which she then did. Mary has been politically active in Britain throughout these years. Despite her deep involvement in British life, she was only prepared to take up British citizenship once she was allowed to retain her Australian citizenship, and then as she says of British citizenship, 'It's, it's just important in terms of the ease of passport control, yeah, yeah. It doesn't mean anything'. When asked why she wanted so much to keep her Australian citizenship, Mary replied:

M: Erm, 'cause it's who I am. Erm, you know, it, it, I am, I am Australian. Although, interestingly these days I think I would consider myself much more to be a Londoner. Erm, I mean I'm a foreigner in Australia. I talk funny, you know, I'm not, I'm not really Australian any more but it's, it's sort of there somewhere in the, in the blood, erm still. So it's, so there isn't anything, I would say I don't consider myself to be English. . erm, British is for convenience.

The argument that holding on to citizenship of a former country of residence hinders integration with the country of settlement as discussed by Vera-Larrucea, (2012, p. 167) is clearly not borne out by Mary's experience. While Mary's ambivalence about her sense of belonging is apparent in her words, her active engagement in British life belies any charge of not integrating, and her absolute commitment to retaining her Australian citizenship is testimony to her desire not to symbolically sever an emotional attachment that has deep resonance with her earlier life. As Sicakkan and Lithman argue, 'Belonging and membership do not always go hand in hand...' (2005, p. 28, cited in Vera-Larrucea, 2012, p. 168). Thus, there may not be, as in Mary's case, equal participation in two citizenships, but the notion of subjective belonging can exist where active membership does not.

Here the difference can be understood as citizenship as an emotional bond too fundamental to Mary's being for her to abandon, and citizenship performatively enacted with emergent attachment. Thus Mary's stance links to my earlier argument (p. 129) that identification and emotional attachment, while obviously linked, can neither be seen to be one and the same, nor be reduced to each other. Mary's emotional tie to Australia remains undeniably significant and she is not prepared to forsake that identification. In her own words however, she probably now, 'would consider [her]self much more to be a Londoner', because London is where her performative belonging has taken root.

Relinquishing citizenship: Frederica

In stark contrast to Mary, Frederica is an example of a Commonwealth citizen not permitted to acquire dual citizenship, who made the choice to relinquish her original citizenship. She came to Britain in the early 1970s as a 20-year-old wanting to leave Malaysia because of its increasingly volatile and repressive political situation. Travelling was important to her and with her Malaysian passport, Commonwealth citizenship and British ILR visa, she had no problems re-entering Britain. She did however encounter problems elsewhere and after a particularly frightening experience with Moroccan passport control she resolved to get a British passport. Having by then been in Britain for seven years, Frederica believed she was not enfranchised but says being able to vote did not feature in her decision to acquire citizenship,⁵⁶ which was primarily to make travelling easier:

N: So you've got dual citizenship now?

F: No, that's not allowed. I had to give it up.

N: So you had to give up your Malay citizenship?

F: Yeah.

N: Wow. .. So, erm mm, so your travelling from Britain somehow was more important, to be able to travel-

F: The world.

N: Ok, the world. So that was . that was going to . overall have more importance than problems you might have getting back in to Malaysia?

F: Well I knew I'd be able to go to Malaysia any time I wanted really.

56 Under the British Nationality Act 1948 Frederica did have voting rights as a Commonwealth citizen. In this narrative exploration it is the subjective reality of Frederica's position that is of most significance, not the fact of her enfranchisement. (For further discussion on truth in narrative and oral history see, for example, Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Andrews, 2007, 1991; Perks and Thomson, 2006; Plummer, 2001; Armitage with Hart and Weathermon, 2002; Portelli, 1997, 1991.)

N: On a British passport?

F: On a British passport.

What is most significant in Frederica's case is that Malaysia did not countenance dual citizenship (Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 69; Sejersen, 2008, p. 542) and she therefore had to renounce her original status, the only interviewee of mine prepared to do so. As can be seen, giving up her Malaysian citizenship was a pragmatic decision, but it also expressed her rejection of Malaysian politics and the restrictions it brought to her life. Frederica's decision reflected the lack of belonging she felt in Malaysia, more than any aspiration on her part to become an active British citizen, or any particular belonging she felt in Britain at the time.

Some 30 years after gaining her British citizenship, when I ask what that citizenship has brought her, Frederica replies emphatically, 'Freedom'. Freedom to think, to read, to say whatever she chooses, freedoms not available to her in Malaysia. Freedom, and the security that allows her to go to Malaysia⁵⁷ but also to, '...just get on a plane and come back to a safe place'. She then replies to my question whether citizenship has given her any sense of belonging to Britain:

Not at that point. I feel it more NOW, that I . at that point it was a practical matter. . And now I feel I'm British, but when I'm in Malaya I feel . less British .. but always glad to get back here, so I suppose truly I do feel I belong here. ..

Frederica makes clear that she did not gain belonging simply by being granted citizenship, but that the combination of her citizenship with the many years she has lived here, and the British values that are important to her, have given her a sense of belonging here. However, the relationship between her citizenship and belonging is not simply clear-cut, even to her. It is through telling her story that she herself begins to reflect on what it means. Although Frederica's decision to acquire British citizenship was pragmatic, time and experience have brought a deeper significance and attachment to Britain, understood through telling her story.

British citizenship not sought: Agnes

Of the 14 interviewees, three were not British citizens. This section explores the effects of not having British status on the sense of belonging of two of the women, Agnes and Tendo, and how those effects altered as their situations changed.

⁵⁷ Frederica spends six weeks every year in Malaysia, visiting her siblings.

Born in 1968, Agnes is Polish, an EU citizen, is employed full-time and has two children. The relationship of Agnes' citizenship to her belonging is a palpable complexity of both apparent irrelevance and deep significance. This paradox is related to time, and the changes in life that time can bring. For fifteen years living in Britain Agnes saw no reason for applying for British citizenship. It simply was not relevant to her. She says:

Like I've said, I will never become English, English, I'm Polish and I don't think it's important. And, so I'm, I'm just Polish. I could have Eng, British citizenship because of, I'm married to Jimmy who is British, but er, well maybe I didn't bother [laugh].

Being married to a British man and having indefinite leave to remain in Britain, meant Agnes had all the official recognition she felt she needed. Citizenship would never give her a sense of being English; she would always be Polish, regardless of her citizenship status. The only advantage she could see in having a British passport would be to avoid costly and time-consuming issues in getting a visa for the family's forthcoming trip to America. In being asked explicitly about how her citizenship related to her sense of belonging, this is what Agnes said:

N: So you'd see no reason for yourself why you would want British citizenship?

A: Erm .. I guess, I would er what I thought about, I would be in the same position as my family. We, otherwise we have this Polish and British citizenship. I live here, I work here, so having this British citizenship .. I guess would be . erm . important.

N: Why would it be important?

A: I dunno, actually. It doesn't matter actually, it doesn't matter if I have, because nobody knows if I have, if, I live here I, and, and, no, it doesn't matter. I never had any problems.

Her response is interestingly multifaceted. Having talked at length about why citizenship was not important to her, except for getting a visa for America, she considers that citizenship would in fact give her the same status as her husband and children and was therefore important. But as the process of the dialogic narrative extract shows, trying to think about what its importance would be, she in fact decides citizenship would not be of particular worth:

N: Would it give you a greater sense of belonging in, in this country if you were a British citizen?

A: ... I dunno. ... I don't think so, no. I don't know Nicola [laugh].

N: No, I mean there's no right or wrong answer, it's just how you feel.

A: [overlapping] This is so HARD, I didn't think about this.

N: Do you feel you belong in this country?

A: Yes. Yes, my English family and Jimmy, his family and erm .. I work here and er I live here, yeah.

N: So having citizenship doesn't change anything, you have all those things already?

A: Yeah, it doesn't . actually.

Her hesitant deliberation in response to the question of how citizenship might affect her sense of belonging is in considerable contrast to the absolute 'Yes. Yes...', rejoinder to the straightforward question about her belonging in Britain. The formation of her thinking can be seen in-the-making through the narrative; the development of her understanding of herself, in which she concludes that citizenship has little to do with her belonging.

However, her feelings of belonging were to dramatically alter some months later when Agnes told me her husband had moved out of their home. Now, though she still had indefinite leave to remain in Britain, her status as a separated Polish woman was not only suddenly wanting, her sense of belonging was radically upset. As Erel (2011, p. 706) states of other Polish women in Britain, 'Migrant mothers are positioned precariously near the boundaries of citizenship.' Agnes' lack of citizenship now found her emotionally wrought and horrified in her treatment by the authorities in her attempts to put utilities and claim child benefit in her own name. She now saw herself '... treated like a criminal, with suspicion, like a foreign scrounger trying to cheat the benefits system'. Her new status as a separated foreign woman now turned her from a respected British-trained professional, wife and mother of two, into an unwanted parasitic stranger. And her sense of belonging was severely shaken.

British citizenship refused: Tendo

The issue of what it means to be British or become British is particularly relevant to Tendo's story because she was the only one of my interviewees whose application for British citizenship was initially refused.⁵⁸ She is also the only interviewee applying for citizenship who had to take the citizenship test as the others were all naturalised before the test came into force in 2005. Tendo has spoken English most of her life and speaks it fluently. She was educated partially in Britain, and has formally passed the Life in the UK citizenship test. Her application for naturalisation

⁵⁸ Tendo was granted citizenship about a year after my first interview with her and it was some months after that before I knew about it.

was however rejected. A Ugandan by birth who had lived half her life in London at the time of the interview, Tendo met her Ugandan husband in East London where they have remained living with their children who were all born in Newham. Tendo and Elie both have Indefinite Leave to Remain in Britain which gives them permanent residency. Tendo responds to my question of why she was not granted citizenship thus:

T: Why did it not work? I've got no idea. I went and did the, er why did it not work, it's some law out there that I haven't read and somebody knows about it [laugh] more than me! Er I went and did the tt, tt, tt, Life in the UK course, but I was educated in England [laugh] oh gosh, and I went and I did erm Life in the UK, test, and I passed. Then I went on to fill in the naturalisation form and I did not get it [...].

N: And you don't know why that is?

T: I don't know why that is and I haven't [laugh], because it doesn't affect my everyday life [...].

Tendo's words convey the mystification she experiences at the refusal of her naturalisation which she attributes more to elusive vagaries of law than to anything related to herself, and she unequivocally distinguishes between holding citizenship, and the everyday life that she leads. These are themes that she frequently reiterates and which I will discuss further. Before doing so, and to make better sense of the forthcoming extracts, I will first introduce another element of Tendo's story, that concerning her children's citizenship status.

Earlier in the year of our interview Tendo planned to travel to Uganda with her children and applied for passports for them. Her youngest child was granted a British passport; the older children were not. Tendo had presumed they were British citizens – not only were they all born in Britain, they had never been out of the country. It transpired that because, unlike the youngest, the older children were born prior to Tendo gaining permanent residency (ILR), they were not British citizens. Despite them never having been to Uganda, Tendo was forced to acquire Ugandan passports for them and then apply for ILR visas on their behalf which would automatically be granted in line with their parents' ILR status. With booked flights and a family event imminent, rather than wait for visas in London, Tendo was assured the British embassy in Kampala would unproblematically issue them so they travelled as planned. However the British authorities in Kampala rejected the visa applications and Tendo was forced to leave the children in Uganda for six months while she travelled back and forth to London trying to sort out the situation.

The following extract continues the exploration of Tendo's status in Britain, how she relates it to her day-to-day life, and (introduces) the children's situation:

T: So you're a citizen and I'm a resident. Do you pay different council tax to me [laugh]? So what does it mean? I, I, I don't know. It means something to somebody, but to my everyday life? . It doesn't mean anything really, so.

N: It doesn't mean anything to your everyday life but it meant a HUGE deal to . your life when you went to Uganda this year. Not for YOU personally, I mean not for y, not in terms of yourself but in terms of your children.

T: I [sigh], is it for me or is it for the person dealing with the papers. First, er, I really don't understand it 'cause I don't see what the difference is between a resident and a citizen.

N: But maybe it's just a piece of paper?

T: I, I, I haven't got around to that and I don't know what it is that I want to say because, I the resident was the same resident that applied for Elizabeth's passport, she got it, no problem. So I was credible then. When it came to the others, when you cross over to the immigration side, then I'm not credible, they treat me with suspicion [laugh]. Same human being! So, er what does it mean? Oh gosh, it means I'm the same person with the different statuses [laugh]. Erm, so me as an individual, I can't understand it. For me it is like, out there. It's outside of myself, even though it was happening to me. But my everyday life, how do I live my everyday life? Oh! HOW do I live my everyday life? So my everyday life I live it as a British resident, erm, a person who lives in England, really, more than anything else.

The extract begins with Tendo questioning how her status as resident differs to mine as citizen – we pay the same council tax – what makes us different? Unable to make sense of it because it appears irrelevant in her life, Tendo first dismisses it as a bureaucratic anomaly. And my suggestion that the passport debacle was a tumultuous upheaval for the family, was met with a resigned bewilderment. She then interprets the varying statuses of her children as a mark of her own credibility, rather than a question of law, and as she verbally mulls over the contradiction of being one and the same resident in both situations, she clearly shows that she feels undermined as a person. What more can she offer to become a credible citizen? Tendo has the language, has passed the test, has lived in Britain more than half her life, pays her taxes and as she says, she follows the rules imposed by the immigration services. She is uncomprehending as to why she was refused citizenship, and what more she can do to be British:

... having LIVED here, I've collected a way of, I've gathered a way, if I can call it that, of living that is the way of life, the way people live, and behave in England. And even [my] expectations I think are the same. 'Cause when I went to Uganda people did certain things, and you're like, 'Why are you doing that?'. [...] But having been there as a child, then PROBABLY I used to live like, I must have lived like that. But because everybody lived like that it was ok. So erm, now, I saw things different because of where I've been and collected THIS [English] culture, if you call it culture, or way of living.

She reflects on how her life and thinking have changed over time, how she now questions the Ugandan way of life of her past, and finds herself more an outsider in Uganda, having adapted to a more English way of living. Tendo is evidently frustrated in her incomprehension of the situation, which she sees as both external to herself, and as an evaluation of herself. Her oscillation between the two positions reflects the undermining impact of a temporally-bound technicality of law which could render one child British, but others stateless, and cause them to be left for six months in a 'foreign' country of which they were deemed to be citizens. Her predicament highlights the vast mismatch between legislative belonging and emotional attachment. As can be seen, Tendo laughs and sighs throughout these dialogues but her laughter is more in incredulity and incomprehension than in humour.

The mismatch is further emphasised by the succinct response Tendo gives when I ask, 'So the children erm are Ugandan citizens?' In her reply, 'The passports I got now are Ugandan', she acknowledges their Ugandan documentation, but she cannot concede that they are Ugandan citizens, a qualitative difference. The political reality which defines them as belonging to Uganda, makes no sense to their lives that have been lived wholly and exclusively in Britain. Also, when asked whether she will reapply for citizenship Tendo replies that she has '... heard it is supposed to make travelling a lot easier. That is what I'll get it for', and she insists that it cannot make her more British:

[Sigh] I live here. [Laugh]. I've acquired it by living here. What is being more British? [Laugh]. I, I don't know, I've lived here, I've acquired what I need to acquire. What more? If I haven't acquired it . I don't need it, really, that's how I see it. And if I need to learn it, I'll learn it.

Pragmatism is at the root of Tendo's decisions to do what she sees as necessary to meet statutory demands rather than it fulfilling any emotional need to belong, for herself. The latter is met, as she describes throughout the four-and-a-half-hour interview, by the British way of life to which she has become acculturated, and her relationships with people, mostly her friends and those with whom she shares her strong religious belief. When pressed by me to tell me how she feels about the events that have taken place, Tendo says she feels confused and discriminated

against, by '...a system that is not working very well' which deems '... all citizens better than residents':

N: And how do you FEEL about that?

T: Er, it angers me having looked at the immigration system, yeah they're creating, they're operating in fear themselves and they end up causing confusion and . er probably, I think it's anger, and then they end up terrorising people [...]

However, she continues to stress that her experience has not affected her sense of belonging; issues that she perceives as external to her sense of self and her relationships with people, cannot affect that belonging. Tendo simply does not associate her belonging with her political status. It is nevertheless difficult to imagine that her sense of belonging is not at least jolted by the insensitivity of government policy and practice that she has experienced, which raises the question of whether she may be denying her subjective feelings in an effort to maintain her sense of fundamental belonging to Britain, the place where she continues to live but where she has been sorely tested.

The passing of time brings new twists to Tendo's story. On meeting with her long after our first interview, Tendo related to me that she had just returned from an aunt's memorial in Uganda. She had been questioned by the UK Border Agency as to how she had come by her ILR and under what circumstances she originally came to Britain as a teenager some 20 years previously. She was unclear what they wanted of her and found the official unbelieving and aggressive. The UKBA official informed her she had been an asylum seeker, of which she had had no knowledge. To me, she vented the rage she felt towards the UKBA, which she said, also must have known she now held a British passport as, in the intervening period, the whole family had been granted British citizenship (of which I had not yet been aware). She said:

The UKBA official obviously knew I was British when he checked his records. Why did he say I was an asylum seeker? I feel threatened, intimidated, he was trying to degrade me as a human being. We know asylum seeker is a dirty word [sic] in this country. Was he trying to catch me out? Now I'm British I'm angrier than ever, they are cooking up a lot of hate in people's hearts. This experience leads me to believe it's not going to be plain sailing. What does it mean now to be British? Am I any more British than before?

The lack of understanding Tendo previously had in knowing how she could be more British, is now turned on its head; having gained citizenship she now shows how she feels alienated and vulnerable. She had previously dismissed citizenship issues as external to her, neither affecting her everyday life nor consequently her

sense of belonging. But having been granted citizenship, the shock of now being under suspicion appears to seriously anger her and seemingly shake her confidence in what meaning being British could have for her. She has consciously resisted links with Ugandan communities here, wanting to be seen as British and seeing little reason to bring up her children up to think of themselves as Ugandan. Tendo furiously told me how she is now teaching her children to question the British colonial influence on Uganda, challenging them when they use British-given place names, saying, 'I want them to know about Uganda as it really is, I want them to know about their heritage'.

Citizenship and belonging

Politics of belonging perspective

Twenty-first century UK government policy has consistently argued that citizenship is a crucial determinant in belonging to the nation (Travis, 2012; Yuval Davis, 2011; van Oers *et al.*, 2010; Sales, 2010; Goldsmith, 2008; Great Britain. Home Office, 2002). Such policies suggest therefore that to belong one simply needs to speak English and pass the citizenship test. For their *Make Bradford British* (2012) television series which brought together eight Bradford people to explore what it meant to be British, Channel 4 asked 111 British people from various ethnic communities in the city to take the Life in the UK citizenship test. One hundred of them – over 90 per cent – failed the test. The white, wealthy middle-class British-born participants from an exclusively white neighbourhood had the lowest fail rate of 85 per cent. In other words, only 15 per cent of them would be eligible for naturalisation based on their test results, were they not of course, already British. The results of the number of people who by choice have taken the test 'on spec' on the Channel 4 television website are even more startling. Across the 12 regions of the UK, only five per cent passed the test in 10 regions, with the other two achieving only a four per cent pass rate. That is, of more than 409,000 people who had taken the test on the Channel 4 website (between March and July 2012), only just over 20,000 passed. Government figures give a much higher pass rate of 69 per cent for 2007 (van Oers, 2010, p. 97) but it must be pointed out that these real test participants will undoubtedly have studied the government-issued test handbook providing the facts necessary to pass the test. Taking all the above scenarios into account suggests that most British people generally do not know enough about British life as required to pass the Life in the UK citizenship test.

Two high profile British Conservative MPs highlighted the separation between citizenship and belonging in the latter half of the 20th century. As far back as 1968 Enoch Powell demanded the repatriation of citizens who he claimed could never belong because as Commonwealth immigrants it was 'ludicrous' and 'dangerous' to imagine they could or would ever want to integrate because of fundamental racial difference (Powell, 1968). Norman Tebbit proclaimed in 1990 that the real test of belonging was not racial identity but commitment to Britain and therefore that citizens whose sporting allegiance was to non-British sports teams did not belong in Britain (Yuval-Davis, 2011, pp. 21-22; 2007, p. 563; Ford and Braude, 1990). As such they both saw citizenship and belonging as discrete positions – a person could hold British citizenship and be deemed not to belong. At the beginning of the 21st century the New Labour government stated that, 'We do not exclude people from citizenship on the basis of their race or ethnicity' (Home Office, 2002, p. 10, cited in Sales, 2010, p. 132) but also stressed the importance of social cohesion in their Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, in which '... the language of improving social cohesion and strengthening the sense of community belonging featured prominently...' (van Oers *et al.*, 2010, p. 321). The then Home Secretary David Blunkett promoted citizenship as a fundamental element of successful social cohesion, envisioning naturalisation and its accompanying ceremony as crucial indicators of belonging, being the products of learning English and passing the Life in the UK test which was introduced in 2005 (Yuval-Davis, 2007, pp. 568-570).

Lord Goldsmith in his later review of citizenship for the New Labour government also argued that migrants should '... learn how to 'become British' – to acquire 'a knowledge of the British way of life'" (Ministry of Justice, 2008, p. 115, cited in Pinson *et al.* 2010, p. 163). In a bid to forge a yet stronger relationship between citizenship and belonging, the Tory-Liberal Coalition Government announced in mid-2012 that elements of the citizenship test pertaining to rights, practicalities of everyday life and benefits would be replaced by questions relating to Britain's history and culture, including its association to Christianity and the monarchy. Such knowledge, according to the Home Office, will not only help immigrants understand British life but will allow people '... to properly integrate into our society' (Travis, 2012). Given that white middle-class British people generally fail the test, it is interesting to note that two months after this government announcement Prime Minister David Cameron was unable to give the English translation of 'Magna Carta' (great charter), on an American television chat-show (BBC News, 2012). In perceiving belonging as an emotional attachment as I do, it is difficult to connect a possible basic understanding of the English language and the passing of a test comprising facts learned from a book, with a real sense of belonging to Britain.

Indeed, in his overview of UK and other European citizenship tests, van Oers (2010, p. 103) questions the value of such tests, given that they involve cognitive rather than emotional processes.

Interviewees' perspective

My findings suggest the relationship between citizenship and belonging is far more ambiguous and complicated than any of the political understandings of belonging outlined above. Before discussing that statement further, it should be noted that my research is not predominantly looking at the impact of the citizenship test. Only one of my interviewees, Tendo, took the test, the others had been naturalised prior to its introduction. However, with regard to the political arguments mentioned, it is perhaps interesting to remember that Tendo spoke fluent English, passed the Life in the UK test and felt a strong belonging to Britain, yet failed to gain citizenship, perhaps underlining van Oers' assertion that the tests also '... operate as a mechanism of selection and exclusion. They are a means to decide to which immigrants which rights are given' (van Oers, 2010, p. 103). As much as having a sense of belonging does not necessarily bring citizenship, as in Tendo's case, other interviewees' experience identifies that the process of gaining citizenship does not in itself bring belonging, regardless of political desires and pronouncements that it should do so. Neither migrant nor British-born interviewees related direct questions on citizenship to their belonging. Two points worth emphasising are, first, that in general my interviewees talk about belonging in terms of emotional attachment which bears out van Oers (2010) doubts about the value of cognitive questions to determine belonging. As highlighted by Yuval-Davis a 'crucial' difference between citizenship and belonging is the emotional dimension of the latter (Yuval-Davis, 2007, p. 564). Second, my research also suggests that citizenship generally has minimal relevance to women's everyday lives and therefore does not have much impact on their sense of belonging which *does* appear to be intricately bound up with their day-to-day experiences. This finding also exemplifies the idea that citizenship can be understood to function on a macro level and everyday belonging on a micro level (Christensen and Jensen, 2011, p. 147).

While arguing that the citizenship process has little emotional dimension, it must also be said that the narratives people tell can reveal a much deeper, more nuanced and resilient emotional connection to citizenship, not least of a place long since left. Mary's story exemplifies this connection, with her sense of belonging as an Australian citizen so deeply embedded within herself that she could not contemplate relinquishing it, despite her 40 years of being active (as a non-citizen)

in Britain, a convincing example of the multi-layered citizenship Yuval-Davis (2011, p. 69) describes. The element of time is also relevant to questioning whether the process of citizenship can meaningfully bring about a sense of belonging. Frederica, who for pragmatic reasons became a British citizen seven years after moving to Britain and whose emotional attachment to Malaysia had begun to dissipate even before she left there at the age of 20 years, found that her sense of belonging to Britain took many years to establish, long after she was naturalised. Studies undertaken for the Goldsmith report also found that the main influence on emotional attachment to Britain for most people was not acquiring citizenship but the making of their lives in Britain over time (Goldsmith, 2008, p. 86). On the other hand, even after nearly 40 years living in Britain, and despite Frederica actively choosing to leave Malaysia and relinquish her Malaysian citizenship, she still retains some sense of belonging to Malaysia (see Koh, 2012). Both Frederica's and Mary's multifaceted feelings demonstrate the degree of complexity in subjective belonging.

That citizenship in usual circumstances has negligible effect on everyday life was true for the women I interviewed. However, this situation changed dramatically for some of my interviewees when their citizenship status was challenged, which then also launched their sense of belonging into bewildering confusion. Such circumstances were acutely evident in Agnes' and Tendo's stories. Agnes' lack of British status was of little concern to her and appeared to make no difference to her sense of belonging as a married woman and parent in Britain, nor to her still very strong attachment to Poland. It was only after her husband left her that Agnes experienced traumatic changes in how she was received. With her new social location as a non-British single parent, the effects of her lack of British citizenship became forcefully apparent, and her sense of belonging was precipitously shaken. Someone in Agnes' situation would undoubtedly be affected were Lord Goldsmith's proposals to come to fruition, that long-term residency be phased out in favour of implementing short term leave to remain, or citizenship acquisition. Not acquiring citizenship would risk people being forced to leave Britain, and Goldsmith specifically gives the example of marriage breakdown as an instance where the non-British citizen may not gain further extension of leave to remain if they had chosen not to apply for citizenship (Goldsmith, 2008, pp. 77-78). In Tendo's case, she unwaveringly believed that citizenship had little impact on her belonging due to the everyday British way of life she considered she was living. Despite her lack of citizenship, and consequently her children's status, throwing that everyday life into alarming upheaval for six months, Tendo still claimed that her sense of belonging was intact, maintaining a stance which could perhaps be interpreted as a

determination not to be seen as non-British. Ironically it was after Tendo and her family had gained their citizenship status, and when she felt threatened and demeaned by UKBA staff, that she revealed her sense of belonging severely shaken. Both her and Agnes' situations illustrate Yuval-Davis' argument that:

Belonging tends to be naturalized and to be part of everyday practices. It becomes articulated, formerly structured and politicized only when it is threatened in some way.

(Yuval-Davis, 2011, p. 10)

At this point it is perhaps important to note, though it will not be discussed in great detail here, how the women's cultural and social capital (Jenkins, 2002) influenced their approach to particular issues and the strikingly different effects it had on their and their children's lives with regard to citizenship. As outlined above, Mary, on knowing she was pregnant, made a point of finding out what citizenship status her forthcoming child would have with a non-British mother with indefinite leave to remain, and British father. On discovering their child would not be a British citizen as parents-to-be they chose to get married, which they had previously no intention of doing, to ensure their future children had citizenship rights both in Britain and Australia. In contrast, Tendo, who with her husband had indefinite leave to remain, assumed that her children being born in Britain would be British. It did not occur to her to check and only many years later realised the drastic consequences of not knowing what their citizenship rights would be. Mary and Tendo present stark examples of both possessing and not possessing cultural and social capital and how that critically affected not only their decision-making but ultimately their sense of belonging.

Conclusion

This chapter was initially informed by discussion of various approaches to ethnicity, that of the somewhat ranked and fixed notions of Barth (1969, 1994) and Brubaker (2002) and the more flexible and fluid ideas of Jenkins (2008, 1997). This discussion, in addition to a brief exploration of identity, provided a theoretical backdrop to my differentiation between identification and belonging – of belonging requiring performativity – and equally important, engendered my theory of ethnic belonging, attachments to ethnic groupings through embodied and repeated performative acts in everyday life. These theorisations are fundamental in my developing thesis. Having established the premise of my argument, the chapter focused on the more formal aspects of ethnic belonging and citizenship.

Exploration of ethnicity through the unequivocal, contradictory and equivocal responses of the interviewees to a question about the meaning of their ethnicity highlighted the limitations and constrictions of categorising, which evidently did not reflect the reality of the women's subjective belonging. Four migrant women's stories explored in detail illustrated how their citizenship statuses of dual citizenship, relinquished citizenship, unsought citizenship and refused citizenship related to their feelings of attachment and belonging. This section demonstrated that the relationship between citizenship and subjective belonging is profoundly influenced by the women's intersecting social locations (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 2007) particularly those of residency status, age, marriage status, and precariousness of their situations resulting from changes in law.

The juxtaposition of the women's formal belonging to the nation-state, in relation to the politics of belonging of British MPs' lasting pronouncements on the limits of who can and cannot belong, and more recent government policy on citizenship testing and social cohesion, and the informal subjective sense of belonging of the women's emotional attachment, unequivocally accentuated that successive governments' approach to citizenship and belonging does not reflect the complicated intricacy and multi-layered realities of the women's everyday lives. Tendo's experience was a forceful illustration of the difficulty of reconciling her status as a black Ugandan woman with indefinite leave to remain with the strength of her feelings of belonging in Britain; the ideological and political values behind British naturalisation law that rendered her a non-citizen could be seen to sit in stark contrast to her sense of herself in the country. Paradoxically, her later social location as a British citizen gave rise to her feeling unwelcome and threatened, and led her to her questioning the reality of her belonging. Such experiences create complex and multifaceted positionings and belongings which are neither addressed in government policy on citizenship and belonging, nor in simplistic legal categorisations.

It was made clear that the form of interview questioning did not, in the main, elicit wider perspectives on the political rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and direct questions about the connection between citizenship and subjective belonging were difficult for the women to answer. However, the narrative approach used enabled the subtleties of the relationship between formal citizenship and subjective belonging to emerge through the women's stories and these revealed how complex intersections of nationality, legal standing, and marital status amongst others, affected their everyday lives and senses of belonging, and how these changed over time. Through this narrative process, issues of citizenship which initially appeared

to have little relevance in the women's lives, proved to have deeper emotional significance.

As I have argued in this chapter, performativity is central to the more informal day-to-day practices of ethnic belonging. The following chapter will therefore focus on the women's experiences of customs and tradition including language, religion and food to explore this everyday aspect of ethnicity.

Chapter 5:

Everyday ethnic belonging

Introduction

The previous chapter explored the more formal aspects of citizenship, ethnic identification and belonging highlighting the inadequacy of such formal markers to reflect the reality of the women's subjective belonging. Four of the migrant women had gained British citizenship many years before their interviews with me, but as could be seen, their ethnicity, and any ethnic belonging they felt, endures. By looking at the women's ethnic belonging through the more informal everyday practices of custom and tradition, this chapter will therefore explore what constitutes ethnic belonging, how it is passed on or not, and how it is maintained. The chapter is divided into two main parts, the first considering custom and tradition more generally, and the second focused on food.

The first part of the chapter explores custom and tradition in the form of celebrations, festivals, language and religion and focuses particularly on the role of the women as mothers and transmitters of cultural tradition. This section considers the cultural transmission both of migrant mothers and of first-generation, mixed-heritage and multi-generational British mothers, drawing out the complex strands of their different backgrounds as transmitters of dynamic and multiple traditions. Food – bought, cooked, eaten, or perhaps yearned for on a daily basis – is *the* staple everyday practice, and for that reason is the whole focus of the second part of the chapter. As a universal element of custom and tradition, food has a tangible impact on all the women's lives in its everyday actuality. As Taylor states, food is not '... just what you eat, it is also who you are and where you come from' (Taylor, 2009a, pp. 195-196). The section explores how belonging through food is embodied in repeated performative acts of shopping, cooking and eating, and examines how food connects to the women's childhood and older generations through strong sensory attachments. The discussion considers the intricacies of food and belonging, showing how they relate in unexpected ways and draws together the notions of performativity and translocational positionality (Anthias, 2008) in an attempt to understand the multiplicity of their relations.

Custom and Tradition

This section considers how the everyday practices of custom and tradition, particularly festivals and celebrations, religion and language impact on the women's ethnic belonging, and the role they play in mothers' transmission of cultural practices. These themes are considered first through the migrant perspectives of Agnes' and Tendo's stories. A discussion based on the two women's contrasting attitudes to cultural transmission is followed by the stories of Samina, first-generation British; Monique, mixed-heritage British; and finally, the stories of Julie and Sarah, women whose families are at least three generations British-born.

Migrant women

Agnes

From the start of our interview Agnes makes it abundantly clear that her Polish ethnic belonging remains central to her. Much as she laughingly describes how in her socially constructed Polish village everyone celebrated traditions differently due to their various regional heritages, being Polish and continuing to celebrate the traditions she grew up with matters significantly to her. Paramount is the passing on of tradition to her British-born children, which she does in both their Polish and British incarnations:

N: Your erm Polish ethnicity, what, how important is that to you, what, how important are the customs and traditions for you?

A: Oh yeah, very important. I keep all of them and I introduced my children, we always celebrate twice. So when it's Christmas we have Christmas Eve Polish, we have Christmas, English Christmas dinner so we have everything double. We celebrate Polish Mother's Day and English Mother's Day [...]. So yeah we celebrate everything [...]. Yeah, erm everything is er, I think we have lots of good customs in Poland and, so I do celebrate everything.

N [...] how would you feel if you didn't celebrate them?

A: Oh, er, er I would miss this. Definitely. I LOVE this celeb, all this customs. Especially Christmas, Easter, erm yeah and other, we have something like, apart from birthday, name day [laugh] so every person has on one day a year a patron or saint who we celebrate, name day. Everybody has this name day [...] so I do like this as well and erm . celebrate just occasion, [the] excuse to get together with family, with friends, to, to enjoy your life because at the end of the day we work hard and busy all the time and without [an] excuse, without any reason, it's hard to organise something.

As Agnes clearly illustrates in the above quotes, celebrating customs and traditions is not something she perpetuates unthinkingly but does so proactively as a means

of fulfilling several purposes. On one level the occasions are a way of socialising with friends and family who, in her busy life as a working mother, could too easily be neglected without 'ready made' events in which to participate. However, the occasions, both faith-based and secular, are also a means of embracing her ethnic heritage, not only for herself but also in which to engage her children. The 15 years of her having lived in England have not diminished her sense of ethnic belonging, rather, having children has developed her desire to pass on to them her sense of belonging, a convincing example of cultural transmission through mothering (Erel, 2011; Gedalof, 2009; Yuval-Davis, 1997). Her inculcating them with a sense of being Polish is critical because she unremittingly aspires that they should perceive themselves as Polish as well as British. At their births the children were registered first in Poland to ensure their dual citizenship,⁵⁹ and they were christened in the same church as Agnes was in Poland. She says of them:

They always [say], 'We are half Polish, half English', I say, 'No, you are whole Polish and whole English'.

Her engagement with her own ethnic belonging and its passing on to her children is firmly connected with her Catholic faith; her children attend Catholic school and the family attends church where the children sing in the choir. Agnes talks with pride about the children's confirmations and first communions, highly important religious and social occasions for her, of which she insists on finding photographs to show me. She has also brought up her children to be fluent Polish speakers which she says is both for their future and to communicate with their non-English speaking grandparents. She always speaks to her children in Polish, they answer her and talk to each other in English. They also attend Polish school in the evenings and weekends. Agnes' commitment to Polish custom and tradition exemplifies the continued performative aspect of her practice which contributes to reinforcing and maintaining her ethnic belonging which she also hopes to pass on to her children.

Tendo

Tendo, in complete contrast to Agnes, shows no interest in participating in or bringing up her British-born children with Ugandan custom and tradition. She says that because she was living mostly in the city in Uganda where 'customs and traditions get watered down', by the time she came to London as a teenager, they meant little to her. She neither wishes to participate in the Ugandan birth and death rituals, which as a practising Christian she believes are based on witchcraft and fear, nor bring up her children with them. As she says, '... if you have a mind that

⁵⁹ Dual citizenship is not recognised in Poland therefore registering the children first in Poland and in Britain later ensured their citizenship of both countries.

questions everything, then you think, what is the point, and you keep questioning it'. Tendo cannot but be aware of the existence of Ugandan communities in the locality of her home as her husband's East African food business acts as a hub for Ugandans, but it holds little to draw her. His choice to be involved in Ugandan issues and to speak Luganda,⁶⁰ as he does on a daily basis, is to her proof of him being 'stuck' in the past belonging of his Ugandan childhood where he feels safe. Of herself she says:

I feel myself safe and secure here, in the present, in people I see, in people I can touch [laugh]. People that I feel, right now are actually supporting me and enriching my life. And should I be in trouble, they will help me. It's very, it's GOOD, that I had my past, that belonging in the past, but I don't have it now. It's in the memory [laugh] really. It's really, really not there.

The following dialogue demonstrates my attempt to engage Tendo further in considering whether she was actively avoiding involvement in any Ugandan life:

N: Do you have any DESIRE to be part of a Ugandan or Baganda community?

T: Er, do I have any desire? Errr gosh, I wonder what that would mean? What would it give me, what [sigh] I can't see what it, it erm, how useful it would be in my life, what it would add to my life, erm 'cause I've had my children and . they're here, so at the moment my life is erm, probably my children . come first. So if they're benefiting from what is being offered that is where I take them and I, I, I don't think I've been offered anything from a Ugandan community.

N: Do you avoid being part of a Baganda community?

T: Do I avoid, no. I just, I, I, I really, I don't know, no, I don't. Erm, do I avoid? [...]

The joint nature of the narrative inquiry enables and challenges Tendo to reflect on her relationship to other Ugandans and all things Ugandan, and she cites her children as reasons why she both might, or might not, be involved in a Ugandan community but ultimately she shows little interest in involving herself, or them, in an ethnic belonging which she sees as her past rather than their present or future. She neither teaches nor speaks to the children in Luganda:

... because I'm not surrounded by people who speak the language, I can't use it, really, in a meaningful way, or in a, an everyday, every, day-to-day life. So I think that's why [laugh] it's kind of fading or stuck into my past years rather than into my present, yeah. [...] I wake up with English and I go to bed with English.

60 Luganda is the language of Baganda, the Ugandan region from which Tendo and her husband come.

By not involving herself with Luganda speakers Tendo loses the ability to speak it but she is choosing that distance, a stance also indicated in her attitude to her church-going. While her faith is of primary importance to her, she opts for a church with a mixed congregation where the teaching of the bible meets her credo. She had attended a Ugandan church where others' thinking, such as 'a black African woman' telling her she had the body of a white woman, hardened her resistance to participate in a Ugandan community. A further invitation to join her aunt's Ugandan church she turned down, citing its distance from home.

However, it is important to state that the stories and feelings Tendo describes above took place over many hours in our initial interviews. Later, after she, her husband and children had all gained British citizenship, there were notable shifts in her attitude regarding her ethnic affiliation. Her anger at the threatening demeanour of the UK Border Agency toward her as a British citizen (as described in the previous chapter, p. 153) spurred in her a desire for her children to know something of the land of their heritage. Later still, she invited me to an Ugandan engagement ceremony which we and her children attended in traditional dress. This was, she said, the first Ugandan event she had attended since her own wedding some fifteen years previously.

Cultural transmission

There are a number of issues arising out of this comparison of Agnes' and Tendo's ethnic belonging. It is plainly evident that as migrant women both of whom married in Britain,⁶¹ their ethnic belonging and their expectations for their British-born children are unmistakably divergent. Merely looking at the stories of these two lives illustrates why it would be erroneous to discuss migrant mothers as a homogeneous group who are simply passing on culture and traditions of their ethnic origins. Primarily, analysis requires an intersectional approach that illuminates the differences that their situations engender. Tendo for example came to Britain unwillingly as a 17-year-old schoolgirl whose predominantly city life had dulled her knowledge and interest in her ethnic customs and traditions. Importantly perhaps, she had also lived through upheavals of war, her mother's death and various familial separations. Agnes on the other hand, experienced a stable childhood in a tiny village and had chosen to come to London as a grown woman in her late twenties. Such family, childhood and political circumstances surely

⁶¹ Agnes married a British man, Tendo married a Ugandan man.

influence their own adult ethnic belonging and what they might bring to their children.

Crucially, neither mother is passing on static notions of custom and tradition. In discussing cultural reproduction Gedalof (2009) argues that the reproductive processes involved in cultural transmission are not simply stable sites of belonging 'here' or 'there', but are dynamic processes of repetition and innovation (2009, p. 88). Though as established, Agnes and Tendo are bringing up their children very differently as regards cultural traditions, they are, as Gedalof suggests, both engaged in dynamic and evolving processes of creating new ethnic belongings for their children. Agnes is not simply mirroring her own Polish cultural upbringing but actively engaging her children in the dual Polish and British ethnic origins of both their parents and families. Tendo of course is more intent on bringing her children up as British, but her attitudes are also dynamic and subject to change. For all the years that she ignored or avoided Uganda cultural influences, with time and shifting circumstance, her belief of the relevance and importance of her ethnic background to her children has begun to alter. How that might develop and whether she or her children build a greater ethnic belonging to Ugandan custom and tradition cannot now be known, but it clearly illustrates the impossibility of any finality of being. As Yuval-Davis states, the processes of cultural reproduction are always open to '... growth, decline and transformation...' (Yuval-Davis, 1997, p. 43).

Gedalof (2009) argues with reference to migrant mothers that cultural reproduction must always be seen as '... a dynamic entanglement of repetition and innovation' (Gedalof 2009, p. 88). I would argue that the notion can also be applied to non-migrant mothers. For the 'repetition and innovation' involved in the process of cultural transmission surely applies to all mothers, albeit not always to the extent of forging new minority belongings in a majoritarian culture. I would also venture that as there are no absolute demarcations in the division between migrant and non-migrant experiences, the question is raised of when a migrant story becomes a non-migrant story, and subsequently a British story. First-generation is perhaps neither migrant nor non-migrant but a personal space that embodies collection and collation; where repetition and innovation are played out and synthesise. The creative result will inevitably be influenced by particular intersectional attributes, with issues such as reasons for migration and skin colour significantly defining different experiences.

First-generation British

Samina

For British-born Samina,⁶² her first-generation space comes with being almost entirely brought up within South Asian communities in Luton, speaking Bengali as her first language and as a very young woman accepting an arranged marriage to a Bangladeshi man mostly brought up in a Sylheti village. She tells of growing up as the only daughter of very traditional parents, and of both wanting to rebel but also appreciating her parents' values and attitudes. Her stories of moving to London after she married depict a somewhat isolated life, and a persistent theme throughout her interview is of her frustration and unhappiness with the traditional attitudes of other Bangladeshi people, particularly with respect to women:

As I say, you can't live your own life. . Tradition, you can't live your life. Womens don't have . right to live their life.

Samina repeatedly speaks of the restrictions that women face, including as regards clothing, and says she does not mix with other local Bangladeshis because of their condemnation of her occasionally wearing western clothes. This representation was remarkably illustrated when we happened to meet one day on our street and stopped to speak. An elderly Bangladeshi man who always greets me in the street, and about whom a number of my interviewees have said is always very friendly to them, passed Samina and myself. He greeted me as ever, with a smile, asking after my health. Looking Samina up and down, he scowled at her and walked on without acknowledging her. His behaviour, said Samina, was exactly what she keeps telling me, that she is judged, she has no freedom, she is not behaving as expected of her (see Gardner and Shukur, 1994, p. 159). She was also rather contemptuous of his apparent friendliness toward me. This politeness, she said, was what he believed was expected of him with regard to his British neighbours, which did not extend to her. Whilst Samina rails against the traditions and attitudes of her 'own Bengali community' it is also that very culture she appreciates as defining who she is:

62 It is important to state that I am in no way attempting to portray Samina as a 'typical' first-generation British Bengali woman. She is the only woman of Bengali origin in the street who was willing to undertake a recorded interview with me and I am presenting her stories and perspectives as I would any other. Unlike many young British Bengali women she left college without completing her 'A' Level education, married at 19 years old and had two children within the next few years. My own previous research includes interviews with two British Bengali women (Samson, 2007) who depict quite different lives in East London. See also, for example, Begum (2008); Eade (2004, 2002a, 2002b, 1997); Eade and Garbin (2006); Gardner and Shukur (1994); Haw (2011, 2010); Kershen (2005).

It is important. It's very important, because this is what brings us out. This what shows who we are . what our background is. .. If it wasn't no, if we was supposed to say yeah, our culture's not important, if someone supposed to come and say, 'What are you?', I wouldn't be able to give an answer. 'Where do you come from?; I can't say nothing. WHO you are, because culture is a thing that sort of brings us out, shows our, our identities.

She speaks of 'everything' relating to custom and tradition being important to her though Eid is the only festival she specifically mentions, and of which she says in England is, '...very dull and very boring, I would describe. It's like everyday routine'. She claims that her generation believes it should be an occasion of fun but that most people are working, including her husband, and explains how different it would be in Bangladesh, again invoking it as her 'own country':

And if I was in our OWN country, it would be like the family thing. For instance if I was to celebrate Eid in Bangladesh, I will celebrate the way it's supposed to be celebrated. You got your own family, you live in your own village and, your own people, your own memories and small things that you did and I mean that's what sort of brings everything together.

In London Samina says Eid will be, 'Well, me and my lonely house'.

The need for 'balance' and 'compromise' between traditional Bengali and western values is a recurring theme in Samina's interview and is reflected in how she wants to bring up her children:

N: Mm. But you'd still like to bring your children up in a traditional way you said?

S: I would, I would want to bring my children up in traditional way, not exactly to run them over with tradition or something and forget everything. I want, you need BOTH to do things. You need a bit of religion, cultures as well, you need a bit of traditional life as well. I wouldn't want, I wouldn't want to change my children's life into modern, when you, you know, you don't agree when you come home, I wouldn't want my children being like that.

She is very sure of the importance of her religion to her which 'teaches us how to live a perfect Muslim life', including in guiding how she should be bringing up her children, but speaks of herself as not being a 'proper Muslim' and therefore not a good example to her children:

I'm supposed to be praying five times a day. Reading our, you know you lot read bible, we read *Qur'an Sharif*. We supposed to be praying five times a days and doing, playing at housewife role as well. .. We have to be covered from top to bottom. .

The subject brings her back to her concern about clothing, perhaps a symbolic manifestation of the somewhat discrepant situation she sees herself in. However, the dynamic process of cultural reproduction in its duality of repetition and

innovation is clearly evident in Samina's story, both in her own upbringing and in how she wishes to bring up her children. As first-generation British-born, Samina is unmistakably involved in synthesising the traditions and values of her ethnic origins and her country of birth into a novel ethnic belonging of British Bengali. As Samina's situation exemplifies, such adaptation and modification inevitably involve elements of contradiction or conflict (Gedalof, 2009, p. 96).

Mixed-heritage British

Monique

First-generation issues of cultural transmission also arise, if to a lesser degree and rather differently, in Monique's story in which her mixed French British heritage left her as an adult with a sense of loss. Having spent most of her life in Britain, it is of her mother's non-British family of which she speaks in response to my question of the importance of ethnic customs and traditions. She is now sad about the lack of cultural transmission from her French mother, and knowing only the bare details of her maternal family in that her grandfather was a Polish/Russian Jew who during 19th century pogroms escaped to France and later married a French Catholic woman. Apart from stating that her family celebrate Christmas and Easter, the only custom she speaks of is Epiphany:

I do celebrate Epiphany because my mother used to celebrate it and we always used to have a special meal and a special cake. I think that's a very French tradition, erm but other than that, birthdays, usual, I wouldn't say . anything particular.

Language is also an important missing link for Monique, as not speaking French as well as she would like is an integral part of her regret of not having more sense of French belonging. In recalling how as a child she hated being expected to speak French because her mother was French, she now rues not having learned the language from her:

... my lack of French stops me from probably being a French person and I would prefer to be, I think I'd prefer to be French now than I would have been when I was growing up. [...] I wish, wish, wish I spoke better French because I think in my heart that's where I feel I belong more than in England now.

In her regret that she knew little of her family's culture and traditions, her mother's death created a determination in Monique to discover more about her family background, a desire she acutely relates to the fact that she is not genetically linked to her own children who were born through egg donation. Not knowing their

maternal genetic history has intensified her need to pass something on to them of her own:

I think that it's slightly more important for me because my sons are actually through egg donation so genetically are not mine so I kind of cling on to my genetic history in a way I think perhaps other people . I know people are interested in their history but perhaps more so because of that. And I sort of feel that for THEM, because we don't really know what their genetic history is I feel it's quite important for them to know what MINE is and to ultimately hopefully find out what theirs is.

As a person of mixed-heritage, Monique's omitting to mention British custom and tradition suggests it is her lack of French ethnic belonging that is most meaningful to her (though it might be questioned whether there is a general taking for granted of custom and tradition within a majority culture). Monique's more unusual situation of not being genetically related to her birth children has not only prompted in her a greater desire to discover more of her cultural heritage to pass on to them, but also highlights an additional twist brought about by early 21st century technology that broadens notions of belonging.

Multi-generational British ⁶³

While multi-generational British mothers are not forging new routes as a minority in a majority culture, issues of performativity and cultural transmission through custom and tradition are of course as relevant in their stories as they are in those of migrant mothers. Julie and Sarah whose stories follow, are from families that are at least three generation British, and while the issues that arise for them may be different to those of migrant women, it is clear they are also involved in processes of adaptation and transformation.

Julie

Julie's immediate response to my question about the importance to her of custom and tradition is the loss she feels of the 'strong British working-class culture' she grew up with in 1950s and 1960s Liverpool, where northern concert halls and galleries made classical music and art 'open to everybody' without class distinction. She suggests this is not only perhaps a north-south divide, but also a consequence of changing times and more recent funding policies which separate people, ensuring there is no longer a 'sense of unifying, sharing culture'. Guy Fawkes, which she loved as a child building bonfires on bomb-sites, throwing bangers,

⁶³ Multi-generational British is used in the thesis to describe women whose parents and grandparents were British-born.

watching fireworks and eating mum's homemade treacle toffee, she believes is less celebrated in London, has now been sanitised for health and safety reasons and has lost prominence since an emphasis shift to Diwali. Similarly, she keenly feels the loss of Whit walks and other such processions, communal activities where people paraded and played music while others lined the streets and children followed the processions. For her 'tenuously religious' festivals such as Easter and Christmas were, and still are, a time to see friends and extended family and for which traditions with their own children have developed; every Easter became a seaside holiday with her children and other families, and Christmas meant a trip to the annual Theatre Royal Stratford pantomime, a tradition that continues still with Julie's adult offspring.

Sarah

Sarah's thoughts are marked by their ambivalence. She unequivocally states:

British custom and traditions are more important to me than I can possibly lay my finger on. Yeah, we probably do things all the time which are erm, which are customs passed on down in families, the things that you do.

and she feels that the similarities she shares with her husband in age and upbringing in adjoining counties just outside London gives them cultural references that makes life 'quite comfortable'. Yet she also hesitates in trying to pinpoint meaningful occasions:

Well there must be, there must be, mustn't there. Well we go to church so we must do all of it. Must be, there must be things that we just take for granted.

The festival Sarah mostly speaks of is Christmas and about that she is fulsome, detailing the various customs that she continues with her husband and son, including 'Stir-up Sunday' for making the Christmas pudding,⁶⁴ singing carols, in addition to the traditions of the day itself. Shrove Tuesday is the other occasion Sarah mentions, in that since her son was old enough, she has not only made pancakes with him but has continued a tradition she acquired when working in Germany, of having a fancy dress pancake party.

Sarah's faith is very important to her. She was brought up a Christian but her family were not great churchgoers and for much of her adult life she has not attended church. It was having a child that has inspired Sarah to join a church as when discussing the possibility of having him christened, she realised that she would not

⁶⁴ The last Sunday before Advent when families participate in mixing the plum pudding, see Lepard (2010).

be prepared to do so as a matter of course, but only if she wished to wholeheartedly re-engage in her faith. Since joining an Anglican church, Sarah has become actively involved, not only through weekly attendance but regularly participating in church activities. However when she talks about her faith she does not directly associate it with ethnic belonging. Sarah's hesitancy in articulating the significance of British customs and traditions, or her religious practice, in any sense of ethnic belonging was shared by other British interviewees who found it difficult to express much significance in customs and traditions. As suggested earlier, this hesitancy may reflect Skey's (2011b) notion that ethnic belonging is more generally taken for granted in the majoritarian culture.

As has been illustrated above, while British mothers Julie and Sarah are not adapting the cultural traditions for their children from migrant ethnic origins, they are incorporating differences of place, and what they understand as the loss of traditions that have either altered over time or are no longer practiced. As Gedalof states, 'Sometimes change is embraced and absorbed into a sense of culture as ever-dynamic; at other times, the sense of loss of something more authentic is more troubling' (Gedalof, 2009, p. 96). It is evident by considering cultural transmission from the quite different perspectives of migrant, mixed-heritage, first-generation and multi-generational British that none of the women were merely passing on custom and tradition as transmitted to them. All the women, regardless of their ethnic origins, were engaged in '... everyday acts of embodied repetition...' (Gedalof, 2009, p. 96) through which new belongings were created.

Food, glorious food

Food speaks. It tells of memories, relationships, cultural histories and personal life stories. It reflects not only who we are, but also who we were in the past and who we want to be.

(Long, 2004, p.119)

The first section on food looks at some theoretical perspectives on food and performativity drawing on migrant studies. The second section will apply these perspectives to both migrant and non-migrant interviewees to explore in greater detail the women's sense of ethnic belonging through their relationships with food.

A taste of theory

It is well documented in explorations of home and migration that food is strongly associated with ethnic belonging.⁶⁵ Whether such studies revolve around Dominicans in New York (Marte, 2011), the Lebanese in Australia (Hage, 2010), Ugandan Asians in London (Alibhai-Brown, 2010), or a black Kentucky woman in America (hooks, 2009), food arises as a potent ingredient in belonging and not belonging. How and why the food/ethnic belonging association is so powerful is summed up by Rabikowska in her study of Polish migrants:

Food in its very sensual dimension serves as vehicle for the recreation [sic] of the abstract meaning of home through materially involved activities which alleviate the sense of fragmentation and discontinuity caused by displacement.

(Rabikowska, 2010, p. 378)

And similarly, as Hage puts it, food ‘... promotes a multitude of homely practices for those who otherwise face the unknowable ...’ (Hage, 2010, p. 24). As vital sustenance the everydayness of food presents itself as both a unique nucleus and an encompassing sphere of daily life; it gives life and gives meaning to life in its practices, its associations and its sensory attachments. Home, so often used to epitomise belonging, was evoked for Raman by the sounds of Indian music and, ‘... through the visceral pleasures of preparing and eating Indian food. The heady smells of lentils cooking on the stove, redolent with salt and spice, and sour with tamarind: this was home’ (Raman, 2011, p. 169).

Childhood food

Childhood becomes a vessel embedded with sensory memories where food holds a primary position. hooks declares that her writing is flavoured by her Kentucky hills childhood, food that she never ate elsewhere but always missed, and that she was haunted by her ‘hunger for familiar food’ which ‘... was a constant reminder of the distinctiveness of the world [she] was coming from’ (hooks, 2009, pp. 169-170). Smells, sounds and sights of childhoods shifting between Madras and London for Raman (2011) and in Uganda for Alibhai-Brown (2010), are central to their stories of food and belonging. Aromatic childhood memories such as these often also acquire great importance in generational relationships between daughters, mothers and grandmothers. hooks returns to her mother, ‘a great cook’, and ‘...recipes handed down by generations of Kentucky women’ (2009, p. 170), and in her quest

⁶⁵ Having stated as part of my conceptualisation of belonging that I am not generally using notions of home in connection to belonging, in this particular context of food, where so much thinking is related to notions of home, I find it unavoidable.

to understand her Cypriot ethnicity, Antoniou (2004) contemplates her relationships with her mother, aunts and grandmothers through food, while Hage (2010, p. 416) argues that 'mother's cooking' and 'back home' suggest one and the same. Spurned by her children's general lack of interest in their Asian background, Alibhai-Brown delights in their enjoyment of its foods and uses this culinary route to connect them to their heritage. 'While they eat I reminisce, linking the dishes to times and places, so that when I am gone, my voice will echo in their heads to remind them who they are' (2010, p. 15). For children, food is a primary source of cultural learning (Taylor, 2009a, p. 194).

Performative food

As can be seen, food is understood as both a signifier of ethnic belonging and a means of creating a sense of comfort and security so often reminiscent of home. Recalling that being in Britain heightened her awareness of her ethnicity, Raman states that, 'Preparing and eating the food of home taught us to be "more Indian" when we arrived in Britain' (Raman, 2011, p. 166). Codesal (2010) suggests that the smells, flavours and tastes foods, '... can be used to fight off the sense of fragmentation or discontinuity brought to people's lives by migration' (Codesal, 2010, p. 24), and nostalgia about food, according to Hage (2010), is not necessarily representative of homesickness or loss, but is used in 'home-building', that is, as a positive means of creating a new life in a new place. Food clearly has a performative role in ethnic belonging. In her search to understand her own ethnicity Antoniou states:

Cooking is a performative act. And, as I'm cooking, I'm realising that ethnic identity is also performative. I'm performing my Cypriotness through food. My Cypriotness is little more than a series of embodied practices. My Cypriotness only exists in my enactment of it.

(Antoniou, 2004, p. 140)

Antoniou's evaluation of her position is by no means indicative of the majority of my interviewees, but the universality of food as a staple of survival distinguishes it as the one pursuit in my exploration into ethnic belonging in which they all partake. This universality also highlights that issues around food and ethnic belonging are not of course solely the stuff of migrants. As Hage says:

... migrant memory is no different from any other memory to the extent that we all invest in memories of an imagined pleasurable past to produce and construct a pleasurable present and the future.'

(Hage, 2010, pp. 426-427)

He differentiates between migrant and non-migrant memory through the former's 'radical discontinuity with the remembered past'. Unlike the majority of studies which tend to focus on particular groups or categories, my research considers the lives of a broad range of women across ethnicity and nationality, and the issues raised relate therefore not merely to migrants but also to multi-generational British women, mixed-heritage British women and first-generation British women. For this reason I believe it important to consider food, as I did custom and tradition, across these varying positions, and will, if sometimes only fleetingly, include all my interviewees in this section.⁶⁶

Complex food

Having established that there is an incontrovertible connection between food and ethnic belonging it is also important to state that the relationship is neither necessarily simple nor straightforward. My interviews plainly illustrate the complexity of the relationship of food to ethnic belonging, ranging from being highly motivating to appearing supremely indifferent. And, for example, that a very strong sense of ethnic belonging does not necessarily correlate with eating ethnic food, any more than eating ethnic food necessarily results in strong ethnic belonging. The issues arising from my question of what meaning food has to the women's sense of belonging will be explored within three main sections: first, the performance of ethnic belonging through food; second, notions of outsidership through food; third, consideration of how ethnic food and ethnic belonging can cut across each other in diverse directions.

The sociality of food

I will begin however by very briefly considering food as a social activity, revealed as the most common topic brought up by my interviewees. As with the other issues, which will be considered in greater detail, this is not purely a simple notion of enjoying food in social situations, nor is it necessarily related to ethnic belonging, but it does involve a powerful theme of childhood memories of eating, family and home. For Sarah and to some degree, Monique, the ethnic origins of the food they eat are less important than the processes of cooking good quality food, and the sharing practices of eating with others, while Meena considers cooking an art and delights in the pleasure she can provide through her meals. The importance and value of sitting around a table eating together as a family was emphasised by

⁶⁶ Except for Mary of whom the question was inadvertently not asked.

Agnes, Julie and Jessica, the later saying in response to whether any particular foods are meaningful her sense of belonging:

Erm, I guess roast pot, roast dinners are like something that I associate with home and . family. We all eat around the table which I think is quite important, a lot of people I don't think do, but we've always ate round the table as a family.

Food represented much broader social participation for Angelique and Frederica. Angelique recalls occasions before she became a mother and the gratification she experienced as a hostess offering tastes of Trinidad:

This was barbecue central. All, I mean everybody loved coming to barbecues here because it was so reminiscent of home.

And Frederica revealed that for her, food has a depth of meaning not easily understood by a non-Chinese speaker:

For enjoyment we eat. And our greeting in Chinese, when you see someone, is, 'Have you eaten?'. That's the way they say hello. They say, 'Have you eaten?'. If you haven't, come in, you know, so it's a very hospitable sort of thing, with food.

Albeit brief, these evocative snapshots depict how and why food has such social importance in these women's lives. But, much as there is a strong association between food, family and social activity generally which may also be linked to ethnic practices around food, it will be seen in the forthcoming sections that this association is not necessarily considered as ethnic belonging.

Ethnic belonging performed through food

The stories of my interviewees' relationships with food will be considered under three headings: *Ethnic belonging performed through food*, *Food outsiders*, and, *Paradoxes of food and belonging*, characterising recurrent themes arising from the women's narratives.

This first section features four women, all of whom portray food as giving them a sense of ethnic belonging. The stories reflect their varied backgrounds as migrant, Angelique; multi-generational British, Julie; and mixed-heritage British, Monique and Peigi.

Angelique

Food perhaps more than anything else represents home and belonging for Angelique and is central not only to Trinidadian celebrations in which she partakes

but also, and most importantly, in her day-to-day living. She frivolously relates how, before she met her Trinidadian-born husband Louis, she would only date men whose mothers cooked West Indian food. Louis however cooks as their grandmothers in Trinidad did, and anything that Angelique:

... used to have to get on a plane and go home to get, Louis can make it. He'll go down Green Street^[67] and he'll find ingredients and he'll come home and make it.

The meals may originate from all over the world but the combinations of fresh herbs and spices provide the Trinidadian twist that Angelique so craves. She is unequivocal that food and home are inseparable:

Food, good food is about home. We have people coming [laugh], when Louis, when the weather is really, really yucky and rainy and horrible, Louis will go out to Green Street or to [the high street] and find yam, cassava sweet potatoes, eddoes, home, home of root vegetables and he will come home and he will make BIGGEST pot of soup . just like we used to make it at home. And you call people up and say, come and get your soup. .. And people will drive through that weather to come and get some of Louis' soup. . Because we know a bit of home. And everybody knows it's a bit of home.

Her words unmistakably invoke Trinidad as home, and not only for herself, because through food, she and Louis are re-creating Trinidad for their friends.⁶⁸ Angelique's sense of belonging to Trinidad so profoundly experienced through food meant that until she found a means of reproducing the experience in London, she could find no sense of belonging here:

I didn't start looking for [belonging in London] until I met Louis to be honest with you, because I wasn't, I wasn't settling here. I wasn't settled in the house, it was mine, but it was a base, it was somewhere for me to feel safe, but home was always Trinidad. I mean I was travelling back and forth a million – when you think about how much money I spent in, in travel over ten years. Phhhh, makes you sss . you know. But I wasn't thinking anything . longer term than, I needed . my mum, I needed a cuddle, I needed food [laugh].

Given the fundamental significance of Trinidadian food to Angelique, it is interesting to note that she has never cooked much herself. Her mother, her grandmother and in more recent years, her husband, have always cooked for her. Food is deeply tied to the most important adults in her life and where they are, she can begin to find a sense of belonging. Food is her mum, her grandmother, her husband. The lack of this potent combination of significant people, food and home impacted enormously

67 Green Street is a major shopping street in Newham, predominantly known for its Asian merchandise but also for the wide range of African and Caribbean foods in Queen's Market.

68 Mills (1975) emphasises the seriousness with which Trinidadians treat food.

on Angelique's first 10 years in this country where, without the people who could provide food, she could not find herself here. Marte's (2011) use of seasonings to explore how migrants find the means of settling in new societies, appositely describes Angelique's situation:

In a way, foods help migrants re-season their perceptions to re-invent an experiential map in which they can again find, speak and recognize themselves.

(Marte, 2011, p. 197)

Until she met Louis, Angelique was unable to locate the 'affective building blocks' that Hage (2010) suggests migrants use in 'home-building'. His differentiation between nostalgia of 'back home,' which can be used to build a new sense of home, and homesickness, as debilitating and rendering people unable to function in their environment, pertinently depicts Angelique's pre-Louis chapter of her London life. In her case those first years were spent '... [taking] refuge in the memories of the past from the potentially traumatising encounter with the present' (Hage, 2010, pp. 416-418). Food *is* home for Angelique. In its diverse semblances of what constitutes Trinidadian, food symbolises who she is.

Given that the literature on food and ethnic belonging concentrates on migrants, it is perhaps surprising that Angelique is the only migrant amongst my interviewees who specifically relates food to her ethnic belonging. Having said that, the women's narratives indicate that the relationship to food is far more complex than a straightforward binary of ethnic belonging or no ethnic belonging. The five women in addition to Angelique who expressly responded that food gives them a sense of belonging were British with differing migrant/British backgrounds. Three of their stories will be discussed here; Julie, multi-generationally British, and Monique and Peigi both, albeit differently, mixed-heritage British.

Julie

Food is significant in Julie's sense of ethnic belonging:

...[It is] particular types of food [...] things that were quintessentially British, and English. I think I always had a sense that British food as good, most people of my generation didn't. You know 'cause my mum would always say we are going to that butcher because I know where the field is where the animals come from that he slaughters, so I know the meat's going to be good. There was always a very strong notion that British food was very, very good food and you had very good British food. You know, so THAT was very much part of the identity, also a sense of adventurousness, that there were other things out there that were also really very interesting. And that was very much a route through to other, to other cultures.

The quality and freshness of the food was of great importance (Marte, 2011, p. 184) and the lessons Julie learns from her mother of local produce and trust between customer and local producer being important are also understood as social signifiers of belonging to a particular group (Prigent-Simonin and Hérault-Fournier, 2005, para. 7). Julie recalls Liverpool's freshly caught fish, going off to pick mushrooms and blackberries, and walking on the moors to find blueberries for pies. She thinks of her mum as a very good cook in times when it was hard to be so, and that '... food was a big part of what we did...'. Her parents also opened other cultural worlds to her through food including Irish and Chinese meals and Jewish foods, '... end cuts of smoked salmon and Russian salad and cheeses' that her father would bring from the delicatessen. The notions of local and fresh have remained with Julie and as she emphasises her enjoyment of them, she also reveals her very strong feelings about food in the locality now:

We go to *Bread and Wine* on Commercial Street, and that erm, that does British food there, and that's a really nice restaurant because they source everything locally. You know and if we go to Suffolk you always get Cromer crab there and then there's the, all the fishing huts and you can buy fresh fish there. Yeah, so things like Colchester oysters [...]. I think it's a shame that so many of the pie and mash shops have gone. I HATE it round here for food. I think it's appalling.

The examples of British produce and quality learned from her mother have not only stayed with Julie into adulthood but have also been passed on to her own children, and although she enjoys Asian foods and eats in some local restaurants, Julie finds the lack of variety on offer and the paucity of good quality eateries abhorrent.

Monique

Food is central in Monique's sense of ethnic belonging and uppermost in her memories is the food cooked by her mother and importantly, her grandmother in France, to whom she was sent as a child to spend school holidays. She wistfully talks of trying to re-create her own versions of their cooking and baking, and to enjoy the meals with her own family now:

... to me food is not just about eating, it's about, you know, you kind of put your heart and soul in it, and my mother was a great cook and we learnt from her. I'm not saying I'm a great cook but erm I find it quite challenging in a house with three men who are not really interested in food other than as fuel basically.

However her desired sense of French belonging is to some extent thwarted by the little interest by her husband and children and she feels alienated from the joys and quality of food that was part of her growing up, and in what she knows of her sisters' experience living in France. In her longing to belong Monique experiences

the 'lack of homely feeling' that induces homesickness (Hage, 2010, p. 421-422), but in her case she is homesick not only for the memory of her childhood home in Britain but also for a French home that she never actually had.

Peigi

The food of the two cultures Peigi grew up with have given her what she believes is:

Probably quite a strong sense of belonging. There are certain things that I do do, probably because of erm where I'm, you know, my background. I mean curries play a big part although they're never as nice as my mum's. I mean things like, I make griddle scones like, which, 'cause my granny used to make them in Scotland on her cooker, on her aga. Erm, and so I make, make those.

The colourful and complex dishes of her father's family in Kolkata and the fresh and simple foods of freshly caught fish, porridge and griddle scones cooked by her maternal grandmother in the Hebrides, represent for Peigi the dual nature of her ethnic heritage, similar to that recounted through food of her dual Jamaican British heritage by Lewis (1985, p. 223). It is notable that Peigi praises the curries of her *Hebridean mother* who was taught to cook them in India by her husband's family cook and her sisters-in-law, and who then provided Indian dishes as regular meals in their North-west London home. The Hebridean food remains a potent memory of childhood holidays Peigi spent with her grandmother in the Scottish Isles, especially the griddle scones, which along with curry she now cooks with her husband in North Newham.

Culinary commonalities

Common to all the above women are the memories and stories of mothers and grandmothers and the places that these women and their food were encountered (Raman, 20011; Hage, 2010; Alibhai-Brown, 2010; hooks, 2009; Antoniou, 2004; Long, 2004). It is notable that of the four women, Angelique, Monique and Peigi also featured in the section, *Stories of community and belonging* (Chapter 3), as women who experienced a strong sense of belonging in what they described as the close communities of their early childhoods; what I term their childhood localities of belonging. It was these particular communities of people in particular places that provided the gastronomic influences that form such a powerful element of their adult lives; sensory memories of tastes and flavours, of spices and seasonings that lead to adult ethnic belonging through the everyday performance of cooking and eating (Antoniou, 2004; Fortier, 1999). Julie had a more dislocated childhood than

the other three women in that she felt alienated from others in her early life and saw herself as an outsider. Significantly however, although she found that a childhood move of home added to her alienation, she did remain in the same geographical region and the food that she so vividly depicts as giving her a sense of belonging originates from those landscapes of her early years.

In addition to cooking and eating, the element of buying food is a crucial part of the performative triad. But here the picture again becomes more complicated for there are no simple correlations between having a sense of ethnic belonging and being able to buy the food that provides it. For Angelique and Peigi who seek Trinidadian and Indian ingredients, going to Green Street and its bustling Queen's Market provides them with a dazzling array of foods originating from distant lands that fulfil their gastronomic desires. Green Street is described as:

... Britain's most celebrated Asian shopping centre [...] with the most authentic curries outside the sub-continent, dazzling fabrics and aromatic spices...

(London Borough of Newham, 2012)

and is well known for Asian, African and Caribbean foods and spices. It is well documented (Winder, 2005, p. 350; Hage, 2010, p. 423; Marte, 2011, p. 186; Raman, 2011, p. 170) that markets develop and change to meet the needs of different migrant groups wherever they settle, and that migrants will often orientate themselves by travelling to different areas of a city in a quest to find food that, if not exactly what they seek, can be substituted for it. As Peigi recalls:

I think somewhere where you can buy spices, these cash and carry shops, I feel very familiar with, having, going there as a child, and when we were younger we used to have to travel to them to Southall, which is an area in West London, a bit like Green Street. So now it's more you can buy things in the high street and even in the supermarket, but erm . I find that quite nice, that you can buy cinnamon sticks or cardamom pods and it's not such an alien thing. Erm and fresh ginger rather than powdered ginger [...]

Peigi clearly associates childhood family outings to Southall for ingredients with her satisfaction as an adult in being able to fulfil those needs locally. For others who experience a sense of ethnic belonging through food, the locality does not provide the desired ingredients to sustain their sense of belonging. Julie, who so colourfully portrays her love of British food, is quite scathing about the lack of quality food available locally, as is Monique who mostly wishes, '... to recreate the food that my mother cooked and my grandmother cooked which would be French-style cooking'. Of these women who express a sense of ethnic belonging through food it is notably those of British and European heritage for whom quality food they seek to satisfy their sense of belonging is lacking in the local area and who subsequently feel

alienated by this lack. Conversely, as will be seen in a later section, for other women such as Tendo and Meena who describe themselves as having little or no sense of ethnic belonging through food, the local availability of foodstuffs used in the cuisines of their ethnic origins appears to remain meaningful in their lives.

Food outsiders

Before looking more closely at some of the paradoxes within relationships between food and belonging hinted at above, consideration will be given to the alienating role food can play in peoples lives. Antoniou (2004, p. 139) speaks of how food both embodied her Cypriotness but also represented her resistance to what she saw as being Cypriot. Julie's and Monique's desire to experience their sense of ethnic belonging through food is thwarted by its local absence, increasing their sense of alienation. Thus much as food can be a means of connecting people to others and to the past, it is also apparent that food can be a means of estrangement. The stories of Elaine and Imogen reveal in the following section aspects of outsidership which are both self- and other-defined, and which relate both to ethnic and non-ethnic belonging.

Elaine

In the contemplative manner Elaine approaches most questions, she ponders thoughtfully when asked whether food has any meaning for her sense of belonging:

..... Ah Oh that's kind of interesting because I do er . sort of like to eat what I think of as Scottish food like porridge and oatcakes and shortbread, that kind of thing, I erm . yah. but not all Scottish food, I have never eaten haggis and never will. I'm a vegetarian by the way so [laugh] . [...] Yuh. I have a kind of affection for the idea of these foods because they are Scottish foods, and erm, yes, I like them apart from that too. A lot of what's considered national British food I don't eat anyway, like the fish and chips, because of being vegetarian, you see, so I don't, I don't feel that that's part of er .. of a tradition that I belong to.

Her words highlight two issues, first her sense of Scottishness rather than Britishness, and second her sense of otherness generated by her vegetarianism. Both issues stem from her childhood; ethnicity, as discussed in Chapter 3 (p. 94), when she was rendered English by her peers for not sounding Scottish enough. As far as she is concerned she is nothing but Scottish and in talking about food it is not food from 'foreign' countries she distances herself from, but traditionally 'British' foods. The food that expresses who she is, is determinedly Scottish, with notably, the exception of haggis which sets her apart as a vegetarian. Elaine tells of becoming a vegetarian as a young child and remembers with distaste being forced

to swallow the 'disgusting' mince ladled up four days a week at school. She met opposition to her vegetarianism from her wider family of aunts and grandparents, yet while her aversion to meat earned disapproval from her parents it was 'allowed', though she was not catered for differently.⁶⁹ For Elaine food is a telling feature of her outsidership. As a pivotal component of celebratory custom and tradition, food is closely linked to family (Long, 2004, p. 120; Roth, 2005), an association that for vegetarians can therefore be problematic where family is opposed to such a life choice because vegetarianism is perceived as a threat to family belonging (Roth, 2005, pp. 187-190). As Preece (2008) states, '... ritual promotes the solidarity, the belongingness, of the group ...' and vegetarians prioritising their ethical stance above community participation '... do so at the expense of the social bond' (Preece, 2008, pp. 7-8). It is conceivable that Elaine's vegetarianism contributed to her decision to live in London, far from her Glasgow based family, on her return to Britain from Africa in the 1960s. She said, '... I just wanted to be independent, I wanted to be free, I didn't want, I didn't want them telling me what I should be doing' [laugh]. Although Elaine makes no overt connection to it, her awareness of herself as gay would surely also have been a significant factor in her sense of outsidership and her decision to distance herself from her family.

Imogen

Imogen would always have preferred to have eaten as a vegetarian but living with her parents in Africa until she was 30 years old meant she only became a vegetarian in practice when she came to London. Her 'dominating', 'critical' and 'extreme' father would not countenance a family member eating a different meal and she was unable to counter him in her struggle to assert herself (Roth, 2005, pp. 187-190). The feminist movement in late 1960s London's provided Imogen with some acceptance of being vegetarian but generally vegetarianism became another aspect of her life where she would 'feel the outsider again'. Though most places now offer 'a veggie option' she is today still diffident about her vegetarianism amongst certain people. Stories of food and language from her life in Africa particularly reveal the complexity of Imogen's sense of ethnic belonging. Living a British colonial life with intimations of African antecedence in the family (Chapter 4, p. 133) Imogen recalls her mother's maid preparing her own meals of an African staple, samp and beans. Imogen recalls saying as a child, 'That, that smells absolutely delicious, we should have that', and it becoming a staple meal of her family, 'a mishmash, one pot cooking' style which to this day is her preference but

⁶⁹ Roth (2005) and Hamilton (2006) explore reasons people become vegetarian amongst which may overtly include aversion to meat and internally be a means of asserting independence.

which she imagines her brothers, who liked the separateness of English food, would 'despise'. This sense of Imogen's assorted outsidership originating in her childhood both within and without her family (described in Chapter 3, p. 95), is also reflected in her use of language. Using Afrikaans words was common amongst white English speakers, words which Imogen still uses in her fiction writing causing her writer friends who do not understand them to advise including a glossary in her work, which '...makes [her] feel even more foreign'. Despite the actuality of Imogen being British, her description of life growing up in colonial Africa in:

... the white community in Africa [which] was just suburbia transposed into Africa and totally out of sympathy with the surroundings ...

is indicative of the complicating and confusing issues of ethnic belonging that Imogen has always encountered.

The continuity of Elaine's and Imogen's experiences in childhood and adulthood is comparable to that of the women discussed in the previous section who experienced localities of belonging in childhood and strong ethnic belonging through food as adults. As seen in Chapter 3, Elaine and Imogen experienced dislocated, nomadic early lives and while experiencing some adult ethnic belonging through food, the generally more persuasive characteristic of their food relationships is that of outsidership. Notwithstanding the importance of Elaine's Scottish heritage and the entwined British, colonial, African influences on Imogen, it is their sense of otherness from peers and family that prevails.

Paradoxes of food and belonging

This third section looking at food relationships focuses on the paradoxes around ethnic belonging and not belonging illustrated in the women's stories. These stories demonstrate that resolute ethnic belonging does not necessarily include the everyday eating of ethnic origin food, and equally, that the frequent eating of ethnic origin food does not inevitably demonstrate a strong sense of ethnic belonging. Agnes and Meena describe examples of the former, Frederica and Tendo the latter. An attempt will be made to unravel some of the varying complexities of these paradoxes and, as in the other sections above, consideration will be given to how their adult ethnic belonging relates to their childhood belonging.

Agnes

Despite her unwavering and seemingly all-encompassing desire to not only retain and perform her Polish ethnicity, but also ultimately raise her children as much

Polish as British, Agnes does not embrace everyday food as a relevant component of her ethnic belonging. Food, she says, is important for health and as the daily family tradition of eating together that she has participated in 'since [she] was born', but significantly, not in terms of Polish fare on an everyday basis. Indeed, she suggests there is little difference between English and Polish cuisine and she rarely uses local Polish shops except for healthy drinks. In her 'degree of exchange with the host culture', Agnes' stance fits within the 'Alternate' level of Rabikowska's (2010) theory of identity performance. This level represents the lowest level of Polish performativity where migrants do accept foreign food, a scenario particularly found in homes where a spouse is of the host culture (Rabikowska, 2010, p. 383). Agnes' husband is of course British and as stated, she wants her children to be both British and Polish. However, her attitude to food belies the level of her Polish performativity in other aspects of her life including cultural transmission to her children (as described under *Custom and Tradition* in this chapter). Agnes's position is perhaps reflected in Marte's (2011, pp. 190-191) observation of Dominican migrants who, due to time limitations of work and school demands, mostly cook traditional meals only for Christmas or other major festivals, as Agnes states that food is meaningful to her sense of belonging 'Only for Christmas'. She elaborates with the words:

For Christmas I'm very specific about the food for Christmas Eve which is traditional twelve dishes. This is very important for me and I'm doing this every year. Fish and vegetable, cabbage, and we are not allowed to eat meat for Christmas Eve, so it's mainly fish, pyrogi – stuffed with mushrooms and cabbage, and .. beetroot soup, barscht, carp, other fish as well, any kind of fish. Yeah that's mainly.

Having stated there is little to choose between Polish and English foods, here Agnes demonstrates that some Polish food is quite different and is of great importance to her. She adds that she buys the Polish fare ready-made and frozen as they are so time consuming to prepare, as Marte (2011) suggests. Further, in response to my asking the relevance of the twelve dishes, Agnes reveals it is the tradition, the performance of the festival itself, rather than its original religious connotation, that is significant to her:

N: So what do the twelve dishes represent? Do they have a meaning?

A: . Erm it must be twelve, I don't know er and just, just fish, er yeah, I think it does but . [...] Can't remember.

N: Ok, not to worry. So that is important. Why, why is that one important to you?

A: As a tradition, as a continuing, every year we waiting for this and as a child I really enjoyed this, and I remember this as a really enjoyable family time, and we are waiting for this first star on the sky and because this is where you, once you see this first star on the sky, when you start your dinner, Christmas, Christmas supper, so er I just associate this with, with this family time and really enjoy all this presents and [laugh] so that's why I continue it, as a very nice . celebration.

The dialogue explicitly conveys the importance of the act of celebration, rather than its historical meaning for Agnes, which she could not explain, and her evocative words clearly portray her memories of childhood, and the significance they still hold for her as a mother raising her own children.

Meena

As seen in Chapter 4 (p. 134), Meena was one of only three women who unequivocally expressed strong ethnic sense of belonging (the others being Agnes and Angelique) yet she uncompromisingly states that food has no relevance in that. To my question of whether food has meaning for her belonging, she answers the following:

No. Food we eat just to survive. We can't eat, from our religion, cow, beef and pork, because of our religion. Cow is our national animal, cow is our goddess also, and pork, why, I don't know. My family they never eat any, so I also.

Notwithstanding Meena's definitive statement that food is purely for survival, Nepalese food is an intrinsic part of her London life. In the rented house she shares with her husband and other Nepalese couples, she cooks Nepalese food every day, the ingredients for which she seeks in Indian shops (Marte 2011, p. 186; Hage, 2010, p. 423). When she goes out to eat it is to a Nepalese restaurant either locally in Green Street or in Plumstead, South London. In all ways Nepalese cuisine is an everyday feature of Meena's life. Her brief explanation above regarding the meats she can and cannot eat is perhaps a clue to this paradox of Nepalese food not being meaningful to her sense of belonging; she acknowledges she does not know why she, nor her family, do not eat pork, but simply because they do not, she does not. Her following of tradition in this manner, as well as her only having been in London for a year and remaining steeped in Nepalese culture, suggest that food is a naturalised aspect of her sense of belonging. She takes her Nepalese food for granted, and is perhaps not yet distanced enough to be reflectively aware of its significance.

Frederica

Throughout an interview which indefatigably stresses her feelings of disconnection from her ethnic origins, Frederica's ardent desire for Malaysian food is correspondingly paradoxical. For despite her little sense of ethnic belonging, Malaysian food remains highly significant in her life. The following exchange is illuminating:

N: So what does being Malaysian mean to you now? ..

F: Er .. not a lot. It means a certain way of living, a sort of street, street way, you know, lots of ... food. Mainly, that's what it means to me NOW.

N: How important are custom and tradition-

F: Not very.

N: -if at all?

F: Not very. Erm .. I don't observe the New Years, the Chinese New Years or all the other customs, because I don't even know when they happen.

As the dialogue portrays, she has little enthusiasm to engage with her Chinese Malaysian roots. She does not practise any of the many Malaysian traditions and customs and describes herself as a member of 'this human race community' rather than any ethnic grouping, remembering her feeling of oppression in claustrophobic ethnic communities in her teenage years. She prioritises having the freedom to lead her life free of ethnic affiliation. Frederica also reveals however that the importance of Malaysian food remains not only in the Malaysian flavours, 'a particular taste', that she would miss if she could not have it, but because of the centrality of food in Chinese Malaysian culture. Explaining that Chinese words of greeting inquire as to whether one has eaten, followed by the offer of food, she adds:

And in Malaya we eat round the clock. ... So huge efforts go into getting your food. Erm, when we go home to visit, we're always taken out, every day. ... It's something that I think, the ord, British life . is SO alien from. You have certain food at certain times of the day, in, in Malaya you can have any food at ANY time of the day. In particular places. So if you wanted a particular food and it's not served in your local place, you would drive ten miles and go and eat there and they'd think NOTHING of it. Or we go there for the main course and go some place else for the pudding. [...] Or, you know, you go out to eat and then halfway along the road, someone says, 'Nah, I think I'd prefer that', ok, you turn round and go the other way for ten miles. It's very fluid, food is very important.

In Frederica's depiction, food represents a pivotal quality of being Malaysian and one that is re-lived on a daily basis. It is also the one aspect of being Malaysian

that Frederica has continued to value and practice in her 40 years in Britain, still re-creating the range of foods she would eat in Malaysia with ingredients and spices she can buy locally in North Newham, and cooking different meals for each member of her own family should they desire, keeping the Malaysian tradition of people eating whatever they choose. Eating, as Taylor (2009a, p. 195) argues, ‘... is not just about the provision of adequate nourishment, but is also a coded practice which defines cultural and family behaviour.’ And with reference to Hage’s (2010) home-building notion, Frederica experiences food as a means of positively creating a new home in a new place. Here she can separate the hospitality and freedom that Malaysian food practices represent, and which she values highly, from the ethnic divisions and destruction that she recalls and chose (and still chooses) to leave behind. Yet paradoxically, Frederica’s everyday performativity of Malaysian food does not translate for her into a strong sense of ethnic belonging.

Tendo

Given Tendo’s seemingly indomitable separation of herself from her ethnic origins and simultaneous desire to be accepted as British as demonstrated in previous chapters, it should perhaps be no surprise to learn that she finds no sense of ethnic belonging in food, when laughing she categorically states, ‘... belonging and food, I can’t see the connection’. Yet Tendo’s relationship with food is probably the most convoluted and paradoxical of all the interviewees. She cooks Ugandan food she knows from childhood but emphatically declares that it means nothing to her and lists a range of western dishes she cooks for the family, adding that she has:

... never thought about [food], I just take it for granted. You, you put it in a pot, it cooks, you eat it [laugh] it’s good for you [laugh] yeah.

That her husband spends seven days a week on his business importing East African foodstuffs, which also acts as a hub for Ugandans in East London, is of no apparent relevance or interest to Tendo; ‘... it pays the bills, pays the mortgage . clothes the children ...’ and is merely an expedient source of matoke,⁷⁰ the Buganda staple that she regularly cooks:

Yeah, the actual food that comes in – I have no connection with it. I know the food that comes in is African food but I have no connection with it.

And, she declares, she is ‘grateful’ for this lack of connection with food. My attempt to draw Tendo out to understand this apparent desire to distance herself so radically from her Ugandan origins, is met with a detailed story describing a laborious process of preparing and cooking matoke, to which she adds:

⁷⁰ A plantain traditionally steamed in banana leaves and mixed with vegetables and or meat.

So I'm grateful that I don't have to do all of that [laugh]. I just peel them, cook them, they're ready, we eat. So, if I'm over, if I'm in Uganda and did that, people would tell me that's not food . so I'd be different.

It is in those words, 'so I'd be different', that the significance seems to lie. She does not want to cook (or live, as we have seen) as a Ugandan, but contradictorily, neither does she want to be seen to be different, or perhaps be found wanting, as a Ugandan. Either way, it would seem she feels compromised through a relationship with food and therefore attempts to put herself outside the realms of any ethnic implication, that is, she has no relationship to food and food has no meaning for her sense of belonging. A further twist in Tendo's ambivalence is that she firmly states she would not serve western food to a visiting Ugandan, because they would not eat it. She therefore cooks matoke for them, whether traditionally or otherwise she does not say. It appears that for Tendo any sense of belonging through food is eschewed both to elude difference but also paradoxically to construct barriers.

Food positionalities

As in the previous food sections where it became apparent that the women's adult relationships with food could to some extent be understood in relation to their childhood localities and dislocations of belonging, so too can such links be traced in these food stories of Agnes, Meena, Frederica and Tendo, albeit the paradoxical nature of the relationships render the associations more ambivalent. What is plainly evident however is that Agnes and Meena, both of whom state they have no ethnic belonging through food, but eat the food of their ethnic origins, *do* both experience strong ethnic belonging and had established localities of belonging as children. In addition, both women came to Britain without intention to stay long term⁷¹ and both maintain very strong relationships with their families and countries of origin. It is conceivable that those continuing strong connections naturalise their relationships to food, and in Agnes' case that the tradition of festivals, rituals and celebrations above all create meaning for her, rather than food per se, while the relatively brief time Meena has been in Britain is a significant factor.

Food is the only way Frederica experiences any sense of ethnic belonging and she otherwise has no interest in connecting to her ethnic origins. She did have a strong locality of belonging as a young child, as with others who experienced ethnic belonging through food. In her case however this was seriously disrupted in later

⁷¹ As stated in Chapter 3, Agnes, despite never intending to stay in London long term, met and married a British man who did not speak Polish and would not be able to work in Poland. She stayed for these reasons and has been here for over 15 years. Meena has been in Britain for 18 months on a student visa and hopes to be able to stay long enough to complete a master's degree.

childhood and as a very young woman she made a purposeful decision to leave her home of origin. Tendo's dislocated, nomadic childhood ended with her being brought to England not of her own choosing, and her marked disconnection from her ethnic origins and from any sense of ethnic belonging suggests the two situations are not unrelated. For both Frederica and Tendo it would seem that the complexity and disruptive nature of leaving their countries of origin is reflected in their more ambiguous associations with food and any ethnic belonging, unlike other women who have not experienced similar ruptures in later teenage years. Through exploring stories of localities and dislocations of belonging in childhood, the reasons the women left their countries of origin and/or chose to stay in Britain, and their adult sense of ethnic belonging through food, it does become clear that there are traceable connections linking such significant periods in their past lives to their current experience. It is indisputable that there is no simple binary of belonging or not belonging revealed in the food that the women buy, cook and eat. What is exposed through the exploration of food and ethnic belonging are the complex and complicating nexus of experiences that can only be understood through an intersectional appreciation of the women's social locations through time, which give context and meaning to their positionalities.

Anthias' (2008) concept of translocational positionality specifically concerns the importance of context, meaning and time in the intersection of social locations and the construction of belonging in migrant lives, stating that:

Ethnic ties cannot be considered in isolation, as delivering 'belonging', given that they are intersected with social relations of different types...

(Anthias, 2008, p. 8)

And following Anthias, it cannot be said that food per se provides or creates a sense of ethnic belonging for the women discussed here, be they migrant or non-migrant. It is not merely their performative acts of buying, cooking or eating foods of ethnic origin that induce a sense of belonging in these women but the meaning or positionality (Anthias, 2008) that they give those actions. While the previous chapter argued that performativity is necessary to experience a sense of belonging, what the women's stories illustrate is that performativity per se cannot create a sense of belonging. The context and the meaning of the acts in the everyday life being lived are crucial. Angelique for example experienced childhood locality of belonging, spent her first 10 years in Britain returning to Trinidad as often as she could afford and has always wanted to retain and maintain her belonging to her origins; food for her engenders performative acts that to a great degree fulfil the meaning she desires them to have, and thereby give her a sense of ethnic belonging. In contrast, Tendo had a dislocated, nomadic childhood and as an adult

in Britain has consistently distanced herself from her Ugandan origins; while she cooks and eats food of her ethnic origins it has no meaning at all in her sense of belonging.

All the women's stories reveal the particular nature of food as an everyday practice crucial to life. While some practices of custom and tradition may cease over time, food is essential to everyday life and it is perhaps not surprising that many of the women continue to follow the food traditions they grew up with. Food may therefore be the last connection with ethnic belonging for women who feel little association otherwise. Women such as, for example, Frederica, Monique, Julie, Peigi and Elaine, who experience little sense of ethnic belonging in their lives generally, do find some sense of belonging in or through food, whether they are migrant, first-generation British, mixed-heritage British or multi-generational British women. In contrast, Tendo continues to eat the food of her ethnic origins while denying it provides any ethnic belonging for her. Yet others such as Agnes and Meena are highly engaged in ethnic custom and tradition but do not recognise this association in food. In total contrast to all the other women is, of course, Angelique, for whom food is central to her very strong sense of ethnic belonging. It is precisely in these multiple and varying configurations that positionality comes to the fore. The performative practices of everyday food shopping, preparation, cooking and eating are all significant aspects in maintaining ethnic belonging, but in themselves are not enough to account for the women's ethnic belonging. It is their positionality above all, involving the diverse social locations and subjective meanings of their lives that shapes their ethnic belonging and not belonging.

Conclusion

In looking at stories of custom and tradition this chapter has concentrated its focus on discussing mothers' cultural transmission through such strands as celebrations, festivals, language and religion. Stark differences in how mothers approach and transmit their cultural heritages have been drawn from the stories of two migrant women. A marked contrast was found between one who strongly retained her sense of ethnic belonging and enveloped her children on an everyday basis in the language, religion, and celebrations of her migrant background, and the other who felt no ethnic belonging to what she saw as her past, and could not rationalise passing her ethnic origins on to her British-born children. Her changing circumstances over time were seen to be a critical determinant in her changing attitude and approach to her ethnicity. An important finding was that mothers

generally, both migrant and non-migrant, were involved in a dynamic process of cultural transmission that was innovative and adaptive, reiterating but also transforming the culture they passed on (Gedalof, 2009). In particular it was argued that first-generation and mixed-heritage women can be seen to be in a transitional space of collecting and collating, and synthesising old and new traditions, though multi-generational British women were also found to engage in a similar process integrating new and different traditions into their own.

Food was seen in the second part of the chapter as having a central role in feelings of ethnic belonging, or as many theorists describe, of home (Raman, 2011; Alibhai-Brown, 2010; hooks, 2009; Antoniou, 2004). The comfort and sociality of food was clearly evidenced but the women's stories also glaringly illustrated that food relationships were exceedingly complex. The narrative process elicited an amalgam of complicated associations and emotions which highlighted connections to childhood belonging but also not belonging; it could be a means of alienation and estrangement, and created paradoxes whereby frequent eating of ethnic food did not inevitably provide ethnic belonging. I argued earlier (Chapter 4, p. 129) that performativity is crucial to ethnic belonging and, unlike identification, required the repeated performance of everyday practices. This chapter has powerfully exemplified that performativity per se is not enough to provide a sense of belonging. It can only be through analytic consideration of positionality in tandem with performative practice that belonging can be understood. Here, it is very clear that without considering the women's translocational positionality (Anthias, 2008) relating to their ethnic origins and early experiences, their food stories would have revealed little understanding of their belonging.

Chapter 6

Class, place and community

Introduction

The thesis began by considering the childhood belonging of the interviewees with emphasis on where they grew up and with whom. Following chapters discussed what forms of belonging they found in citizenship and ethnicity and what meaning they had in their adult lives. This chapter now returns to the issue of place, situating the women within their current geographical and social context, and focusing on how they find belonging in their places of adulthood. The section *Introducing the neighbourhood* (Chapter 2) has mapped the changing demographics of the street since it was built and situated the street in its specific historical and social background. The sections that follow explore the women's belonging under the separate concepts of class, place and community, concepts which need disentangling to understand the intricacies of the women's experience.

As described in Chapter 2, the Hollybarn neighbourhood has always been a more middle-class area within a poor area of East London, albeit with a changing history of class mix and ethnic diversity. The nature of the neighbourhood raises questions of middle-class elective belonging (Savage *et al.*, 2005) and selective belonging (Watt, 2009), and the women's stories of both coming to and living in the neighbourhood are analysed with reference to these theories. Their stories are also discussed in the light of Butler and Hamnett's exploration of Newham's changing population, particularly concerning the complexities of its multi 'ethnic/class split' (2011, p. 238). With the research situated firmly within the street, the chapter argues that place itself is not a fixed and bounded entity and the women's lives are therefore not considered purely in this place of the street, but, using Massey's (1994) more fluid concept, in the meaningful places of their social relations. What inhibits the women's belonging to place and what enables it, are explored. The third part of the chapter briefly considers the problems of 'community' as an analytic concept, and debates Miller's argument that a street is simply a 'random juxtapositions of households' (2008a, p. 284). The women's subjective experience of belonging is drawn out through applying an understanding of community in the varied forms meaningful to them.

Class belonging

S/elective theory

Class is not being discussed in general in this thesis but specifically in reference to belonging and place. Savage *et al.*'s (2005) notion of 'elective belonging' which relates belonging closely with class is therefore singularly apposite to my research. Their theory is based on Bourdieu's concepts of habitus as in the internalised and embodied understanding and behaviour, and fields as the social arenas in which capitals are played out and fought over. As embodied, habitus is therefore also directly related to physical location (Savage *et al.*, 2005, pp. 8-9). According to this theory:

People are comfortable when there is a correspondence between habitus and field, but otherwise people feel ill at ease and seek to move – socially and spatially – so that their discomfort is relieved.

(Savage *et al.*, 2005, p. 9)

This approach therefore argues that people have a sense of belonging when their social environment accords with their class orientation and lifestyle. Belonging to place is seen as a social construction which is never fixed but 'fluid and contingent' (Savage *et al.*, 2005, pp. 11-12).

The original Savage *et al.* (2005) project involved interviews with residents of four different Manchester areas to investigate '... the interplay between global processes and the formation of distinct local milieux' through exploring interviewees' routine, everyday lives including, work, leisure, family and residence. While they chose deliberately not to include working-class areas, interviewees had a range of different economic and/or cultural capital (Savage *et al.*, 2005, pp. 14-16). From this study the researchers found links between belonging and residence which they designated 'elective belonging' and 'nostalgia'. A third strand of belonging and residence was identified in a further study in which Savage was involved, which he labelled 'dwelling' (Savage, 2010, p. 3). Of the three narratives claiming local attachment it is elective belonging that is most relevant here, but the others can be briefly summed up as, 'nostalgia' being the narratives of loss of social cohesion and community, and 'dwelling' being the belonging narratives of those born-and-bred in an area (Savage, 2010, pp. 117; 130).

Elective belonging is used to describe middle-class incomer attachment to their place of residence. Savage *et al.* (2005, p. 29) found that middle-class people's choosing and settling in a place that reflected their sense of themselves socially

and culturally, that is, where their habitus and their social fields coincided, gave them a sense of belonging. People claimed belonging through investing a place with meaning related to their own biographical stories and through aesthetic and ethical attachments:

It is aesthetic insofar as it was important to claim beauty, and ethical insofar as it involved making a statement that one has “put down roots”, and thereby chosen to affiliate one’s own identity with a specific location.

(Savage, 2010, p. 118)

Middle-class choice of area was a significant differentiation from others’ long term residency in that place, thereby distinguishing ‘elective belongers’ from ‘dwellers’:

Elective belonging pitches choice against history, as the migrant consumer rubs up against dwellers with historical attachments to place.

(Savage, 2010, p. 116)

Importantly, it was found that despite elective belonging requiring the convergence of habitus and social fields for those middle-class individuals, their attachment neither needed, nor necessarily embraced, a socially cohesive neighbourhood. Indeed, as long as the middle-class residents believed their place of residence was appropriate to who they understood themselves to be, and others did not intrude on their lives, their neighbours’ values, attitudes and interests were relatively unimportant (Savage, 2010, p. 118).

Paul Watt’s (2009) research on class and residence on the ‘Woodlands’ private housing development in Essex finds a rather different phenomenon to that of Savage’s elective belonging. All those interviewed for this study had moved to Woodlands from London, 86 per cent of them from East London. Woodlands was ‘... a zone of home-owning, middle-class affluence’ (Watt, 2009, pp. 2878-2879). Compared to Savage *et al.*’s (2005) elective belonging of the middle-classes in Manchester whose sense of attachment was to their broader locality and often outlying countryside, the Essex Woodlanders had a much narrower boundary to their sense of belonging, their own middle-class private estate which many thought of as an ‘oasis’ (p. 2884), and not the more working-class larger town area of which it was a part (Watt, 2010, p. 154; 2009, pp. 2888-2889). As Watt says:

Processes of sociospatial segregation occurred in such a divided neighbourhood as the Woodlanders distanced themselves symbolically and in their everyday social practices from ‘local’ people and places.

(Watt, 2009, p. 2890)

This ‘selective belonging’ Watt argues, is particular to London and the South East where prohibitive house prices force people to trade their habitus and/or fields with

their economic capital and move to the best they can afford, but not necessarily where they would ultimately choose to be (Watt, 2010, p. 155; 2009, p. 2891).

Both Savage *et al.*'s (2005) and Watt's (2009) research are potentially useful as middle-class studies for the analysis of my interviewee data from Hollybarn. The latter appears to have similarities with, but also diverges from, their studied areas. The Hollybarn neighbourhood is undoubtedly part of a more middle-class area in one of London's poorest boroughs. However unlike Watt's Woodland Estate, it is not a private estate, is not comprised of only owner-occupiers and is not exclusively middle-class. The starkest contrast with Savage *et al.* and Watt is in the ethnic mix of respondents. In the four Manchester areas studied respondents averaged 97 per cent white British and only three per cent ethnic minority (Savage *et al.*, 2005, p. 21); similarly, 85 per cent of Watt's respondents were 'White English' (Watt, 2009, p. 2878). Significantly, of my interviewees, 36 per cent identified their ethnicity as white British and 64 per cent as ethnic minority. These figures compare with the London Borough of Newham as a whole which has a white British population of about 17 per cent, with 83 per cent ethnic minority (Great Britain. ONS, 2013). Although Hollybarn is not representative of the borough's ethnic mix and has a more middle-class demographic, the figures highlight the diversity of my interviewees compared to those of Savage *et al.* and Watt.

What these figures also reflect is the phenomenally rising ethnic minority middle-class which is examined by Butler and Hamnett (2011) in their study of ethnicity, class and aspiration in East London. They describe this change as '... the most dramatic ethnic transformation of any part of Britain in the last 30 years' (2011, p. 6). Noting that East London has long been a point of arrival and site of migrant settlement, they describe Newham as a 'zone in transition' from which the more successful migrants move eastward, a relocation which for them symbolises their rising success (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, pp. 5-6; see also Hall, 2007). In particular they document the educational and environmental aspirations of many ethnic minority families and their changing social and economic status which has enabled them to escape to more middle-class outer London areas where they believe better schools and housing are to be found. Butler and Hamnett argue that East London is now an '... increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-class sub-region, segregated in new and complex ways' (2011, p. 12) where interactions of class and ethnicity are complicating '... previously separate narratives of gentrification and suburbanisation' (2011, p. 21).

In addition to ethnic minority middle-class families increasingly moving outwards, Butler and Hamnett identify a group of white middle-class professionals who desire to remain in inner London boroughs but, in the context of escalating London house prices, cannot afford such gentrified areas and are moving, in particular, to Newham (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, pp. 22-23, p. 106). While these white middle-class residents often speak very positively about the ethnic diversity of their neighbourhoods, Butler and Hamnett question the extent of actual social mixing. They cite earlier South London research of Butler's (with Robson, 2003) suggesting that diverse areas can be '... 'socially tectonic', in which different social groups slide past each other...', with the middle-classes treating others merely as 'social wallpaper' (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, p. 241; Butler with Robson, p. 92). In addition to the 'urban-seeking' professionals and increasing largely South Asian ethnic minority middle-class, Butler and Hamnett identify two other groups in a shifting 'four-way ethnic/class split'. These are the traditional white working-class who have moved further east, and African and East European migrants who are moving into houses vacated by South Asians. They note an important difference in current patterns of movement of less 'pushing out' of one group by another, and more what they call 'replacement', as people themselves move on or die (2011, p. 238). The Butler and Hamnett study is significant not only for its account of the new ethnic minority middle-class, but also for its exposition of the ethnic/class splits which complicate the correspondence of habitus and field. Such work raises the question of how any people in such a diverse area feel in harmony with their social environment and experience any sense of belonging.

Coming to Newham, coming to the street

To contextualise the interviewees' residency in the Hollybarn neighbourhood, this section outlines the reasons and circumstances of their moving there, which are subsequently discussed in view of Savage *et al.*'s (2005) and Watt's (2009) respective notions of elective and selective belonging, and Butler and Hamnett's study of Newham's incomers. At the time of interviewing my interviewees had lived in the street for anything between six months and 30 years (Appendix I). Broadly, three had been there up to 18 months, three between three and eight years, two between 11 and 13 years, and six between 20 and 30 years. Ten of the 14 women had lived in Newham before coming to the street, some in North Newham, others in different parts of the borough. The interviewees are considered in four groups, mainly according to the different circumstances of their coming to the street.

Owner-occupiers moving to and within Newham

The largest of these groups are seven owner-occupiers who had lived in the borough before moving to the street. These are Elaine, Imogen, Frederica, Mary, Monique, Peigi and Tendo. Most had moved to Newham in the 1960s and 1970s and their prime motive was seeking affordable property to buy; they came from rented rooms and flats in various parts of London. After varying lengths of time in the borough they moved to Hollybarn, primarily for larger housing.

Monique had been renting a flat in North London where by choice she would have remained had property not been so expensive. A work colleague suggested North Newham as a potential place to live and she moved there in 1990. She says of it:

North Newham [...] wasn't quite as chicken shop heavy as it is now, it was slightly more interesting, a bit down at heel and shabby but not what it's become really, and there were shops on the street that we lived on, there was, as I said, there was the post office, there was a newsagent, a fish and chip shop, there was a cobbler.

Monique's words convey both her lack of enthusiasm for the area when she first moved in and as 16 years went by, its decline. All but the newsagent had gone and by then having children, Monique perceived other changes that made it less desirable; neighbours' kids hanging round in noisy gangs, swearing and shooting air guns, behaviour she did not want her own children to get involved with, and a nearby pub was trying to extend its late night music licence. Wanting a bigger house and garden made it a good time to move, probably the best time, Monique says in retrospect, to have relocated to France. They were however reluctant to move the children from their local primary school where they were very happy, and their desire to upsize found them moving only a few minutes walk away, to the Hollybarn neighbourhood, a more attractive and quieter environment.

Elaine was living in Earls Court having relatively recently returned from Northern Rhodesia, and looking for a two bedroom ground-floor flat to buy for herself and Imogen to share. She made it very clear that location had very little influence on her choice:

... [I] tried, you know, to find something cheap enough that I could afford and it came between the place in [Newham North] and one in Hanwell in West London, and the one in Hanwell was 5000 and something pounds and the one in Newham North was 4000 and something pounds and I thought well, that difference can buy me furniture [laugh] so I should go for the one in North Newham and I did. [...] I would have liked to have got closer to the centre of London but it was obvious that I couldn't afford it [...] it could have been either east or west, north or south [laugh].

In Elaine's case it is significant that both areas she considered were areas of migrant settlement, undoubtedly because they were located some distance from the centre of London and were cheap. Not unlike Monique, after fourteen years in their first North Newham flat, Elaine and Imogen were looking to move to escape young 'hooligans' who were harassing them and throwing things at their windows. Their coming to the neighbourhood related more to the limited choices of properties facilitating wheelchair access than upsizing, but both households were leaving what had become noisier, 'rougher' parts of North Newham for the neighbourhood.

Frederica 'just sort of stayed' in Newham after learning that a 1970s mortgage on a flat in Newham would be cheaper than rent she and her husband were paying in rent for one room in Ladbroke Grove. They were wanting to start a family and as their family grew, so they moved into larger properties in the borough. Their current house is their fourth, and the second in the street. Mary, Peigi and Tendo were all incomers who had lived in smaller and cheaper properties in the area before moving to larger houses in Hollybarn as their families grew. Of this group, Tendo was the only person who moved to Newham as a teenager when she first came to Britain with family from Uganda. She remained in the area as she married and had children, and seeking a larger house, her husband put word out through a local Ugandan community through which they found their present home.

Tenants moving to and within Newham

Agnes, Angelique and Meena were all tenants in the borough prior to coming to the neighbourhood. Meena was immediately attracted to the large Hollybarn house that she privately rents with 10 other Nepalis, for its similarity to those 'at home'. As council tenants Agnes and Angelique had little choice in where they might be offered housing. Agnes was living in her husband's nearby parents' home until she was pregnant with her second child. They were eventually rehoused by Newham Council in a two-bedroom flat in a converted Hollybarn house. Angelique, having been told to leave by her father shortly after she came from the Caribbean to stay with him in Newham, spent over a year in homeless persons hostels all over London before she was offered a property. She was expecting a tower block and 'could not believe this could be mine' when she found she was being offered a one-bed flat in an old house in the Hollybarn neighbourhood with sun pouring through the large windows:

[how the house is] laid out is very similar to houses back home, where I grew up, with big you know, tended front gardens with rose bushes and, so I used to walk past there and feel, you know, whenever I had a little bit of homesickness, I would walk past there and feel a little bit of home. The only difference was that, you don't know who's living in there and the gates are always closed. Whereas at home you could go in and smell people's flowers, 'cause it was nice, you know, it was always a talking point. You talk about, 'Oh, that bush has come up really nice. I can get a cut?' And you know they'd give you a cut and you'd take it home and you would start your own rose bush.

While she extols the properties' virtues, she also pinpoints the absence of engagement from neighbours. When she married 10 years after getting the flat she and her husband bought it through the government 'Right to buy' scheme.

Other movers with little choice

Samina and Jessica both came to the street in family moves in which they expressed they had little choice. Samina went to a rented flat in Tower Hamlets when her husband opened his first business there. As the business developed he bought the Hollybarn house but, unlike other interviewees' houses, it is a small two-bedroom property, originally the service annexe of the main house to which it is attached. Samina refers to the house as being owned by her husband and suggests she had little part in the decision to buy or move to Newham.

Jessica had moved from Tower Hamlets with her family as a 10-year-old child and says she had not really wanted to leave her previous home.

Newcomer owner-occupiers to the Hollybarn neighbourhood

As artists living in a one-bed flat in Northwest London with their first baby, Julie and her husband wanted a family house with space for them each to have a studio. She had a friend in Tower Hamlets to which she was attracted but preferred Newham for its apparent better socioeconomic and cultural mix. She was also at the time working in the borough and a friend told of the Hollybarn neighbourhood.

When Sarah and her partner looked for their first jointly owned property a major priority were good transport links between daily commuting to work in Surrey and Sarah's family in Essex. They would have preferred to live in North London but the transport links were not good enough. They fell in love with the Hollybarn house but knew nothing of the area or East London generally when they moved in. Indeed

Sarah was the only one of the fourteen interviewees who had no connection with East London prior to moving to the Hollybarn neighbourhood.

Moving in and staying put

As can be seen from the above sections, the most common factor in the women moving into the street was that most of them had experience of living or working in the borough before they moved to Hollybarn. Ten of them already lived in Newham. Two others came from the neighbouring borough of Tower Hamlets. One was working in Newham, leaving only one who knew nothing of East London. The majority of the owner-occupiers cited housing costs for their choice of Newham, which has remained one of two cheapest London boroughs for housing (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, p. 75). They presumably originally bought houses in those 'mundane and mean streets' that Butler and Hamnett (2011, p. 238) say are now being 'colonised by lower professionals', before they moved to the larger houses and more agreeable environment of the Hollybarn neighbourhood.

Despite this apparent upward move in class, it is difficult to associate it with either elective belonging (Savage, 2010; Savage *et al.*, 2005) or selective belonging (Watt, 2010, 2009). There is little evidence in their 'arrival stories' (Savage, 2010, p. 125; Savage *et al.*, 2005, pp. 90-93) to suggest they were determinedly seeking middle-class belonging or felt any great aesthetic connection to the neighbourhood or its surrounding landscape. Angelique is the only person who could be described as 'waxing lyrical' (Savage, 2010, p. 117; Savage *et al.*, 2005, p. 101) but her enthusiasm was very much about the style of neighbourhood housing than it was optimism of the area generally. Importantly, Angelique was one of the few women *not* choosing the property, as she was being rehoused by the local authority. Indeed, most of the owner-occupier reasons given for coming to the street were functional (Savage, 2010, p. 116; Savage *et al.*, 2005, p. 88), relating mostly to the size of properties and good transport links rather than particular desirable lifestyle.

It is evident that many of these women accord with the trend identified in recent research of people moving to Newham for cheap housing and subsequently moving on to more middle-class areas (Butler and Hamnett 2011, p. 106). (In addition, that three migrant women, Angelique, Meena and Tendo all arrived in Newham from their countries of origin, also gives credence to the argument of East London as 'an immigrant reception area' (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, p. 66)). My interviewees reflect much more the ethnic/class mix found by Butler and Hamnett than the predominantly white middle-class professionals of Savage and Watt.

However, distinguishable from the Butler and Hamnett findings is that both the white and ethnic minority middle-class interviewees have not moved up and out, but have remained within this very diverse and mostly poor borough. They are neither suburbanites moving to East London's outer regions, nor white middle-class gentrifiers of inner London (Butler and Hamnett 2011, pp. 234-241) and a number of them came to Newham long before gentrification took hold in many parts of London. As Hall (2007) notes of the area, there are some:

... truly grand mid-Victorian villas [...] And the gentrifiers are clearly at work here – though evidently, the majority of them are Indian professional business people, who seem to have discovered the area before anyone else.

(Hall, 2007, p. 87)

The large presence of a South Asian middle-class makes this area very different to the London areas of gentrification discussed by Butler with Robson (2003). Telegraph Hill in particular is discussed as 'a middle-class enclave' with a 'hegemonic narrative of belonging', of which neither description could be applied to Hollybarn (Butler with Robson, 2003, p.189). Perhaps Hollybarn is an anomaly but it attracts a mix of people both in class and ethnicity, and does appear to offer an alternative to those who desire to progress, to stay within the same area.⁷² While there may be truth in there generally being little ethnic interaction (see p. 54, footnote 21) it is debatable whether my white middle-class professional interviewees are disinterested in diversity (Butler and Hamnett 2011, p. 241) for as Hall argues about Newham gentrifiers:

...theirs is a world apart from the classic, high-earning professional colonisation of more desirable areas such as Battersea and Bankside. Of course many now-fashionable London areas were like this once. But Newham still bears a much heavier imprint of its working-class history; its physical environment, facilities and infrastructure recall the area London forgot. [...] The area is mixed socially and ethnically.

(Hall, 2007, p. 125)

Indeed, I would argue that this desire to remain is strongly connected to the fact that most of these women have a background of migrancy and/or living within diversity. Additionally, not all the owner-occupiers are professionals, and of seven professionals, six fit this migrancy/diversity premise.

The analysis of the women's reasons for moving to the neighbourhood has very clearly demonstrated rather pragmatic, functional attitudes to the neighbourhood itself, and mixed, often ambivalent feelings about the wider area. All three women

⁷² As Butler and Hamnett say of Newham in general, there is no doubt that there are many people from ethnic minority middle-classes living in the neighbourhood, and particularly South Asians, but as discussed previously (p. 62), few were inclined to participate in recorded interviews with me.

who came to the neighbourhood as tenants were delighted to have been offered properties in the neighbourhood, beyond their expectations given their lack of real choice and the general style of available housing in the borough. Most of the women who bought their homes expressed their liking of the neighbourhood with regard to its appearance, its flora and its properties, and this clearly fulfils their desire for larger housing in an attractive setting. However, this fulfilment does not appear to extend to achieving the belonging of middle-class habitus described by Savage *et al.* as:

... a socially constructed, embedded process in which people reflexively judge the suitability of a given site as appropriate given their social trajectory and their position in other fields.

(Savage *et al.*, 2005, pp. 11-12)

It seems clear that the area of the Hollybarn neighbourhood does not fulfil the promise of its middle-class housing, nor is it an area in which most of these women are highly invested, or to which they could claim a particular sense of belonging (Savage, 2010, pp. 117-118). Indeed, as many of the interviewees had lived in the borough for some time before they upgraded their lives into this predominantly middle-class housing, they did so knowingly, making aesthetic choices regarding the properties, but with awareness that the area was unlikely to meet other middle-class desires. Monique and Elaine did speak of the neighbourhood itself being more desirable than their former North Newham homes, but they were moving within the same locality. With brief reference to Watt's (2009) study, it is difficult to associate these women with the mostly white selective belongers of whom he speaks, as this neighbourhood, which is not all private housing, is home to a great variety of people of differing statuses and ethnicities, and is evidently not a refuge for the white middle-classes trying to escape others.

A question of class impact

Savage *et al.* have said: 'One's residence is a crucial, possibly the crucial, identifier of who you are' (Savage, 2005, p. 207), yet on being asked a direct question of how class impacted on the women's belonging, most made no connection at all between their class and where they live. The very obvious fact that the Hollybarn properties are larger, leafier, and costlier than the Victorian terraces surrounding them was not an issue that was expressed other than by Jessica, a young woman and the only one who grew up in the neighbourhood. Julie, Imogen and Monique were the only others who related the area to the issue of class, a point that will be discussed later. In retrospect it must be considered whether the question asked (Appendix VII) could have been differently worded to elicit more comprehensive

responses. Those given generally concerned working-, middle- and upper-class divisions, and related class to economic capital, rather than to any broader notion including social and cultural capitals such as, in academia at least, is more often discussed, and indeed informed the recent *Great British Class Survey* (Savage et al., 2013) which differentiates seven categories.

Middle-class habitus

The lack of facilities and range of shops on the high street was a theme voiced by some women but rarely in class terms. The absence of a quality café or a coffee shop was a detail specifically mentioned by five women, some of them mothers of young children who longed for a social meeting space on the high street. The dearth of culinary choices in the plentiful local restaurants was also raised by a number of the women but Julie was the only person who discussed such matters overtly in terms of class:

... the general environment is so working-class. It's got very few middle-class facilities. And I think that's the problem really. Or cultural facilities. Or social facilities. Not just for me but say, for one's kids. [...] There's just nowhere to eat round here and I think that's a real cultural deficit. I think places to eat, places to drink, places to hang out are very much part of friends and community and that's what I think is appalling around here.

Julie's choice of words are interesting for someone who, as she says, enjoys and often eats South Asian food. Her concern is clearly not the lack of eating places, but that there is little choice available in an area whose population is so mixed in both ethnicity and class. What is most significant here, if no surprise, is that all the women who voiced these concerns are white or mixed-heritage professionals, and would be deemed middle-class. As Julie says of herself, while her 'deep identity' is working-class, her lived life is middle-class. None of the migrant women talked about a lack of coffee shops or local facilities but it would be simplistic to imagine this meant they were any less middle-class; indeed, as Hollybarn house owners their economic capital suggests they would be middle-class. But it would be mistaken to assume the existence of one homogeneous middle-class habitus. A more useful approach would be to speak of diverse middle-classes whose social and cultural backgrounds engender divergent notions of middle-class pursuits. As has been made clear, there are many South Asian Hollybarn residents who would be considered middle-class but no doubt have a different habitus from white British women. As Julie commented with regard to her adult offspring, there are few places locally where young people can hang out, or pubs left to go to, but '... where do pubs fit in if you've got an Asian community that doesn't drink much'. Thus a lack of lifestyle attributes appears to deny some level of belonging for a white British (born)

middle-class, but the range of foods and spices available to buy, and enjoy in restaurants, is perhaps a very appealing draw to migrant middle-classes.

Sarah talked at length about the lack of facilities in the area 'for people like her' yet rebuffed any connection to class which she believed had little meaning beyond some people wanting to categorise others. Stating that class was really not something she had ever thought about, in response to my asking how she would describe herself she said, 'Probably white, middle-class':

N: So when you've said quite, very clearly, that there's nothing for you here, you don't think that's a class issue?

S: I don't know, I haven't thought of it as a class issue, no. No, I haven't actually, But I don't know if it is or not.

N: What do you think of it as? Does it occur to you as anything in particular?

S: It just occurs to me that somebody is missing a trick because there's a whole lot of people here, a whole lot of people, that would like some more facilities, locally and somebody could make quite a lot of money-

The dialogue above illustrates a common reality amongst the interviewees not thinking or talking about themselves or their belonging in terms of class. However Sarah's attitude is particularly significant as she expresses more than most about the area's lack, including the inadequacy of shops, cafés and dearth of books in the library. Above all, it reflects her family's decision to leave North Newham, which they did shortly after the interview.⁷³ For financial reasons she said the family wanted to downsize from their very large home but it is difficult not to see a class-related association, as the choice of area she moved to resonates closely with Savage et al's (2005) notion of middle-class habitus and elective belonging. Though geographically she has not gone far, the new home is in an area which to a much greater degree meets her desired habitus. It is nearer her church, has a very well-stocked library, boasts cafés, restaurants and bars, a variety of shops, children's play area, and the nursery her son had recently joined. It clearly has the quality and facilities that she found lacking in North Newham. Sarah's decision to move home highlights a firm marker between herself and other white middle-class women choosing to remain in North Newham.

Education, class and belonging

As the only interviewee who spent later childhood years growing up in the neighbourhood, 23 year-old Jessica speaks of class difference with an awareness

⁷³ The interviewing actually took place over a period of time, the latter part after she had moved.

not shown by most of the others, though she simultaneously appears unaware of some of the contradictions she conveys. She remembers first becoming conscious of differences when she joined a Stratford youth club:

It was like more working-class kids that went there. [...] most of the kids there lived in like the estates around Stratford and Plaistow and stuff, and going to their house and like not really wanting to bring them back 'cause I was embarrassed because our house was so big and, of, you know like, even one of my friends at school, she had six sisters and lived in a smaller house than we have. And I just, I found it a bit embarrassing.

She recalls feeling the need to explain to her friends that her parents were only able to buy their first house because it was run down and cheap, which in turn enabled them to buy the current house. Her embarrassment is manifest and when she talks about the youth organisation she joined in North Newham the inconsistencies are intriguing. Despite describing it as 'a bit of a weird cult' and 'a youth club for middle-class people' whose ethos did not sit particularly well with her, she not only made a number of local friends in the organisation, it was, she said, also where she met her best friend, 'who's still my best friend today'. Unlike friends she made at her predominantly Asian school who were not allowed to socialise with her outside school, these were friends she could and did spend time with at weekends, who she says were 'white, middle-class'.⁷⁴ In needing premises that were wheelchair accessible, Jessica did not attend a local school. The circumstances and ambivalences in Jessica's story offer some insight into growing up in the ethnic/class mix of the locality, and suggest very real complications in experiencing a sense of belonging.

It is perhaps appropriate at this point to note that no specific question on education was asked of my interviewees though it was a topic talked about in all the interviews. With regard to class and ethnicity, the complex, often fraught and sometimes divisive issue of education in East London is without doubt immensely important and is a main focus of the Butler and Hamnett (2011) study.⁷⁵ However, my research focus is the sense of belonging experienced by my interviewees, rather than their children about whom much of the education talk revolved. Indeed, the subject of their children not being able to mix with South Asian friends out of school was a common point brought up by a number of the women. However, both Frederica and Julie also made reference to their diminished sense of belonging locally when their children were older; none of their children went to local

74 Other women spoke of their children not able to maintain friendships, particularly with South Asian girls, out of school.

75 As a middle-class mother of children who attended an East End comprehensive school it is also a subject of great personal interest.

secondary schools. Acknowledging that parents' everyday connections with and through their children's schooling generally decrease at secondary level, it could be of value to explore how educational decisions affect belonging, both for children and their parents, particularly with respect to the differing social, cultural and economic capitals parents may have access to. In what ways might family members' belonging be affected by children being at local or more distant schools, and/or at different types of school? At the age of 23 years Jessica commented that she felt more belonging to the area she had lived until she was 10 years old and where she attended primary school within walking distance from her home, than to the Hollybarn neighbourhood where she has lived 13 years but attended secondary school some miles distant, in her case because she needed wheelchair accessible premises.

Class diversity in the Hollybarn neighbourhood

As explained previously, Hollybarn is home to disparate forms of tenure; private rental, social housing and owner-occupiers. Although there are figures for the borough as a whole (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, pp. 72-78), it has not been possible to establish the ratio of owner-occupiers and tenants living in the street and it is therefore impossible to know whether the ratio of interviewee tenants and owners reflects the street and neighbourhood generally. At the point of their moving to the street three of the interviewees were tenants, two local authority and one private. A dominant concern for Agnes throughout the 11 years in her two-bedroom council flat was to buy her own home. Explaining that home ownership was the norm where she grew up in Poland and, she believed, was central to her sense of belonging, she said:

... I am so desperate to own my own place. We didn't pay attention to, to get bigger place from, from council because actually I am so, so pushy, 'Let's go and get our own place'. It is important for me because that's what .. I was used to. You've got your own house.

As Nava notes of her own experience:

A house, in the absence of a sense of national belonging, becomes the material means by which we try to connect to place, stability, the local.

(Nava, 2007, p. 143)

Agnes' dream to buy remains a dream since she learned they could not even afford to buy their discounted, small council flat which they were offered under the Right to Buy scheme.

Angelique, at the suggestion of her husband-to-be, took out a mortgage to jointly buy the council flat she had already lived in for 12 years. Unable to afford the mortgage 10 years later when her husband left the family home, as a single parent with health problems, she is attempting to revert her ownership back to council tenancy. Meena rents her home from the owner who lives elsewhere in the neighbourhood. She has no idea how long she may be living in the house. Clearly these women do not have as much power and control over how and where they live as do owner-occupiers, which, it could be expected, affects the sense of belonging they experience, though they do not articulate it. Apart from Agnes none of the interviewees talk about belonging in terms of tenure and indeed none commented on class differences relating to housing within the neighbourhood.

It is significant that three women comment that class difference is not generally apparent in the street, which they believe is attributable to class being subsumed within the ethnic diversity of the area. In reflecting on her own working-/middle-class affiliation, Julie suggests:

You know, I think if you had a very erm .. if you had a sort of very, sort of mono culture you might be able to work out where you were in terms of class, but I think when you've got a very diverse society it's quite hard to work out where you are in terms of class. And what the signifiers of class are.

And responding to the question of whether class impacts on their belonging Imogen says:

In East London I think not. The mix of people here is so good and so varied, that we don't notice here do we. Erm . I have noticed it elsewhere though.

Monique observes:

I don't know that it does around here particularly. I think, it's, it's a kind of a bit of a melting pot around here ...

These women's understanding of a changing and more complex class/ethnic mix in the neighbourhood accords with the notion that East London is '... an increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-class sub-region ...', requiring new conceptualisations of class and community (Butler and Hamnett, 2011, p. 12).

Place belonging

Social construction of place

Recent research on belonging and place in urban settings specifically focuses on class (for example, Benson and Jackson, 2012; Savage, 2010; Rogaly and Taylor, 2009; Watt, 2009; Savage *et al.*, 2005). Of course I too am considering class in relation to place but I would question the notion that all attachment to place be understood through class alone. Forms of belonging are no more determined by class than they are by any other social locations. These studies also focused on particular classes of people, largely people of the same ethnicity. My place of research, in contrast, was chosen specifically for its multi-ethnic/class mix (Butler and Hamnett, 2011), and highlights the 'throwntogetherness' of place of which Massey speaks (2005, p. 151) in which people find themselves thrown into close proximity with a variety of 'others'. No doubt my street is not the most typical of Britain, but in London, and particularly Newham, its variety is an increasing norm (Butler and Hamnett, 2011).

Just as community cannot necessarily be fixed to place, neither should place itself be considered an essentialised bounded entity. Indeed every place has to be understood through and within its relationship with other places:

Instead then of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings...

(Massey, 1994, p. 154)

This approach insists on the acknowledgement of the social nature and social construction of place and all that is experienced within its fluid boundaries, as place cannot be reduced to a dissociated or discrete entity. My research studies the lives of residents of one street but their lives do not exist and cannot be understood purely within that street. The street is part of the Hollybarn neighbourhood, which is part of North Newham, which is in the borough of Newham, in East London, etc. Restricting people's lives to a discrete place restricts making sense of the lives they are living and certainly would not enable a study of subjective belonging. To ask the question, do you belong here? (whatever 'here' represents) can only be met with comparably limiting answers. A more three dimensional portrayal can be elicited by asking how people belong and analysing their narrative responses through the intersecting physical and social locations.

Massey's (1994, 2005) conception of place also emphasises its multiplicity:

If it is now recognized that people have multiple identities then the same point can be made in relation to places. Moreover, such multiple identities can either be a source of richness or a source of conflict, or both.

(Massey, 1994, p. 153)

She presents examples of Kilburn and Hackney as vibrant, diverse places where the varieties of ethnic foods, entertainments, politics jostle for attention on the streets, where people share and dispute ideas and beliefs going about their lives in multiple ways; separately, in harmony, and in hostility. As she says, 'Hackney *is* Hackney only because of the coexistence of all those different interpretations of what it is and what it might be' (Massey, 1994, p. 138, emphasis in original). Her statement that, 'Localities will 'contain' (indeed in part will be *constituted by*) difference and conflict' (Massey, 1994, p. 139, emphasis in original) is emphatically illustrated by the Hollybarn neighbourhood itself. As a designated conservation area aiming to protect what is deemed an interesting example of Victorian residential development, it becomes a site of conflict of beliefs and claims for habitus and belonging. Bye-laws restricting renovation to that expressly in keeping with the original design of the houses, are disregarded, either unknowingly or by intention, by some residents who have chosen, for example, to replace window glass with that incorporating Islamic designs. In acknowledging the 'becoming' of place rather than demanding stasis in its 'being' (Massey, 1994, p. 119), a cultural clash could potentially be avoided by part of the neighbourhood being allowed to be altered, with part left intact, but thereby also potentially establishing an explicit cultural divide which currently does not exist. That people should wish to stake a physical claim of belonging within the fabric of their homes is neither new nor surprising, but it highlights how history, heritage, migration and settlement are played out in the street contestation of belonging to place.

The richness of diversity may be something people are comfortable living within, and even enjoy, but the question remains, does comfortable translate as belonging? I have proposed that belonging is an emotional attachment that must have performative elements. In relation to place, belonging is not the attachment to an essential form of place, but a performative engagement in the everyday practices of social relations that constitute place. In those terms, I would argue it is possible for people to feel comfortable in diversity, without necessarily feeling a sense of belonging. In a very recent study bringing together the notions of belonging, place and performativity, Benson and Jackson (2012) state that unlike other research, they will show how belonging to place is performative. However, in the section discussing Peckham their paper is not explicit about how spatial practices are being performed in inner London to create belonging. They mention in

brackets '(shopping, renovating a house)', and a reference to 'place-making' practices of a campaign to restore Victorian shopfronts. My analysis will attempt to draw out more detail of performative everyday practices, which I argue, are crucial to place belonging.

Relationship and belonging in the locality

In wishing to understand what, if any, sense of belonging the women have to the area, it was important that they first gave thought to how they relate to it. Asking apropos of nothing whether they had a sense of belonging to the area would likely be met with little consideration and yes/no answers. Asking them first to reflect on their thoughts and feelings to the area would hopefully induce more forthcoming responses. For this reason they were first asked to describe their relationship to the local area and only subsequently what sense of belonging they felt (Appendix VII). Their more detailed responses to these questions can be found in Appendix VIII.

Analysis of the women's responses to the questions presents some of the elaborate intricacies of belonging. It is perhaps important to point out first that nobody responds with an indisputable, 'yes', they have a clear sense of belonging to the area.⁷⁶ Samina is categoric, she has never thought about belonging, and this resonates with an earlier interpretation of her having 'assumed belonging' (see Chapter 3, p. 103). Peigi and Meena, having been in the street only a few months, feel it is too early for them to have any sense of belonging, though in fact Peigi had lived only a mile away for the past seven years. Tendo, Jessica and Julie give clear negatives, they have no sense of belonging to the locality; they had been resident respectively for three, 13 and 26 years. Given the range in periods, time does not appear to be a paramount factor in how belonging is experienced. The most striking aspect in the women's responses is ambivalence, and within a general feeling of ambivalence there are five distinct variations.

The 'little ambivalent' are Elaine and Mary (26 and 30 years in the street) whose responses are a limited 'yes'.

Elaine:

.... I suppose a bit now, yes. I don't think you can live in a place for 26 years without feeling that when you come into the street, you're coming home [laugh].

⁷⁶ The women were asked either about their sense of belonging 'here', or, 'to the area', after they have been talking about their relationship to the area.

Mary:

'It's not necessarily somewhere we PARTICULARLY love but it's convenient [...]'.
[...]

With her 'yes and no', Angelique could be said to be 'simply ambivalent'. She says:

[sigh] Phw. . Yes and no. I think I know more shopkeepers than I know residents. .. That's bad. [...] I feel I bel, I Do I belong here. I feel comfortable here. I feel the familiarity keeps me . safe.

The other five women are reflective in answering but in widely assorted ways. With their starting point of 'No, no', Agnes and Sarah both begin quite definitely denying any sense of belonging but are taken over by their own reflectivity, concluding that they do indeed have some sense of belonging.

Agnes:

. Not, not to this area. Er no. . No I mean, it's again hard question. Yes I do because I've got everything around. Schools, church and erm . a place where I live. My home is here.

Sarah:

N: Would you say that you belonged here?

S: No. No.

N: That was very definite. Why is that?

S: Erm . well we thought we would ... and . erm ... [whispered] do I belong here? In some sets of people I think we do belong here.

N: Tell me about what you meant, you thought you would belong.

S: We thought ... well we thought that . erm, well there isn't really anything on the high street for us, I think that's probably the thing that makes us feel the most that we don't really belong here. I mean I said no quite quickly then but, I suppose yes in a way that, I do feel at home.

Frederica and Imogen are very self-questioning, doubtful that on a deep level they could ever be sure of their belonging.

Frederica:

..... In some senses, in the way of life, in the way that there are plenty of restaurants, in the way that there are markets, because that is what I KNOW from growing up. In that . very loose sense . yes meaning I like that kind of life and I like living here for that reason, but as to, do I really belong here? What is there to make me belong here, I don't know.

Imogen:

Erm ... I don't know, because of my background, am I ever going to feel I belong anywhere? I . I don't know. ... Erm, it's hard to say.

Monique oscillates back and forth in her evaluation of her belonging, between no 'in her heart', 'I guess I must', 'I resist belonging', 'I don't think I do', 'I don't want to', 'maybe I do', a remarkable vacillation accentuating her conflicting beliefs and desires:

Erm in my heart no, but obviously I've lived here for 20 years so I guess I must in some way. But I think I resist belonging here. It's not where I want to be .. erm .. [...] I don't think I do, I don't want to belong here but maybe I do. Maybe I'm just kidding myself.

The contradictory feelings and ideas that the women express about their sense of belonging are matched by the complicating interpretations of place they convey. When Tendo for example says she has no sense of belonging to the area, she is referring to the locality of the street, and her important connections a few neighbourhoods south of here are not included in 'this area'. In contrast, Imogen means by 'here', Newham as a whole. Indeed, the different meanings of place for the women can be mapped as concentric circles, starting with the nucleus of the street, widening to the Hollybarn neighbourhood as mentioned by Monique, and further to the main roads bordering the neighbourhood, of whose shops and businesses Angelique speaks. Farther still are the Green Street restaurants and markets offering the food in which Frederica finds some sense of belonging, and the political ward demarcations that both bound and bind Mary's sense of belonging. For Elaine and Imogen belonging locally is bordered by borough boundaries, while Jessica and Julie experience their commitment and belonging to a much broader sense of 'East London'. Such an amalgam of understandings is a pertinent example of Massey's argument that places cannot be defined within fixed boundaries but must be understood as intersecting networks which create different meanings for different people (Massey, 1994, pp. 152-154).

In exploring the women's relationship and belonging to the area, however the women may define that area, it is apparent that they typically talk about place in terms of social relationships, whether it is those they engage in, or those which they feel are lacking. Place is expressed as meaningful for the women through the connections they have with others in situations such as school, church, work, and indeed dog walking. When the women do mention specific geographical spaces such as the street or neighbourhood being pleasant or attractive, there is little suggestion that such positive feelings amount to any deep sense of belonging. As

Massey emphatically argues, it is not place per se but the varying networks through which people of a place interact that produce meaning in and of place (Massey, 1994, pp. 154-155). Significantly, it is the performance of relationships in the women's ordinary day-to-day life that appears to be meaningful in developing any sense of belonging that they feel to place.

Using examples from the women's stories the following section will present some aspects of the women's lives which inhibit their belonging to place, and others that positively promote or enable a sense of belonging. Place as discussed in this section generally relates to the street, the neighbourhood and the nearby locality.

Inhibitors to belonging to place

It is markedly evident that while some women do have friends and acquaintances within the surrounding locality, few of them know many others living in the street itself. The main inhibitors they suggest to knowing others and having a greater sense of belonging to where they live, are cars and architecture, lack of social spaces and for a few, a downmarket high street. Length of time living here does not appear to be a major factor.

Neighbours and cars

After 20 years living in the street Angelique, who in the last 10 years has made an effort to involve herself in local activities and organisations, suggests that any sense of belonging she has locally is partial because she has not got to know her neighbours:

They come out, they park their car, they come out of the car, they get in the house. They don't, they're not on the street. .. People, people here are always behind their doors. .. Nobody comes out to talk. . there's not, there's no sense of, there's no REAL sense of community, there's no spirit of helping each other. .

Also a resident of 20 years, Frederica knows few residents, most of whom are strangers to her, a feeling echoed by many of the women who seldom know anyone apart from immediate neighbours and even these connections are rarely more than a level of neighbourly greeting. Hall (2007) found an 'informal system of mutual aid' between neighbours in his research which did not extend to friendship (Hall, 2007, pp. 351-353). A few of the women in the street said they would be able to call on someone in an emergency but the lack of connection was a concern for others. Meena and Tendo particularly felt being able to help and be helped by

others was an important element of being a neighbour, but one that was decidedly absent. Tendo has lived in the street three years and says:

I belong in this street because I live in it, that's about it, AND, because now, I know YOU and I know [one immediate neighbour] and that's about it really, yeah. The people opposite me we just managed to fight over the parking space and that, is not good, [laugh] yeah.

Vehicles clearly feature as three-way inhibitors to meeting others: for safety reasons children are not allowed to play on the street, as instigators of bad feeling where parking is at a premium, and in reducing the chance of casual street encounters. As Imogen identifies, car use is a cause of detachment:

It's a great isolator really isn't it, you jump in your car, off you go. You're not, you're not talking over garden walls and fences to people.

Architecture

Such distancing is not only produced by cars but also pertains to the very architecture of the street. Specifically built as upmarket homes for the middle-classes, these are not the small, compact Victorian terraces whose front doors virtually open onto the street, but somewhat imposing houses flaunting large front gardens; houses with inbuilt separators keeping passers-by at bay and the inhabitants anonymous, sometimes quite hidden behind their shrubbery turrets.

Having recently moved in, Peigi is very conscious of how house style alters how she lives:

... our last house it was a kind of Victorian terraced house, erm and a very small front garden, and basically erm, you could see your neighbours on both sides and across the road. It was very close. Whereas here, because the houses are so, I mean, across the street seems much further away. And the houses are so big and wide that you, and also we, in this house there's a lot of privacy in the hedges that you don't really see what's going on, or don't hear what's going on.

Frederica recalls her previous Newham home and the smaller, more street-accessible terraces, where she developed good relationships with others, one of whom became a 'grandmother' to her children. In *The language of space* Lawson (2001) discusses how architecture mediates peoples' relationships, noting that, 'Space is both that which brings us together and simultaneously that which separates us from each other' (Lawson, 2001, p. 6) This street creates neighbours of us but does not necessarily provide the opportunities for us to connect.

Social spaces and shopping

There can be little doubt that space and cars impact on how people live, and the lack of social spaces is another crucial factor mentioned by a number of the women. Neither this street nor its surrounding area appear to create the associations and meanings that Crouch (1998) describes, presumably because it does not have such parks, empty spaces, shops, allotments or areas where young people might hang out. It does not appear to be a street that embodies any ‘... shared purpose and participation [or] meaning that transforms the materiality of the space itself’ (Crouch, 1998, p. 167). Indeed it is a long street of houses leading to a high street of little attraction. A proliferation of chicken and betting shops and the lack of quality provision regarding the library and food stores combine to discourage a number of the women from lingering there. The lack of social spaces within walking distance is also identified as an obstacle to meeting others and developing a sense of belonging. Mothers with young children speak of the non-existence of playgrounds, places not only for children to play but for parents to meet friends and make new acquaintances. A few women mention the lack of a desirable cafe or coffee shop offering other than a traditional fry-up, or any casual cultural spaces where people might meet. Eating out is a social activity that most of the women engage in, some if only occasionally, but there is little to entice them to eat in the immediate locality. Nearby Green Street is a food destination for some, both for shopping and eating, others go further afield to Stratford and beyond. However, only Sarah consistently performs much of her everyday life elsewhere: while she loves her house and takes her son to local baby and toddler activities, she shops, eats out, socialises, attends church and has selected a school beyond Newham’s boundaries.

Enablers of belonging to place

As probably *the* performative activity that epitomises the everyday, food must be included in considering belonging to place. However, in addition to the brief mention of food and social eating in the previous section, food and belonging were discussed in depth in Chapter 5 with regard to ethnicity and living in East London, and for that reason will not be explored again here. Analysis of the women’s stories suggests that the other most germane everyday performative belonging to place is achieved through motherhood.⁷⁷ Being a mother of young children appears to open a measure of activities and connections simply not available through other means.

⁷⁷ This is not to suggest that it would not apply to fathers of young children, only that these interviewees are women.

Active churchgoing is another important enabler to belonging to place, as are organisations closely allied to the women's beliefs, and being a regular dog walker appears to offer openings to social connection in a way that other activities do not. This section will first depict how the women's sense of belonging to place is differently influenced by social connections developed in the context of their children's lives. Ten of the 14 interviewees are mothers; Agnes, Angelique, Frederica, Julie, Mary, Monique, Peigi, Samina, Sarah and Tendo. Their experiences will be used to highlight how motherhood functions as a principal feature in belonging to place, mediated by varying social locations.

Motherhood

Greider suggests, children '... are a cementing agent for the small world [...] They bring their elders into contact' (Greider, 2011, p. 134) and many of the mothers relate how their connections with others increased substantially once they had children. Angelique declares that she met more people locally in the two years since she had her son than in the previous 20 years all together. Just walking in the streets with a baby or toddler in a buggy opens up conversations that would never happen for her as an adult alone. Sarah found that when she had her son her circle of people in the area 'absolutely ballooned', meeting 'a whole new network of people going through the same thing as I was going through at the same time'. Peigi and Samina found the same, with the latter finding the school gate an opportunity to meet people who she would otherwise not come across, and with whom she could chat and sometimes go for a coffee, shopping or talk on Facebook. Monique clearly demarcates the nature of her changing relationships:

... before we had the children we really didn't know very many people in the area at all. So our friendships were based on people we knew through work who we'd been friends with for a long time beforehand. But that has changed to having friends locally as the children have gone to school basically.

Monique and Sarah also contemplate that these relationships will change as their children get older, and may not remain. This feeling of theirs is affirmed by Julie, whose children are now adult, in her observation that although she maintains some local friendships made when her children were very young, the sense of belonging to place alters with time and circumstance:

I felt very much part of the community when my kids were at school. And I don't feel part of the community really any more.

Hall (2007) notes that having children of school age creates social bonding at the school gates which diminishes as children move on (Hall, 2007, p. 360).

Like other mothers, Agnes also made friends when her children were very young, however she has very much remained in a Polish environment as she met her Newham friends through the Polish church they all attended further east, beyond the borough boundaries. Through these friends who had older children, she learned of local Catholic schools attached to a North Newham church which her children then attended. She would not now want to leave the area because the:

... children have friends, they have good schools, I'm so happy with the schools. They have friends in the schools, they are very attached to this place and that's what makes me feel, really, er, it's very important for me to stay here, er this area.

Her own sense of belonging to *this place* is circumscribed not only by her children's attachments but also by its continuing Polish/Catholic dimension. The attachment to place through motherhood relationships that Agnes in particular so clearly portrays was also found by Fenster who says, 'Several women [she] interviewed said that they felt much more attached to their environment after they became mothers (Fenster, 2004, p. 244).

The significance of the relationship of motherhood with belonging and place can be understood further through examples of those interviewees whose children do not attend school within the local catchment area. As described above, Frederica feels little belonging after 20 years in this street but she did experience good social relationships with others in her previous Newham home, a street of small terraced housing. There, her children were also in primary school until, in concern for her son's particular needs, she moved them out of borough to a school where they remained when the family moved to this street. Here, not living near the children's school, she has not developed relationships as other mothers have and she reflects somewhat ruefully that her children did not make local friends:

... I had to drive them to school, I had to pick them up, and those school friends lived all over the place. So it was quite hard for them to socialise. If they went out to visit anybody they had to be driven there and picked up. So they didn't, so I've robbed THEM too of this sense of, you know, local belonging if you like.

It cannot be categorically stated that Frederica's sense of belonging locally would have been different had her children been to school here but her earlier experience elsewhere suggests it may have been.

Organisations and belief

The connecting links of social relations, place and belonging are apparent in exploring the women's religious or other involvements. However a notable difference their stories reveal is that place has far less importance in faith belonging, than other organisational belonging. A number of women spoke of their faith being very important to them, some of whom, including Christian, Hindu and Muslim believers, practised their faith personally at home with their families, sometimes attending services and festivals, while four regularly attended (in their cases) church as part of their weekly activities. For these four women their regular participation in the church was clearly linked to their social relationships with others, and specifically relevant to their chosen style of worship, indeed more so than a need for that place of worship to be local to where they lived. For Agnes, discovering a regular Polish mass in a church close to home which linked to local schools, and for which she left her more distant Polish church, was pivotal to her sense of local belonging. As noted above, it was specifically the local elements of school, church and home that provided a belonging for her. But as with Agnes, the pertinence of the style of worship and being with like-minded others took precedence over locality for all the women, and none of the others attended church within their immediate locality. For Tendo, schooling, friends and faith are intrinsically linked and all still centred where she used to live. What 'united' her with those she describes as 'solid friends' was taking their children to school, and they too, 'happen to be believers':

The friends I have in my life, I look at them and, I did not really go out and seek the people I have in my life, and they happen to be people that I need in my life and they SOMEHOW, they seem just to have been there, but because I have faith in God, I say God put them there for me, and more or less that's erm everyday life for me, really, yeah, erm faith in God.

Church is important insofar as its teaching of the bible is meaningful to her, regardless of denomination, and this she found close to her former home. Thus for Tendo, as much as she has shown she desires some sense of belonging where she now lives, retaining the belonging she already has through her faith and friends is paramount. For Jessica too, being with people who have similar beliefs and practices is of greatest importance to her. As a student living both at home in Hollybarn and in elsewhere at university, Jessica attends two churches, one Pentecostal, one Baptist, neither of which are chosen for their location or denomination but for the people she meets there and, as with Tendo, the particular interpretation of faith, and for these reasons her church 'at home' is one in a neighbouring borough suggested to her by friends. Sarah reflects that while her beliefs and faith have always been with her, her finding a belonging in church (also

just outside Newham) is more recent since a friend introduced her to one that meets her demands of it being neither narrow-minded nor bigoted in its teaching. Its importance to her has increased over the years and it has become 'like a kind of family'. That people do not necessarily find belonging in local churches was also underlined by the vicar of one of the neighbourhood churches who told me that of the 9,000 people in the parish, only six were church members. The congregation was predominantly people originating from Africa and the Caribbean who live in other London boroughs.

However for Mary, Elaine and Imogen who have had significant involvement in organisations other than the church, their activities are specific to the locality. For example, Mary has been active in local party politics for some 40 years; she found her second local home through her ward-based electoral leafleting, politically like-minded friends made at her adult daughter's primary school gates are still friends, and she says the party is her community. Her attachment and sense of belonging to place is indisputably informed by her local political involvement. It is similarly evident that Imogen's and Elaine's long established voluntary involvement in Newham's disability organisations is the central feature of their belonging to place. Becoming involved in activities was largely due to Imogen's concern some 30 or more years ago that they had few connections:

And so that's why I started joining groups 'cause I thought, 'God, you know, we're going to go on in this strange little BUBBLE not knowing many people, and once you join groups you do start to know, know many more people.

They have in the intervening years been involved with a number of disparate organisations but their Newham-wide voluntary work in disability campaigns, projects and on local authority panels has been fundamental. As Imogen explains:

One reason it's changed a lot in Newham is the, the, the improvement of access. I used to be kind of the only disabled person I saw when I went out and I felt very . obvious, but now you don't, you go out and there are LOTS of people out in wheelchairs or in scooters and I think just changing the fabric of Newham, making it more accessible, has enabled that, and that, that does give me a sense of achievement and belonging because I think, well, I was part of making it more accessible.

As suggested, both faith-based belonging and other organisational belonging involve significant social connection and demand meaningful performative engagement. They differ however in respect of place; faith primarily requires a personally befitting style of worship, whereas other forms of involvement are more directly related to the geographical area to which they pertained.

Dogs

Sarah is the only one of the 14 interviewees with a dog but her experience demonstrates that dog walking can be instrumental in the formation of social connections which, as Massey (1994) argues and is shown in previous sections, are fundamental to place and belonging. Sarah herself brought dogs into the interview:

S: Having a dog makes me feel as though I belong as well [laugh].

N: Oh, go on, talk about that.

S: No, no, no. It's just, no, no, no-

N: No, no, no, no that's really important, talk about that, seriously.

S: What, having a dog?

N: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

S: Well, I feel as though I belong to the set of people who, who have dogs.

Walking her dog is an everyday undertaking that Sarah clearly experiences as a socially engaging activity which creates significant bonds for her. In her research Fenster also found that, '... people who walk their dogs several times a day mentioned this daily ritual as contributing to their sense of belonging to the area (Fenster, 2004, p. 244).⁷⁸ While she was working Sarah only met immediate neighbours, but when she took voluntary redundancy and got a dog, 'my circle of acquaintances got a lot wider'. Many of the people she subsequently got to know in the locality were through walking her dog on Wanstead Flats and the impact on her life was significant. Amongst other friends made, a dog walker living on the other side of the flats became a close friend, introduced Sarah to the church she later joined, and eventually became godmother to Sarah's son.

⁷⁸ Broadcaster/author Ed Stourton considers his dog a social tool and observes, 'Walking with a dog always improves the quality of my interaction with other people ...', (Stourton, 2011, p.32), and on BBC Radio 4's *Ramblings* (2012), Clare Balding walks and talks with two women who met through their dogs' interest in each other and became firm friends themselves.

Community belonging

Concepts of community

*... community is something we actively **do** together rather than something we just **are** or are defined by others to be. Community is active rather than passive. I also think it is a term which is often used in very lazy or sometimes even highly dangerous ways.*

(Gregg, 2013, personal email, emphasis in original)

In the recent past I attended a public meeting discussing a development company plan to 'regenerate the local high street' by turning it into a Spitalfields-style 'city-scape', and build a 27-storey tower block for young city professionals who would be seduced by the soon-to-arrive Crossrail in North Newham.⁷⁹ In a not very subtle bid to flatter his audience, the development company representative began by eulogising 'the strong North Newham community'. Amongst other points, I stood to say that while there may be many, varying communities in the locality, there was definitely no one North Newham community. I use this example to illustrate the continuing lack of clarity around the meaning of community, including my own attempts to broaden the meaning but whose connotation still hides more than it defines. The illustrations highlight other points; the somewhat manipulative use of the word in an attempt by people with power to ingratiate themselves with 'the locals'; the inference that thousands of disparate people in an area all live together in sort form of undefined harmony, and not least, unthinking use of the word by those with financial power who have no understanding of the real complexities of people's lives. However, it is not only people of power who unthinkingly invoke community, but also those who themselves supposedly constitute it.

It is a slippery, hard to define concept and the literature provides confirmation of the fuzzy, imprecise, varied use of 'community' and the extensive theoretical debate as to its existence; past, present and future (to cite but a few: Delanty, 2010; Savage, 2008; Lin and Mele, 2005; Ahmed and Fortier, 2003; Cohen, 2002; Bauman, 2001; Urry, 2000; Eade, 1997). Bauman opens his exploration of community suggesting that the word perpetuates the notion of warm and cosy places of comfort where safety and trust can be assured, but quickly argues that it is, in fact, more a, 'Paradise lost or a paradise still hoped to be found...', and embodies a continuing dilemma between freedom and security (Bauman, 2001, pp. 1-6). A central debate

⁷⁹ Such a plan has of course overtones of the original 1870s Hollybarn development; housing for the middle-classes to escape the city for what was then suburbs, travelling on the new London to Essex railway.

of 20th century sociology has revolved around whether community can exist at all in the modern urban environment. Within widespread agreement that community is no longer what it was, perspectives range between, '... community as something preserved in the locality [...] as pertaining to relatively small groups, such as neighbourhoods, based on mutual interdependence and common forms of life' (Delanty, 2010, pp. 40-41), to that of community inevitably declining in the face of globalisation, urban fragmentation and gentrification (Delanty, 2010, p. 42). Ahmed and Fortier state in their introduction to a series of papers, *Re-imagining Communities*, '... the word 'community' does not itself secure common ground...' and, '... that community itself is 'in question'...' (Ahmed and Fortier, 2003, p. 251). It is patently obvious that community is something of a minefield, so much so that Cohen (2002) states:

Community is used so variously, even inconsistently, and so loosely that, paradigm considerations apart, it has ceased to be of any obvious analytical use as a category in social science.

(Cohen, 2002, p. 167)

The above uses, categorisations and debates illustrate the elusiveness of community and raise the question of what use can be made of the term at all.

Miller (2008a, 2008b, 2005; Miller and Woodward 2012), proposes a radical approach to community in his recent anthropological studies on material culture based on people living in London streets. The streets were the context for a study on shopping, his exploration of people's relationships to objects and one on denim. His chosen streets were in some aspects similar to my own East London street; very ethnically diverse, home to a mix of owner-occupiers and private and social housing tenants, varying forms of family and different generations. Miller's rationale for basing his work on streets is that he has:

... studied the community of a street because it isn't a community, I studied a street because it represents no person and no group, or at least none in particular. This street is literally nondescript, a term that seems to imply something that defies simple description because of its very ordinariness.

(Miller, 2005, p. 1)

He focuses his attention entirely on individuals; as customers of the shops, and as individual portraits of particular residents in the resultant chapters from his research on people and objects. Miller owns to there being some element of social interaction between the neighbouring residents but because they are not communities, he chooses to present entirely individual stories without making connection or exploring commonalities. Indeed he says it is important:

To find a way to locate people and study them as they are, irrespective of whether they bear any relationship to anything we might call a community.

(Miller, 2008b, no page number)

London streets, says Miller, are just ‘... random juxtapositions of households...’ (2008a, p. 284). Unlike the theories of community discussed above, Miller does not see lack of community in any terms of loss but as a refreshing opening to ‘A completely new form of culture...’ (2008b, no page number) which focuses on people’s attachment to the objects in their homes and the meaning gained from them.

Miller presents a challenging perspective on community, but one that invites critique in its rationale of how community should be considered. While my research may concur with Miller’s statement that a street is not a community, his approach chooses to ignore crucial issues. First, it is problematic to regard a street as an entity separate from its wider context (Massey, 1994). A London street, unlike a village, is a very small part of a much broader nexus of neighbourhood, borough and city and its forms of community are therefore likely to be very different. Because a street may not be a community, does not mean that it does not contain elements of social belonging. His desire to explore the residents ‘as they are’, allows them only to be self-contained, autonomous, unconnected individuals. The possibility of finding community is blocked from the outset by the parameters that Miller has set. His determination to present the street as nothing more than a random collection of households, renders it nothing more. It cannot be understood as more than an assemblage of disparate parts unless there is at least desire to explore such potentiality.

The approach to community I propose to follow is one that retains community as a meaningful concept – when specifically located within the complexities and ambivalences of people’s actual lives. As seen in the illustration opening this chapter, and the endless debates, community has little use as a generalised collective term, but that does not exclude its potential as a significant and perhaps eloquent means for an individual expressing their own sense of belonging. An approach to community that complements my very specific focus on belonging is that of Karen Fog Olwig (2002) who construes community as a cultural construction, or, as she conceives it, as, ‘shared fields of belonging’. This perspective moves:

... away from regarding community as a collective unit encompassing individuals, towards a focusing on the ways in which community is constructed through the negotiation of meaning among interacting persons.

(Olwig, 2002, p. 125).

In other words, community needs to be studied through the social relations and cultural values experienced by people themselves rather than through a prism of pre-determined categorisations such as ethnicity or religion. Importantly, such a conception also frees the notion of community from being fixed in a particular bounded location. Crucial to understand is that shared fields of belonging may not be connected to place at all, but take non-geographical forms where like-minded people interact, the internet being the most obvious example.

Also pivotal here is Olwig's use of narrative inquiry in her research. She says:

Narratives [...] allow for the elucidation of the sort of communities of belonging with which persons identify in different contexts of life.

(Olwig, 2002, p. 128)

She demonstrates by using individual life stories, how two Caribbean men living in Britain experience divergent belongings both in the Caribbean and in Britain. By considering their differing social locations of class, education and employment, as well as their islands of origin, their stories can be seen to portray the men's contrasting experiences of community mediated through their continuing interpersonal relationships both here and there (Olwig, 2002, p. 143).

In her 'fields of shared belonging' Olwig (2002) provides a notion of community and a means of exploring it that accord both with my perspective on community and my method of inquiry. Following Olwig my research therefore explores what particular fields of shared belonging are meaningful to my interviewees. Rather than assume the existence of prescribed communities such as street, neighbourhood, ethnicity or religion, the intention is to solicit how they themselves understand and experience the notion of community. As Olwig states:

... it is important to examine concrete instances of community formation as experienced by particular individuals, rather than take a point of departure in presumed categories ...

(Olwig, 2002, p. 127)

For this very reason my interviewees were not asked to what communities they belong, but whether they feel a part of any community. I believe such questioning draws out a far richer and more complex portrayal of community and social belonging in a contemporary urban setting. Their responses were multifarious but two basic spheres emerged, one relating to local community, and the second

relating to other forms of community. These two spheres do not however represent two distinct groups of women; some women discussed different kinds of community significant to them, which cut across both spheres.

Community and locality

It is particularly notable that answers which specifically attempted to associate community and locality highlighted the complications of such an association, and generally expressed few positive depictions of local community. Such responses also tended to be hesitant, unsure, and some, frustrated. It was apparent some women perceived the question to mean 'local', though it was in fact deliberately unspecific. Frederica for example, initially responded saying, 'No, because I have never been a joiner, a clubby person...', but when I suggested that the notion was not restricted to formal groups she replied:

I suppose, although it's not a local one. But when you think of community, I, I tend to think of . proximity, erm, in the wider sense, I suppose.

Clearly Frederica's assumed perception is of community both as formal groups and local, rather than her close knit community of migrant friends with whom she has retained a strong sense of belonging since they met when training as nurses 40 years ago, and who live dispersed over London. Mary somewhat reluctantly replies to the same question, 'I suppose I do feel a part of the local community...', but when I emphasised that I was not necessarily meaning a geographical community, she instantaneously responds, 'Definitely my political family is my community', patently distinguishing between geographical and other forms of community.

Monique too registers ambivalence and unsureness as she reflects on the question:

I, I think I'm probably part of this community. [...] Erm, but I wouldn't, I don't know .. I don't suppose I'm really in, I don't know what being in the community really means.

The depicted conflation of local and community is complicated not least by the apparent lack of significance the local/community combination has for those people talking about it.

Lack/loss of local community

Another theme arising within the sphere of local community is its suggested lack and/or loss. Unlike any of the other women, Angelique began to talk of local

community when asked about citizenship, prior to the question of community. She explained that she wanted to contribute to her local community, become involved, make it better, also saying:

I find that very, very frustrating. Because I know what I was brought up in. I, I KNOW what community is. I, I KNOW what community is. 'Cause that's, I was brought up in it. The, the, like, when we had that snow, that's CLOSEST to community I've seen here. When I had that sale [in her front garden] on Saturday, that was ANOTHER bit of community spirit. Because people were coming in, people who lived on street were coming in and talking, just talking. People didn't know I lived here. [...] 20 years I've lived on this street, in this flat ...

Her frustration is palpable as she, again unlike most of the interviewees, has participated for years in local authority residents' forums and in a residents association predominantly concerned with the conservation of the neighbourhood. She has also attempted to set up street events. However, rather than giving her a greater sense of belonging these have:

... highlighted for me how fragmented . thinking is. [...] [In the street there's not, there's no sense of, there's no REAL sense of community, there's no spirit of helping each other.

She takes her son to local shops and walks local streets with him as a conscious means of teaching him about the area in which he was born and lives, but she regrets the lack of local community sense he is growing up with that gave her such strength of belonging in her childhood.

Monique, who showed such hesitancy in answering the question on community, similarly reflects on her own small-community childhood and likewise regrets the lack of local community her own children experience now. Knowing local families who have lived in this area for generations with a far greater sense of community, highlights for Monique the geographical distance from her own and her partner's families, and she suggests that remaining in North Newham was partly a desire to foster such a continuity for their own family.

Not only do these examples illustrate the dilemma generated by varying meanings of community, but also Delanty's premise that, 'A central question in all discussions of local community is whether the urban form of the city accommodates it' (Delanty, 2010, p. 53). Frederica and Mary in particular find little meaning in the notion of local community, and Monique's transparent doubt about community and her place in it, would certainly not be characteristic of mid-20th century East London community presented by Young and Willmott (1957). The sense of loss however that Angelique and Monique feel, particularly on the part of their children, reveals

an unmistakable break from the localities of belonging they experienced in their own childhoods. Paradises lost perhaps (Bauman, 2001, p. 3), and surely a consequence, as Monique herself suggests, of the greater movement of people and generational discontinuity, reflected in the lives of the interviewees and the Hollybarn neighbourhood.

Mixed feelings about local community

Whilst also concerned with lack and loss of community, Frederica portrays rather different but also seemingly quite contradictory attitudes to local community:

Growing up in Malaya I've seen how there is community, you know, there's extended families and there's neighbours, and the people in a neighbourhood you live in, but that kind, it creates a sort, it CAN create er claustrophobia. It can create a LOT of emotional unhappiness. I've seen it first hand. So I don't necessarily think we SHOULD have this, we SHOULD have that. If it's there, it's nice. I would join in, now and again when I wanted to but I personally . for me I would feel . very claustrophobic and I think . that might be why I came as well, a second reason apart from the politics. 'Cause life can be very, very . closed in, in a close community.

Her sense of community is overwhelmingly formed by her childhood experience from which she chose to escape. Yet she also speaks warmly of the sense of community she felt in her previous Newham home, a smaller street where neighbours were friendly, people knew each other and a, '... lady next door actually became a granny to [my] children'. Indeed, she also deliberates on whether it might be a positive step to try to create more of a local community spirit:

It, I did wonder whether you can MAKE belonging. [...] I don't know If that's possible. Certainly you could be a sort of catalyst to start something up, but whether it carries on or it will fizzle out, I don't know. But I've often wondered whether if everybody made an EFFORT it might be a better, more cohesive neighbourhood, for the good of all. . And it might be worth trying .. but I don't know. Like the, you know, like a street party thing. I remember the jubilee and that certainly looked jolly friendly [laugh]. It would be nice, I think it would be nice to see it in this street. Erm, re-create a little bit of what we had in [elsewhere]. ..

Samina laughs ruefully at the idea of her feeling a part of any community, other than that of her childhood home of which she says:

.. Yeah I do. My, Bury Park, hometown. Shopping centre – I mean this where I've been constantly coming and going, everyday things I'd be doing, people I'd be meeting, things I've been doing there. The roads I walked every day for shopping, and stuff like, you know, things you can't take out of it. . First where I made my friends.

Removed from this community, one that she clearly embodies, she says she would rather not be a part of any community due to the complications of others' expectations:

There's so much issue, it's not one and two issue, there's so much issue. Sometime because of issue I think that it's because I'm not belonging to anyone . or any sort of community. You can't, once you're in, you can't them. You can't chuck them and you can't diss them [laugh].

Due to the difficult issues that arise for her, she rejects belonging to any community yet she too has conflicted feelings and her rejection is tinged with a contradictory sadness of the loneliness she feels. She sums up her situation:

Being lonely, being alone is very hard. But I think in a way it is very good. . I think ... you're not a big crowd any more. You're not in that big crowd. . You are in your own little world. There's no problem, there's no hassle. If there is a problem it's [for] you to solve yourself.

Neither Frederica nor Samina have actively sought to become a part of any particular community since leaving their childhood homes. Their experiences of living in communities are both positive and negative, reflecting Bauman's dilemma of balancing the warmth and security of community with the stifling of personal freedom (Bauman, 2001, p. 20). The women's stories and reflections appear conflicting but they are also clear evidence of the multiplicity of a person's ideas and feelings, and, as shown by Frederica, even the most determined beliefs, such as those involved in decisions to leave family and country, do not result in absolute, fixed positions. This is an intricacy that a narrative approach can unveil, and thereby reveal the multi-layered approach necessary to understand the desires and experiences of belonging and not belonging.

Local community belonging: children's community

As previously discussed as an enabler of belonging to place, motherhood is the one consistent circumstance that appears to provide a sense of belonging to local community. Of the seven women with children under 18 years, all of them spoke of children being instrumental in them connecting with others, and four of them specifically talked about children in response to the question of whether they were a part of any community. Peigi answered, 'Yes, I do. I suppose a children's community, inevitably', and Sarah spoke of having been part of 'a baby community', and now part of 'a young children community' revolving around pre-school activities. Tendo talked of making friends through the daily trips to school but it was her son's learning disability which, initially alienating her from others, eventually provided her in a community in which she finds a sense of belonging through a

support group for parents with special needs children. For Monique, who was so unsure about community, engaging in parents' activities in her children's school did provide some sense of community, and from this a mothers' book club developed in which the social connections for the women is, she says, of greater importance than the actual reading of the books. Mumford and Power (2003) found an, '... extraordinarily high level of participation in the local community among families with young children' (Mumford and Power, 2003, p. 46).

Local community spirit

Issues of local community have been considered in empirical research by both Hall (2007) and Mumford and Power (2003) undertaken in East London and predominantly in Newham, however there are notable differences between the Mumford and Power research and my own. Theirs was undertaken with low income families (Mumford and Power, 2003, p. 9) and most interviewees were tenants rather than owner-occupiers (p. 3). They found that 90 per cent of their participants felt that having community spirit mattered (compared to national average of 57 per cent) (p. 31) and the majority of their participants felt part of the local community (p. 43). They also found that most people had a good understanding of, and were able to clearly explain, what they meant by community (p. 55). Mumford and Power challenge the notion that local community does not exist, arguing that, 'root[ed] in actual experience' it is a reality for many people 'rather than an idealised concept' (Mumford and Power, 2003, p. 38). They also suggest that class is a factor in how community is experienced and that reciprocity and neighbourly support are more characteristic of low-income areas where people may spend more time in their home areas while in higher income areas people have less time to be social (Mumford and Power, 2003, pp. 39-40), an observation that my interviewee Sarah made about her own life when she gave up work. Such an analysis therefore potentially throws some light on my findings which appear more similar to those of Hall (2007) who found little sense of local community in the 'transit zone' of Newham's Upton Park area (see also Butler and Hamnett, 2011). Hall describes Upton Park as:

... a place in a state of constant toing and froing: a place full of new arrivals, who might take up sticks and move on, or might just lay down roots there.

(Hall, 2007, p. 83)

My interviewees are largely middle-class who have laid down roots and stayed long term, but length of residency is clearly not a basis for a strong sense of local community.

Non-place-based communities

The second sphere, as outlined in the section introduction, involves forms of community that are predominantly non-place-based. Mumford and Power (2003) as seen above, illustrate that aspects of local community do indeed still exist in urban areas. Delanty (2010) does not disagree but argues that:

The communities of today are less spatially-bounded than those of the past. [...] have opened up numerous possibilities for belonging based on religion, nationalism, ethnicity, lifestyle and gender. It is in this world of plurality rather than of closure that the new kinds of community are emerging.

(Delanty, 2010, pp. 151-152)

Delanty's argument clearly relates to Amit's (2002, p. 3) thinking of community as 'quality of sociality' rather than 'an actualised social form', and not least Olwig's notion of community as shared fields of belonging by people, '...who are not necessarily interacting within the same physical space' (Olwig, 2002, p. 128). It is precisely such forms of community that have salience for most of my interviewees, which are on the whole not bounded by place, but are based on other commonalities including ethnicity, sexuality, politics, family, church, artistic and internet. It will be seen in this next section that a number of the topics arising under these headings have been discussed in depth in previous chapters and therefore will not be addressed in detail here.

Ethnicity as community

Angelique brought up issues of community under the rubric of citizenship; but when asked directly, 'Do you feel part of any community?', she responds, 'The Trinidad community in London', without hesitation aligning community with ethnicity. Talking about becoming involved in Notting Hill Carnival costume-making soon after arriving in Britain, she speaks of the relationships which developed:

We treat each other more like sisters, more like family, than friends. It's a really deep, we don't see each other often but when we connect it's VERY deep.

Likening these relationships to family rather than simple friendship, she brings together the notions of ethnicity and family as templates or exemplars of community. Agnes highlights the importance of Polish friends and acquaintances with whom she can celebrate Polish customs and traditions, one means of remaining part of a Polish community in London. In a very different form Meena has developed her own Nepali community in her rented home which she shares with

other Nepalis.⁸⁰ Furthering the idea of community being family, Meena speaks of her 10 house sharers as family, 'They are not actually in my family, yeah. But we live together so I call them my relatives'. Hers was a deliberate intention to live with others from the same background with whom they would have shared understanding:

You know in this country if I saw somebody Nepalese then I feel somewhat they are my one. They are someone to me. They are my brothers and sisters, I feel like that [laugh].

Chain migration discussed relating to South Asians (Adams, 1987; Ballard, 1994) and Caribbeans (Peach 1991) seeking out others from the same region with whom they could stay, and from which larger communities grew, applies as much today to Meena's small Nepali community in the Hollybarn neighbourhood.

Church, family and friends' communities

Other ways in which the interviewees define community are as church, friends and family. As stated earlier in this chapter, for Agnes, Jessica, Sarah and Tendo the location of their church is far less important than that its teaching should match their beliefs, and significantly they all describe it as a central community in their lives, specifically their shared understanding with other people. Some also liken their church community to family – which itself is sometimes evoked as community, as are friends. Peigi illustrates just such a notion of community in describing the West Bengal family and friends she grew up amongst in London and who she says remain highly significant in her adult life. Her response to the question of whether she was part of any community included, 'I suppose I am part of the Bengali community, I do feel that'.⁸¹ The aspect of friends as a non-place-based community is persuasively argued by Agnes. Explaining that her closest friends now live dispersed in different Polish cities and in West London but that they comprise her community:

Because you belong to a group of friends. [...] Yeah, it doesn't matter where, wherever they are, we, we make this, this community which is important for us and the place on, on, on the map, doesn't matter.

Specifically denying geographic importance Agnes says where they are is simply not an issue as they call each other, email, and talk on Skype regularly, and visit each other whenever possible.

80 See Brown (2009) regarding international students recreating home through interacting with other conationals.

81 The community Peigi refers to is not an East London Bengali or Bangladeshi community but her family and friends who came from West Bengal in India and settled in Northwest London where she grew up.

Issue-based communities

Specific place appears to have little relevance in various community situations, notably the issue-based activities spoken about by Elaine and Imogen. Imogen speaks of the first meeting she attended of the Campaign for Homosexual Equality definitively as:

... an instance where I SUDDENLY felt very much at home in this country and this would have about about, oh, in the . late 70s [...] I was in a room, JUST full of gay people, and I felt SO at home. I mean they were a diverse lot, most of them were men, erm, who I gradually got to know [...]. But that was a great feeling of home coming, it was quite strange. Because we'd got to know some other gay women . and got friendly with them, but it was coming to a whole meeting that was, you know a meeting with a purpose, it had a speaker and so forth and it was there for a reason. And that was a big feeling of community.

By this time in her late 30s, becoming involved in the gay rights campaign was the first time Imogen remembered feeling any sense of community since living in a boarding school for a period when she was eight years old. These were not geographical places that had significance for her but groups of people with particular commonalities whom she had found rare affinity, and 'a great feeling of home coming'. Both she and Elaine also found such community, or shared fields of belonging (Olwig, 2002), in their disability groups and voluntary work, and the writers' groups they are part of.

Time and community

Arising from their thinking about the communities they feel a belonging to, Imogen, Elaine and Julie also reflect on the communities they have been a part of, but are no longer. The element of time highlights changing attitudes, priorities and experiences, and consequently, shifting belonging. In the context of place, Julie mentions the lack of opportunity she has found locally to meet new people since her children have grown up, saying that older people consider moving:

... older people, my age, people are very much talking about moving away. Moving somewhere, I think as people retire, they want somewhere nice to be, they want somewhere where they can go and shop, go and sit in a pub, they can go and sit in a café. They can meet people. And there isn't anywhere to do that here. And there aren't really any community . situations or events one . is really involved in unless one's part of say a church, or one's kids are at school.

She too is thinking of leaving the area when she retires, possibly to Tower Hamlets where she believes she could be part of a thriving artistic community. While her

work currently offers her such a focus, she fears that once she retires she would be very isolated in Newham where there is no similar community.

Imogen recalls the organisations that have given her a sense of community but no longer exist such as, 'the Women's Centre' in Central London, and the Women's Unit in Newham, closures which she associates with lack of resources rather than lack of need, and Elaine suggests that in the gay rights campaigns there is no longer so much to do as, '... a lot of the battles have been won', which also means a loss of the communities they had:

... other people we used to know but we've drifted apart from them. Well, some of them have moved out of the area, some have died. Yes, so we're not really a community any more.

a situation Hall (2007, p. 372) also found in his older interviewees who felt a loss of community as they got older and people moved on.

However, while some communities may no longer exist, Imogen and Elaine also convey their moving with the times. Knowing that Age Concern are working more with gay people and are setting up social support groups Imogen says she:

... would love to be involved [...] Erm, just to have some kind of community with older people who are perhaps starting to feel isolated.

And Elaine has found a new community:

..... Well [laugh] it's a different kind of community, I I . feel as if I belong to a section of Harry Potter fans on the internet. Does that sound completely insane? [laugh].

In her mid-70s and as my oldest interviewee, Elaine is the only one who speaks of having joined an internet community, from which she gains much pleasure.

Conclusion

Three separate but connecting notions of class, place and community have been explored in this chapter in an endeavour to understand the sense of belonging the women have experienced within each of the differing aspects, but also how their belonging is informed and shaped through the interconnecting constitutive relationship of all three.

Considering class through Savage *et al.*'s (2005) theory of elective belonging clarified that although most of the interviewees chose to move to Hollybarn, they

did not entirely meet Savage *et al.*'s elective belonging criteria in that there tended to be a discrepancy between their habitus and social fields. Although they were happy in their homes, they were generally ambivalent about the wider area and often found a lack in the local shops and facilities. Their situation was also not that found by Watt (2009), in that the women here had not sought a mono-ethnic, or in his example, white, private oasis to escape to. Indeed the latter point is central to my argument that it is, in Butler's and Hamnett's (2011) terms, Newham's complex 'ethnic/class split', that has kept the women in the area for so long, most in fact between 20 and 40 years. While they came originally for cheap property, the majority had migrant/diversity backgrounds and were generally not the more recent white professional incomers of whom Butler and Hamnett write. Significantly, the section has shown there is not one middle-class habitus in an area of such ethnic diversity. While the absence of coffee shops was an issue for a number of the women, the diversity of foods that could be bought or eaten in local restaurants was also welcomed. (And it might be found that the large South Asian middle-class population in the neighbourhood would have expressed a more direct correspondence of habitus and field, had I interviewed more than one South Asian woman.) I would argue, as Watt stated about his white respondents, that these women have traded some of their desired social fields not just for a large house, but specifically in their choice to remain in an ethnically diverse area. Moreover, I argue that it cannot simply be coincidental that the one person who did not have some form of migrant or diversity background, and clearly voiced her discontent with local shops and facilities, is also the one person who, after eight years, moved to a neighbouring borough.

Belonging to place was considered in the light of Massey's (1994) notion of place as a fluid, unbounded construction existing through networks of social relations. Massey's conceptualisation of place closely fitted my own of place belonging as not an attachment to an essential form of place, but as a performative engagement in the everyday practices of social relations that constitute place. The section has argued that a sense of belonging to place was experienced where meaningful experiences occurred, specifically associated with the women's personal interests and beliefs and the accompanying social connections that were forged. It was the combination of these elements that created meaningful place. Exploring the women's relationship to the area in which they live highlighted that notions such as 'here' and 'area' expanded outwards from the street in waves of concentric circles encompassing meanings that linked to places of importance. Analysis was undertaken of everyday practices that either enabled or inhibited the women's belonging to place, principal enablers being (in addition to food as discussed in

Chapter 5) motherhood and organisations, and inhibitors, lack of social spaces, paucity of quality shops, and in the street itself, not knowing neighbours. The most demonstrated feeling about belonging in the locality was ambivalence, which appeared to have no relevance to the length of time the women had lived in the street. Recognising place as a fluid construction raised questions about whose place the street could be, in regard to the fixing of the street's identity through conservation regulations which highlighted how history, heritage, migration and settlement are played out in the contestation of belonging to place.

Acknowledging that community as a concept defies simple analytic use, this section also took a stand against Miller's (2008a) argument that a street per se was not a community, therefore there was no validity to explore it as such. It was argued here that exploring community through people's own experience of it was crucial to its meaning. As Delanty notes, 'The individual is not tied to only one community, but may have multiple and overlapping bonds' (Delanty, 2010, p. 153). In presenting this approach it was proposed that Olwig's (2002) concept of shared fields of belonging offered such a perspective. Locating the notion of community within the complexities and ambivalences of people's lives, avoided both fixed categorisations and fixing community in (a) place and instead enabled an understanding of community through the social relations of the women. This perspective highlighted two spheres of community that emerged from the women's stories, those of local communities and non-place-based forms of community. The notion of local communities was illustrated mostly through their lack of significance in the women's lives, expressed by ambivalence and loss of community. The foremost positive sense of local community was the notion of a children's community which developed connections and networks for the mothers which were significant when their children were small and diminished as the children grew older. The second sphere of non-place-defined communities comprised varying characteristics, interests and beliefs of the women involving such notions as ethnicity, sexuality, politics, church and the internet. The research established that notions of community were meaningful to the women.

Considering the elements of class, place and community independently of each other has provided the opportunity to explore the women's sense of belonging in a more nuanced fashion. I would argue that the broadest understanding of *how* the women find a sense of belonging, rather than simply *where* they belong, can only be achieved by taking all three elements into account.

Chapter 7

Concluding thoughts

Changing places, changing times

Since I undertook my interviews considerable change has taken place in the North Newham area. In the street Angelique has been organising family activities in her large front garden for neighbours. More widely, a website set up by a local resident hosts information about local events and acts as a forum for discussion. A Women's Institute has been established whose members are taking a pro-active role in organising events and activities in the area. Where there were none, there are now two thriving coffee shops on the high street, to the delight of mothers of young children who often meet there. A trial food market started by local residents is thriving and an occasional arts market, and food and drink fair, bring a lively buzz to the high street. A gastro pub opened this month, and ideas for creating a community garden are underway. Plans for a high street tower block are receding and a new neighbourhood forum is in the process of being set up by residents who hope new plans will meet the diverse needs of local people. And Crossrail is coming. The changes noted suggest the seeds of white middle-class gentrification, in an area, as amply illustrated, of great diversity. These are changes seen from my positionality as a white middle-class resident, but also as a second-generation migrant, who hopes that much needed high street regeneration will continue to be meaningful to the mix of residents.

Importantly, such changes highlight how this place, indeed any place, is not fixed in time but continues in a process of flux, particularly as seen over the past 120 years. The lives of the participants have also moved on, in different ways; one has left the area, some are active members of the new Women's Institute, family make-up, citizenship status, and personal situations have altered. Neither the locality, nor people's lives, are frozen in aspic. Inevitably therefore, my findings are provisional, not absolute. It is a relatively short time since I undertook those interviews, but given inexorable onward movement, would the women say now what they said then, about their belonging? But also, if I were to re-look at their transcripts now, would the new experiences, new ideas, new knowledges that time brings, lead me to different interpretations of their belonging? As Andrews notes of narrative inquiry, 'There is never a final analysis, only points along the way' (Andrews, 2008, p. 96).

This thesis could be seen merely as a snapshot of 14 women's subjective experience in one place, at one period of their lives. However it also opens a window onto the multi-layered complexities of subjective belonging, not simply where people belong, but the multiplicities of *how* belonging is configured in their lives. It is the richness of depth and detail that the narrative process offers within a specific time and context, that enables such exploration and meaning-making. Narrative inquiry opens the window illuminating social reality through individual lives, revealing history through biography, and here, unveiling an understanding of subjective belonging.

Narrative articulation of subjective belonging

Returning to where this thesis began, Samina's words capture a recurring theme in this study:

I never thought of this belonging [laugh]. It's a hard question. It's so straightforward, it's so hard to answer.

Expressing what sense they make of their belonging has been a challenge for the women participating in this research, not due to the women themselves but because subjective belonging is simply difficult to articulate. The thesis has illustrated how women who freely and openly talk about their lives often find themselves faltering in trying to address their belonging. Referring to their faith, both Agnes and Sarah struggled to express their feelings of belonging. Agnes said:

... I think it's important for me, it's important for me . to, to have this feeling again belonging, to, to, to belong to any, not to the church not as a, but erm ... I don't know, it's too hard . to explain, honestly. [...] Yeah, it feels I would need few more days for this question [laugh], I'm thinking about it, now I will think about this all the time how important is this.

And similarly Sarah said:

Mm, ok. What does it mean to me? Oh gosh these are really, these are REALLY deep questions aren't they? And I need a bit more [laugh] [...] Perhaps a week off [motherhood] to, even to think these things through. Erm, what does it mean to me in terms of belonging?

Also, Angelique thinking about belonging and class responded with:

Mmm. Gosh. THIS IS DEEP MAN [sigh]. ... [sigh] [sigh].

Belonging, in its tendency to be naturalised and articulated only when threatened (Yuval-Davis, 2011, 2006a), is deeply embedded in the self understanding of who one is and its complications are difficult to unravel. The interviewees often

struggled to answer direct questions about belonging, Peigi, for example, relating to her citizenship, Imogen to her ethnicity and Monique to place. As has been illustrated, it is the open, semi-structured questioning of narrative inquiry that has enabled the women make meaning of their subjective experience, and to reveal the often elusive nature of their belonging. Subjective belonging is complex and multi-layered, not simply 'there' to be scooped up from the surface but is fathomed from the deeper recesses of conscious understanding. As Agnes said at the end of her interviews, 'You opened all my parts of my brain', and Elaine commented that she felt a little befuddled about, '... all these things that I've never really thought about'. Meaning is elicited through the reflective self-questioning that a narrative approach both demands and enables; it is drawn out and articulated through the stories that the women tell of their lives (Andrews *et al.*, 2008; Riessman, 2008; Elliott, 2005). The challenge of narrative confronts us to make sense of ourselves in ways that are not readily available. Subjectivity becomes explicit through narration (Ludvig, 2006) which is not just about the self but is fundamentally part of the self (Eakin, 2008). Angelique ended her interview saying:

I think you've unearthed quite a lot [...] you've allowed me to just talk and ramble so we've talked and extracted things that I wouldn't normally have . thought about.

These words, as well as speaking of unearthing previously unthought thoughts, also acknowledge the co-construction of her reflections. It was through such interviewer/interviewee interaction and the co-constructing narrative process (Salmon and Riessman, 2008) that the complexities of belonging, and how belonging changed over time, could be seen to emerge, as illustrated particularly in Agnes' and Tendo's citizenship stories. Not least, in telling me that I was 'brave' to interview her, Tendo also raised the importance of careful listening that narrative requires, saying:

Yeah. That is brave. It's not easy to listen to other people's stories, I don't think so. Erm, I feel we want to fix people. Rather than erm, listening, yeah. We want to offer solutions, I think, yeah, so that's why I say it's brave what you're doing. Yeah [laugh].

Crucially, narrative inquiry also facilitates and encourages consideration of whole lives, neither only past memories nor just the present, but the interweaving of both in autobiographical time (Brockmeier, 2000), enabling this thesis to explore how circumstances of varying time periods may have influenced or affected the subjective belonging experienced throughout the women's lives. For example, the thesis has shown a continuity between what I have termed childhood 'localities of belonging', a stable sense of belonging with particular people in particular places,

and the women's adult ethnic belonging. Such continuity was illustrated by Angelique's mixing past and present in her reply to my question about her belonging as a child. She did not speak of her childhood but of her childhood links now, in her words, 'Oh yeah. Even now, even now on Facebook we're part of the Emerald Hollow group ...', revealing how those connections were still so meaningful to her some 30 years later. The same 'multi-layered weave' of times (Brockmeier, 2000, p. 56) was shown by women who experienced my designation of 'dislocated belongings' in childhood. Elaine's vivid telling of her exclusion from a children's game nearly 70 years previously showed how she in hindsight traced her sense of not belonging, of being an outsider, from childhood to the present. Similarly, Imogen connected her childhood with the lack of belonging she experienced as an adult:

Erm ... I don't know, because of my background, am I ever going to feel I belong anywhere? I . I don't know. ... Erm, it's hard to say.

The whole life associations that are revealed through the women's narratives are however neither exclusive to, nor determined by childhood, as their sense of belonging could be seen to alter and shift in relation to other periods of their lives and in the contexts of their changing social worlds. In disability activism and sexual politics Elaine and Imogen experienced very different senses of belonging than ever they had done within their early lives, as did Julie whose belonging as an artist could be said to have developed despite her family life. The circumstances of the migrant women coming to Britain, which most had undertaken in early adulthood, were often influential in their later adult ethnic belonging. Those who had come without any choice or intention to stay expressed a much stronger sense of belonging to their ethnic origins than others who had consciously chosen to come with plans to stay. Despite her childhood locality of belonging, for Frederica the disruption she experienced in her teenage years and Malaysia's political instability undoubtedly contributed to her sense of not belonging there, influencing her decision to leave and arguably her later lack of connection with her Malaysian origins. Motherhood in particular also brought new belongings to place, which again began to shift as their children grew up. Older age was experienced as a time of changing belonging, when issues such as retirement and less mobility brought loss of some fields of belonging but also possibilities of new belongings.

Theoretical illumination of subjective belonging

My introductory chapter outlined analytical frameworks of belonging of Yuval-Davis (2011, 2006a), Antonsich (2010), and May (2011), which informed my own

conceptualisation of subjective belonging and my exploration of how people experience belonging. I have applied Yuval-Davis' three facets of belonging, though not all equally, and with some adaptation. My use of the term subjective belonging refers to deeply felt attachments that give meaning, self-assurance and security in people's lives, and for this reason I have focused primarily on Yuval-Davis' facet of emotional identifications and attachments. However, I have also differentiated my concept from hers by separating the notions of identification and emotional attachments, arguing that the latter demands a performative element while the former, while also potentially emotional, does not. The research participants' subjective belonging has been explored in relation to Yuval-Davis' other facet of social locations of ethnicity, class, citizenship status and, to a lesser degree, generation and motherhood. The study has demonstrated that while the women's subjective belonging is shaped by their social locations, it is neither determined nor fixed by those locations, confirming Yuval-Davis' argument that differentiating between the facets is crucial to avoid essentialising belonging.

Ethnicity has been shown through the thesis to have significance in the women's subjective belonging although it has very clearly demonstrated that ethnic categorisations are quite inadequate to describe the complexities of their ethnic belonging. Asked directly about the meaning of their ethnicity to them, only three of the 14 women unequivocally expressed a strong sense of ethnic belonging, and one was contradictory. The other ten women, a mix of migrant, British mixed-heritage, British multi-generational, and British brought up abroad, were quite equivocal, showing a medley of inexplicit and indecisive positionings. Strikingly, six of these ten women offered an unsolicited response that they felt more belonging to London than any particular ethnicity. More meaningful depth and complexity regarding the women's ethnic belonging was revealed in their stories of everyday performative practice revolving around customs and traditions, religion, language, and specifically regarding the buying, cooking and eating of food.

The thesis explored the relationship between the women's subjective belonging and their social location of class in the context of the street and neighbourhood, which are more middle-class than their surrounding areas. Issues of class belonging were considered through Savage *et al.*'s (2005) concept of elective belonging and Watt's (2009) selective belonging. The women's stories provided little evidence of either elective or selective belonging relating to their reasons for moving to the area originally, or for staying in the borough. They suggested neither clearly defined middle-class habitus nor a general sense of belonging to the local area. What does appear significant is that the one person who could be said to

meet Savage *et al.*'s portrayal of an elective believer is the one who chose to move away to a neighbouring borough which, while also ethnically mixed, had a more pronounced middle-class habitus fitting her desires. Most importantly the analysis of social location and class suggested that there is not simply one middle-class habitus in an area of such ethnic diversity, but that the women's belonging is complicated by the complex ethnic/class mix in the area, as defined by Butler and Hamnett (2011). Furthermore, my research has illustrated that the women's own migrant/diversity backgrounds are critical in understanding their relationship to the area. These findings confirmed that in such an ethnically mixed area class alone is not sufficient to account for belonging but that it can only be understood through an intersection of class and ethnicity. In reflecting the significant demographic changes currently taking place in Newham, my research illustrates May's (2011) argument of the importance of belonging as a concept linking the self and society and revealing social change.

As stated at the outset, this thesis was less concerned with Yuval-Davis' third facet of ethical and political values. My focus specifically concerned subjective belonging and therefore the women were not asked questions directly relating to their or others' values, though responses pertaining to values would be explored. To the question of what meaning their citizenship had for them, only one of the women related her answer to rights and responsibilities and her role as a citizen. All the others talked about citizenship in status terms. However, the issue of values arose acutely in Agnes' and Tendo's later stories when their citizenship statuses were challenged by their changing circumstances exposing them to institutional prejudice and undermining their sense of belonging. These stories illustrate Yuval-Davis' argument that belonging tends to be normalised and becomes politicised only when threatened.

The third analytical framework discussed in the introductory chapter was Antonsich's concept of place-belongingness. My research has established that subjective belonging to place was important through the women's lives but it was argued that such attachments cannot be defined purely in terms of place because they are so closely bound up with social relations experienced in those places. My exploration of the women's childhood belonging firmly suggested that attachments to people were not only as important as those to places, but that they were inextricably enmeshed; producing attachments to particular communities of people in particular places which I defined as localities of belonging. However, there were also women who as children did not experience such localities of belonging, but experienced dislocated childhoods not least due to repeated moving from place to

place, or other forms of alienation. For some of the women their childhood attachments to place have remained important in their adult belonging according with Antonsich that childhood place belongingness often has 'a central place' in adult lives. In addition, I believe it is imperative to distinguish between attachments to place that exist in adult memory and those that remain actualised in adult life. For it was evident from the women's stories that a sense of belonging to the places of their childhood was far more meaningful where there were continued social relations, in particular with family. Frederica eloquently expressed such a sentiment about her relationship to Malaysia, which she had left nearly 40 years previously:

So I do ... feel a sense of belonging as, as the place that I grew up in and obviously my family's there, but as I say, if my family wasn't there I think I would feel less, and I certainly, almost certainly wouldn't be visiting every year.

Following Massey's (2005, 1994) conceptualisation of place, I argued that place belonging is not attachment to an essential form of place, but is a performative engagement in the everyday practices of social relations that constitute place. As such, my research found that although in adulthood the women did experience belonging to place it was not necessarily local place, as in the street or immediate locality, but more fluidly, to other parts of Newham or the borough as a whole, and for a few, to East London more generally. In other words, it was very much where the women had made particular connections with others through activities meaningful to their everyday lives. Place- and non-place-based belonging also arose in exploring the notion of community belonging. The thesis argued against Miller's stance that there is no value in researching community because it has no meaning within a London street. Instead, I advocated Olwig's (2002) broader concept of community as shared fields of belonging which fore-fronts the social relations that had meaning for the women themselves. Through using this concept it was demonstrated that, while little belonging to community was experienced in the street itself, the women had multifarious community belongings some of which were place-based such as motherhood in the locality, and others such as belief- and issue-based activities for which place had less relevance.

Everyday performativity of subjective belonging

The role of performativity in belonging (Bell, 1999; Fortier, 1999) has been broadened and applied in this thesis to everyday practices and has been a common motif throughout. Repeated everyday practice has been shown as central

in the formation of childhood localities of belonging, adult ethnic belonging, and adult attachments to class, place and community. Indeed, I have argued that everyday performativity is an essential component of subjective belonging, which requires the performance of embodied practices over time to form the emotional attachments to people and places that give meaning and security to the women's lives. In making this claim I have differentiated the concept of belonging from that of identification which I have argued does not necessarily require performative practices. Through close analysis of different practices, particularly custom and tradition, including religion, language and food, I have demonstrated the significance of these performative everyday acts in revealing the complexities of the women's adult ethnic along a shifting spectrum of belonging and not belonging. However this analysis also demonstrated that although performativity is necessary for a sense of belonging, it cannot per se, create a sense of belonging. The multiple and varying configurations in the women's practice and attitudes in particular to food revealed that the women's positionalities (Anthias, 2008, 2002) were crucial in shaping the meaning of ethnic practices and their ultimate sense of belonging. The meaning of these practices to the women could only be understood by consideration of the stories of their whole lives and the sometime fluctuating belonging and not belonging that they experienced as children, and as younger and older adults, which were articulated through their narratives. It is the women's positionalities through time, embedded in their performative emotional attachments, and articulated through the narrative meaning they make of their experiences as they reflect upon them, that enable an understanding of their sense of belonging.

Future research of subjective belonging

The original motivation of this research was to open a window onto subjective belonging. There was never a hypothesis to prove but a determination to understand how a sense of belonging is experienced. In the context of a multicultural East London street and through the stories of an assortment of both migrant and non-migrant women of varying ethnicities, ages and class, this thesis has offered a detailed and nuanced analysis of some of the multi-layered and intricate complexities found in the formation of subjective belonging. Hopefully I have come some way in meeting the need, argued by Savage, to research, '... the more general concept of 'belonging' itself, which I think is remarkably under-utilized in the social sciences' (Savage, 2010, p. 161). However, as much as the thesis has considered, the research has thrown up questions and realms of exploration far in excess of the potential of this thesis, giving rise to a range of possibilities for future

research. As noted early in the thesis, the lack of South Asian participants was significant. It excluded the possibility of providing a broader understanding of subjective belonging in relation to the locality's ethnic/class mix (Butler and Hamnett, 2011) and the potentially varying habitus of the South Asian middle-class. It would seem in this circumstance that involving 'gatekeepers' and/or South Asian researchers would be necessary and appropriate. Related to this concern is the element of diversity, or super-diversity (Vertovec, 2007), of the area. A number of the interviewees did mention a lack of social mixing (as Butler with Robson, 2003, make clear) which this thesis did not explore, but an attempt to research the issue would complement and enhance understanding of subjective belonging in a very ethnically diverse part of London. 'How does the locality's diversity impact on your sense of belonging?' is an unasked question that clearly should be asked, but also one that is difficult to adequately address without the inclusion of a large ethnic minority population. A related but very different issue is the notion of London as an alternative subjective, geographical marker to that of ethnicity. Such a positionality has been raised here by a surprising mix of migrant and non-migrant women and suggests that how subjective belonging is understood in this 'world in one city' (Benedictus, 2005) must be worthy of further research.

A further sphere that did not come within the remit of this thesis but is clearly of some import is that of education. The educating of children certainly arose in my interviews and following Butler and Hamnett's (2011) East London focus on parental educational aspiration, it would be timely and important to consider education in relation to subjective belonging. How and where children are educated is often a contentious and problematic issue; parents want to 'do the best' for their children, but what is the best when considering the sense of belonging for both children and their parents? Is it staying local or travelling? Is it state or private education? Does the place and type of schooling alter belonging within the family, or to the locality in which they live? How are both children and their parents affected?

Already raised in the thesis as an area that should be further investigated are the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. How do notions of civil, political and social rights relate to subjective belonging? What is meaningful in belonging as a British citizen beyond that of status? Other thematic issues that would enhance further understanding of subjective belonging would include concerns such as safety, work, family, friendships and arts and culture, and a further means of illuminating subjective belonging would be through a lens of gender difference.

Last but certainly not least, this project highlights a need for more research, into and perhaps beyond subjective belonging, to focus across, rather than within ethnic categories. My research has patently demonstrated that many issues are applicable to British-born women of all ethnic backgrounds, as well as to migrant women, one example being cultural transmission which has been shown here as dynamic and innovative in non-migrant transmission as well as in migrant transmission. The intersectional consideration of the life stories of a diverse range of people, rather than those within particular ethnic or national categorisations, offers a deeper understanding of similarities and differences of experience which, through narrative inquiry, enable a more comprehensive understanding of the self and society.

References

- 1911 Census website, <http://www.1911census.co.uk/> (Accessed: 16 January 2013).
- A2D (Advance to Deliver Project) (2011) *Newham - key statistics*. Available at: <http://www.aston-mansfield.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/newham-key-statistics.pdf> (Accessed: 30 January 2013).
- Academy for the study of Britishness, (2008) *University of Huddersfield* [Online]. Available at: <http://www2.hud.ac.uk/asb/index.php> (Accessed: 4 July 2011).
- Adams, C. (1987) *Across seven seas and thirteen rivers: life stories of pioneer Sylheti settlers in Britain*. London: Thap Books.
- Agbaje, (2012) *Belong*. London: Bloomsbury, Methuen Drama.
- Ahmed, S. and Fortier, A-M. (2003) 'Re-imagining Communities', *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(3), pp. 251-259.
- Alagiah, G. (2006) *A home from home: from immigrant boy to English man*. London: Little, Brown.
- Alibhai-Brown, Y. (2010) *The settler's cookbook: a memoir of love, migration and food*. London: Portobello Books.
- Allsopp, J. (2012) 'Migrations: reconstructing 'Britishness' in art', *openDemocracy*, February [Online]. Available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/jennyallsopp/migrationsreconstructing-britishness-in-art> (Accessed 24 February 2012).
- Amit, V. (ed.) (2002) 'Reconceptualizing community', in Amit, V. (ed.) *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*. London: Routledge, pp. 1-20.
- Anderson, B. (2006) *Imagined communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. 2nd ed. London: Verso.
- Andrews, M. (1991) *Lifetimes of commitment: aging, politics, psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Andrews, M. (2002) 'Feminist research with non-feminist and anti-Semitism-feminist women: meeting the challenge', *Feminism and Psychology*, (12)1, pp. 55-77.
- Andrews, M. (2007) *Shaping history: narratives of political change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Andrews, M. (2008) 'Never the last word: revisiting data', in Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage, pp. 86-101.
- Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) (2008) *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage.

- Anthias, F. (2002) 'Where do I belong: narrating collective identity and translocational positionality', *Ethnicities*, 2(4), pp. 491-514.
- Anthias, F. (2008) 'Thinking through the lens of translocational positionality: an intersectionality frame for understanding identity and belonging', *Translocations: Migration and Social Change*, 4(1), pp. 5-20, An Irish Inter-University Open Access E-Journal [Online]. Available at: http://www.dcu.ie/imrstr/volume_4_issue_1/Vol_4_Issue_1_Floya_Anthias.pdf (Accessed: 1 July 2011).
- Antoniou, M. (2004) 'My Cypriot cookbook: re-imagining my ethnicity', *Auto/Biography*, 12, pp. 126-146.
- Antonsich, M. (2010) 'Searching for belonging: an analytical framework', *Geography Compass*, 4, pp. 644-659.
- Armitage, S. with Hart, P. and Weathermon, K. (eds.) (2002) *Women's oral history: the frontiers reader*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
- Atkinson, R. (1998) *The life story interview*. London: Sage.
- Back, L. (2007) *The art of listening*. Oxford: Berg.
- Baker, J. (2008) *Belonging*. London: Walker Books.
- Baker, S.E. and Edwards, R. (2012) 'How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflections on sampling and cases in qualitative research', *National Centre for Research Methods* [Online]. Available at: http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/1/how_many_interviews.pdf (Accessed: 27 March 2012).
- Ballard, R. (1994) *Desh pardesh: the South Asian presence in Britain*. London: Hurst.
- Balutansky, K. M. (1989) 'We are all activists: an interview with Merle Hodge', *Callaloo*, 41, pp. 651-662, JSTOR [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2931174> (Accessed: 29 October 2011).
- Bamberg, M., De Fina, A. and Schiffrin, D. (eds.) (2007) *Selves and identities in narrative and discourse*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins, Studies in Narrative Series, vol. 9.
- Bannister, J. (2012) 'Young people, territoriality and identity', *Everyday belongings: theorising the self, society and change symposium*. Morgan Centre for the Study of Relationships and Personal Life, University of Manchester, and Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, University of East London, at the University of Manchester, 17 February.
- Barth, F. (1969) 'Introduction' in Barth, F. (ed.) *Ethnic groups and boundaries: the social organization of culture difference*. London: Allen and Unwin, pp. 9-37.
- Barth, F. (1994) 'Enduring and emerging issues in the analysis of ethnicity' in Vermeulen, H. and Govers, C. (eds.), *The anthropology of ethnicity: beyond 'Ethnic groups and boundaries'*. Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, pp. 11-32.

- Bauman, Z. (2001) *Community: seeking safety in an insecure world*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bauman, Z. (2008) 'Identity for identity's sake is a bit dodgy', in Davison, S. and Rutherford, J. (eds.) *Race, identity and belonging: a soundings collection*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, pp. 92-100.
- BBC News (2102) 'David Cameron stars on Late Show with David Letterman', Online, 27, September. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-19739066> (Accessed: 27 September 2012).
- Begum, H. (2008) 'Geographies of inclusion/exclusion: British Muslim women in the East End of London', *Sociological Research Online*. Available at: <http://socresonline.org.uk/13/5/10.html> (Accessed: 6 January 2012).
- Bell, V. (1999) 'Performativity and belonging: an introduction', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16(2), pp. 1-10.
- Belong* by Bola Agbaje (2012) Directed by Indhu Rubasinghan [The Royal Court, Jerwood Theatre Upstairs, London. 24 May].
- (be)longing* (2007) Directed by L. Hill and H. Paris [DVD]. London: Curious International Ltd.
- Belonging* (2008) Young people's workshops and video films exploring belonging. Manifesta in association with the Runnymede Trust. Available at: <http://www.manifesta.org.uk/our-work/belonging/the-project.html> and: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/projects-and-publications/projects/young-people/belonging.html> (Accessed: 22 July 2011).
- Benedictus, L. (2005) "Every race, colour, nation and religion on earth", London: the world in one city', *The Guardian* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2005/jan/21/britishidentity1> (Accessed: 16 October 2009).
- Benson, M. and Jackson, E. (2012) 'Place-making and place maintenance: practices of place and belonging among the middle classes', *Sociology*, 0 (0), pp. 1-17, Sage [Online]. DOI: 10.1177/0038038512454350 (Accessed: 3 January 2013).
- Bhattacharya, K. (2007) 'Consenting to the consent form: what are the fixed and fluid understandings between the researcher and the researched?', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13(8), pp. 1095-1115.
- Bhopal, K. (2001) 'Researching South Asian women: issues of sameness and difference in the research process', *Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(3), pp. 279-286.
- Bloch, H. (1997) *Earlham Grove Shul: one hundred years of West Ham Synagogue and community*. London: West Ham and Upton Park Synagogue.
- Bloemraad, I. (2004), 'Who Claims Dual Citizenship? The limits of postnationalism, the possibilities of transnationalism, and the persistence of traditional citizenship', *The International Migration Review*, 38, pp. 389-426. DOI: 10.1111/j.1747-7379.2004.tb00203.x (Accessed: 14 June 2012).
- Blunt, A. and R. M. Dowling (2006). *Home*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Borland, K. (1991) 'That's not what I said': interpretive conflict in oral narrative research', in Gluck, S. B. and Patai, D. (eds.) *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history*. London: Routledge.
- Bouwman, R. (1993) 'Australians and New Zealanders in London', in Merriman, N. (ed.) *The peopling of London: fifteen thousand years of settlement from overseas*. London: Museum of London.
- Brah, A. (1996) *Cartographies of diaspora: contending identities*. London Routledge (Gender, racism, ethnicity series).
- Brah, A. and Phoenix, A. (2004) 'Ain't I a woman? Revisiting intersectionality', *Journal of International Women's Studies*, 5(3), pp. 75-86.
- Braybon, G. and Summerfield, P. (1987) *Out of the cage: women's experiences in two world wars*. London: Pandora.
- Bridge, G., Butler, T. and Lees, L. (2012) *Mixed communities: gentrification by stealth?* Bristol: Policy Press.
- British Nationality Act 1948 (16 George VI, ch. 56). Available at: http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1948/56/pdfs/ukpga_19480056_en.pdf (Accessed: 19 June 2012).
- Brockmeier, J. (2000) 'Autobiographical time', *Narrative Inquiry*, 10(1), pp. 51-73.
- Brockmeier, J. (2001) 'From the end to the beginning: retrospective teleology in autobiography' in Brockmeier, J. and Carbaugh, D. (eds.) *Narrative and identity: studies in autobiography, self and culture*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 247-280.
- Brockmeier, J. (2002) 'Remembering and forgetting: narrative as cultural memory', *Culture and Psychology*, (8)1: pp. 15-43.
- Brockmeier, J. (2009) Stories to remember: narrative and the time of memory, *StoryWorlds: A Journal of Narrative Studies*, (1) pp. 115-132. Available at: <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/stw/summary/v001/1.brockmeier.html> (Accessed: 9 August 2012).
- Brockmeier, J. and Carbaugh, D. (eds.) (2001) *Narrative and identity: studies in autobiography, self and culture*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins
- Brown, B. L. (1996) *Bringing it home: women talk about feminism in their lives*. Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp.
- Brown, L. (2009) 'An ethnographic study of the friendship patterns of international students in England: an attempt to recreate home through conational interaction', *International Journal of Educational Research*, 48, pp. 184-193, ScienceDirect [Online]. Available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/B6VDF-4X30C3H-1/2/b0a98889563be36da3a33cdd53197226> (Accessed: 1 March 2011).
- Brubaker, R. (2002). 'Ethnicity without groups', *European Journal of Sociology*, 43 , pp. 163-189, Cambridge Journals [Online]. Available at: http://journals.cambridge.org/download.php?file=%2FEU%2FEUR43_02%2FS0003975602001066a.pdf&code=a19591fe8dc3ecc8b451e4f5abcf862 (Accessed: 27 April 2012).

- Brubaker, R. and Cooper, F. (2000) 'Beyond "identity"', *Theory and Society*, 29, (1), pp. 1-47. JSTOR [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3108478> (Accessed: 22 July 2009).
- Bruner, J. (1991) 'Self-making and world-making', in Brockmeier, J. and Carbaugh, D. (eds.) *Narrative and identity: studies in autobiography, self and culture*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, pp. 25-37.
- Bryan, B. Dadzie, S. and Scafe, S. (1985) *The heart of the race: black women's lives in Britain*. London: Virago.
- Butler, T. and Hamnett, C. (2011) *Ethnicity, class and aspiration: understanding London's new East End*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Butler, T. with Robson, G. (2003) *London calling: the middle classes and the re-making of inner London*. London: Berg.
- Calder, G., Cole, P., Seglow, J. (2010) *Citizenship acquisition and national belonging: migration, membership and the liberal democratic state*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cameron, D. (2011) 'State multiculturalism has failed, says David Cameron', *BBC News*, 5 February 2011. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994> (Accessed: 5 February 2011).
- Canning, K. and Rose, S.O. (2002) 'Gender, citizenships and subjectivity: some historical and theoretical considerations', in Canning, K. and Rose, S.O. (eds.) *Gender, citizenships and subjectivities*. Oxford: Blackwell, Gender and History special issue.
- Cannon, C. (2001) *Our grandmothers, our mothers, ourselves: a century of women's lives*. 2nd ed. London: Third Age Press.
- Carrillo Rowe, A. (2005) 'Be longing: toward a feminist politics of relation', *NWSA Journal (National Women's Studies Journal)*, 17(2), pp. 15–37.
- Casey, M. S. (2007) *The history of Kuwait*. Westport: Greenwood Press (The Greenwood Histories of the modern nations).
- Castles, S. and Davidson A. (2000) *Citizenship and migration: globalization and the politics of belonging*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Caxaj, C. S. and Berman, H. (2010) 'Belonging among newcomer youths: intersecting experiences of inclusion and exclusion', *Advances in Nursing Science*, (33)4, pp. E17 - E30.
- Census Returns (1891; 1901; 1911) Newham Archives and Local Studies Library, Stratford Library, London Borough of Newham.
- Chamberlain, M. (2005) 'Family and identity: Barbadian migrants to Britain' in Benmayor, R. and Skotnes, A. (eds.) *Migration and identity*. 2nd edn. London: Transaction, pp. 119-135.
- Chamberlain, M., and Leydesdorff, S. (2004) 'Transnational families: memories and narratives', *Global Networks*, 4(3), pp. 227-241. DOI:10.1111/j.1471-0374.2004.00090.x (Accessed: 16 November 2011).

- Chamberlain, M.E. (1999) *Decolonization: the fall of the European empires*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell (Historical Association Studies).
- Chamberlain, M.E. (2010) *The scramble for Africa*. 3rd edn. London: Longman (Seminar Studies in History).
- Chater, K. (2009) *Untold Histories: black people in England and Wales during the period of the British slave trade, c. 1660-1807*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Cherry, B., O'Brien, C. and Pevsner, N. (2005) *The buildings of England: London 5 East*. London: Yale University Press.
- Christensen, A-D. (2009) 'Belonging and unbelonging from an intersectional perspective', *Gender, Technology and Development*, 13(1) pp. 21-41.
- Christensen, A-D. and Jensen, S.Q. (2011) 'Roots and routes: migration, belonging and everyday life', *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 1(3), pp. 146-155. DOI: 10.2478/v10202-011-0013-1 (Accessed: 23 June 2013).
- Codesal, D. M. (2010) 'Eating abroad, remembering (at) home: three foodscapes of Ecuadorian migration in New York, London and Santander', *Anthropology of Food* [Online]. Available at: <http://aof.revues.org/index6642.html> (Accessed: 18 April 2012).
- Cohen, A.P. (2002) 'Epilogue', in Amit, V. (ed.) *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*. London: Routledge, pp. 165-170.
- Cooper, H. and Morrison, P. (1991) *A sense of belonging: dilemmas of British Jewish identity*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Coronation Street* (1960-2013) ITV.
- Cosslett, T., Lury, L. and Summerfield, P. (eds.) (2000) *Feminism and autobiography: texts, theories, methods*. London: Routledge.
- Crouch, D. (1998) 'The street in the making of popular geographical knowledge', in Fyfe, N. (ed.) *Images of the street: planning, identity and control in public space*. London: Routledge, pp. 160-175.
- Dahl, I. and Thor, M. (2009) 'Oral history, constructions and deconstructions of narratives: Intersections of class, gender, locality, nation and religion in narratives from a Jewish woman in Sweden', *Enquire*, 3, pp. 1-24. Available at: <http://enquirenottingham.co.uk/images/documents/3rd-dahl-thor.pdf> (Accessed 28 November 2011).
- Dahlin, E.C. and Hironaka, A. (2008) 'Citizenship beyond borders: a cross-national study of dual citizenship', *Sociological Inquiry*, 78(1), pp. 54-73.
- Davis, K. (2008) 'Intersectionality as a buzzword: a sociology of science perspective on what makes a feminist theory successful', *Feminist Theory*, 9(1), pp. 67-85.
- den Besten, O. (2010) 'Local belonging and 'geographies of emotions': immigrant children's experience of their neighbourhoods in Paris and Berlin', *Childhood*, 17(2), pp. 181-195, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://chd.sagepub.com/content/17/2/181> (Accessed: 27 October 2011).

- Delanty, G. (2010) *Community*. 2nd ed. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Duyvendak, J. W. (2011) *The politics of home: belonging and nostalgia in Western Europe and the United States*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Eade, J. (1997) 'Keeping the options open: Bangladeshis in a global city' in Kershner, A. (ed.) *London the promised land? The migrant experience in a capital city*. Aldershot: Avebury, pp. 91-109.
- Eade, J. (2002a) 'Identity, nation and religion: educated young Bangladeshi Muslims in London's East End', in Eade, J. (ed.) *Living in the global city: globalization as a local process*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, pp.146-162.
- Eade, J. (2002b) 'Reconstructing places: changing images of locality in Docklands and Spitalfields' in Eade, J. (ed.) *Living in the global city: globalization as a local process*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, pp.127-145.
- Eade, J. (2004) 'Rather than making upset', in Bechler, R. (ed.) *Identities on the move*. London: British Council, pp. 10-27.
- Eade, J. and Garbin, D. (2006) 'Competing visions of identity and space: Bangladeshi Muslims in Britain', *Contemporary South Asia*, 15(2), pp. 181-193.
- Eakin, P.J. (2008) *Living autobiographically: how we create identity in narrative*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Easton, M. (2012) 'Define Britishness? It's like painting wind', *BBC News*, 2 March 2012. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-17218635> (Accessed: 12 March 2012).
- Elliott, J. (2005) *Using narrative in social research*. London: Sage.
- Epstein, H. (1979) *Children of the holocaust: conversations with sons and daughters of survivors*. Reprint, London: Penguin, 1988.
- Erel, U. (2009) *Migrant women transforming citizenship: life stories from Britain and Germany*. Ashgate: Farnham.
- Erel, U (2010) 'Migrating cultural capital: Bourdieu in migration studies', *Sociology*, 44(4), pp. 642-660, sagepub [Online]. Available at: <http://soc.sagepub.com/content/44/4/642> (Accessed: 27 October 2011).
- Erel, U. (2011) 'Reframing migrant mothers as citizens', *Citizenship Studies*, 15 (6-7), pp. 695-709. [Online] DOI: [10.1080/13621025.2011.600076](https://doi.org/10.1080/13621025.2011.600076) (Accessed: 14 June 2012).
- Ergun, A. and Erdemir, A. (2010) 'Negotiating insider and outsider identities in the field: 'insider' in a foreign land; 'outsider in one's own land', *Field Methods*, 22(1), pp.16-38.
- Etherington, K. (2004) *Becoming a reflexive researcher: using ourselves in research*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Ethnos (2005) Citizenship and belonging: what is Britishness? *Commission for Racial Equality (CRE)* [Online]. Available at: http://ethnos.co.uk/what_is_britishness_CRE.pdf (Accessed: 21 July 2012).

- Fathi, M. (2011) *Class narratives of educated Iranian women*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of East London.
- Fenster, T. (2004) 'Gender and the city: the different formations of belonging', in Nelson, L. and Seager, J. (eds.) *A Companion to feminist geography*. Oxford: Blackwell, pp. 242- 256. (Blackwell Companions to Geography).
- Feuchtwang, S. (1992) 'Where you belong', in Cambridge, A. and Feuchtwang, S. (eds.) *Where you belong: government and black culture*. Aldershot: Avebury, pp. 1-13.
- Finney, N., and Simpson, L. (2009). *Sleepwalking to segregation?: challenging myths about race and migration*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Fivush, R. and Haden, C. A. (eds.) (2003) *Autobiographical memory and the construction of a narrative self: developmental and cultural perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Ford, R. and Braude, J. (1990) 'Cricket test' is defended by Tebbit, *The Times*, 21 April 1990, Nexis Uk [Online]. Available at: http://www.lexisnexis.com/uk/nexis/results/docview/docview.do?docLinkId=true&risb=21_T15265430987&format=GNBFI&sort=BOOLEAN&startDocNo=1&resultsUrlKey=29_T15265430991&cisb=22_T15265430990&treeMax=true&treeWidth=0&csi=10939&docNo=7 (Accessed: 5 August 2012).
- Forster, M. (2002) *Good wives?: Mary, Fanny, Jennie and me, 1845-2001*. London: Vintage.
- Fortier, A-M. (1999) 'Re-remembering places and the performance of belonging(s)', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 16(2), pp. 41-64.
- Frankenberg, R. (1993) *White women, race matters: the social construction of whiteness*. London: Routledge.
- Fraser, P. (1993) 'Africans and Caribbeans in London', in Merriman, N. (ed.) *The peopling of London: fifteen thousand years of settlement from overseas*. London: Museum of London, pp. 51-61.
- Freeman, M. (1993) *Rewriting the self: history, memory, narrative*. London: Routledge.
- Freeman, M. (2010a). *Hindsight: the promise and peril of looking backward*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Freeman, M. (2010b) 'Telling stories: memory and narrative', in Radstone, S. and Schwarz, B. (eds.) *Memory: history, theories, debates*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 263-277.
- Freeman, M. (2012) *Working with issues of memory and identity* [workshop], NOVELLA, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, London WC1, 28 May 2012.
- Frisch, M. (1990) *A shared authority: essays on the craft and meaning of oral and public history*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Frisch, M. (2003) 'Sharing authority: oral history and the collaborative process', *The Oral History Review*, 30(1), pp. 111-113.

- Game, A. (2001) 'Belonging: experience in sacred time and space', in May, J. and Thrift, N. (eds.) *Timespace: geographies of temporality*. London: Routledge.
- Gardner, K. and Shukur, A. (1994) 'I'm Bengali, I'm Asian and I'm living here: the changing identity of British Bengalis', in Ballard, R. (ed.) *Desh pardesh: the South Asian presence in Britain*. London: Hurst. pp. 142-164.
- Garnett, E. (1937) *The family from One End Street*. Reprint, Harmondsworth: Penguin (Puffin), 1963.
- Gedalof, I. (2007) 'Unhomely Homes: women, family and belonging in UK discourses of migration and asylum', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 33(1), pp. 77-94, tandfonline [Online]. Available at: <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/13691830601043513> (Accessed: 24 July 2011).
- Gedalof, I. (2009) 'Birth, belonging and migrant mothers: narratives of reproduction in feminist migration studies', *Feminist Review*, 93, pp. 81-100.
- Geddes, A. and Favell, A. (eds.) (1999) *The politics of belonging: migrants and minorities in contemporary Europe*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Gluck, S.B. and Patai, D. (1991) *Women's words: the feminist practice of oral history*. London: Routledge.
- Goldsmith, P. (2008) Citizenship: our common bond. *Ministry of Justice* [Online]. Available at: <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20081105144348/http://www.justice.gov.uk/docs/citizenship-report-full.pdf> (Accessed: 16 August 2012).
- Good, F. (2006) 'Voice, ear and text: words, meaning and transcription', in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds.) *The oral history reader*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge, pp. 362-373.
- Great Britain. Home Office (2002) *Secure borders, safe haven: integration with diversity in modern Britain*, White paper, London: HMSO.
- Great Britain. Department for Communities and Local Government (2011) *The English Indices of Deprivation 2010*. (Neighbourhoods statistical release) [Online]. Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/6871/1871208.pdf (Accessed: 8 October 2012).
- Great Britain. (ONS) Office for National Statistics (2012) *Ethnicity and national identity in England and Wales*. Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/search/index.html?newquery=Ethnicity+and+National+Identity+in+England+and+Wales> (Accessed: 30 January 2013).
- Great Britain. (ONS) Office for National Statistics (2013) *2011 Census: QS211EW Ethnic group (detailed), Output Areas (OAs) in London*. Available at: <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/taxonomy/search/index.html?pageSize=50&sortBy=none&sortDirection=none&newquery=QS211EW&nc=Population> (Accessed: 30 January 2013).
- Gregg, A. (2013) Email to Nicola Samson, 28 March.

- Greider, K. (2011) *The archeology of home: an epic set on a thousand square feet of the Lower Eastside*. New York: Public Affairs.
- Grills, S. (ed.) (1998) 'Introduction', in *Doing ethnographic research: fieldwork settings*. London: Sage, pp. 1-18.
- Guterson, D. (1995) *Snow falling on cedars*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Hage, G. (2010) Migration, food, memory and home-building', in Radstone, S. and Schwarz, B. (eds.) *Memory: history, theories, debates*. New York: Fordham University Press, pp. 416-427.
- Hall, P. (2007) *Local voices London lives: tales from a working capital*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Hall, S. (1996) 'Who needs 'identity'?', in Hall, S. and du Gay, P. (eds.) *Questions of cultural identity*. London: Sage, pp. 1-17.
- Hamilton, M. (2006) 'Eating death: vegetarians, meat and violence', *Food, Culture and Society*, 9(2), pp. 155-177.
- Hancock, A-M. (2007) 'Intersectionality as a normative and empirical paradigm', *Politics and Gender*, 3(2), pp. 248-254.
- Haraway D.(1988) 'Situated knowledges: the science question in feminism and the privilege of partial perspective', *Feminist Studies*, 14, pp. 575-599, JSTOR [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3178066> (Accessed: 31 May 2011).
- Hartley, J. (ed.) (1994) *Hearts undefeated: women's writing of the second world war*. London: Virago.
- Haw, K. (2010) 'Being, becoming and belonging: young Muslim women in contemporary Britain', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 31(4), pp. 345-361.
- Haw, K. (2011) 'The 'changing same' of an 'in-between' generation: negotiating identities through space, place and time', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 32(4), pp. 565-579.
- Haynes, M. (1999) 'Whose life is it anyway?', *Women's Studies International Forum*, 22(6), pp. 659-671, ScienceDirect [Online]. Available at: <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/B6VBD-3Y3XP6C-7/2/2cf30e0531e864d2f81098e44a67b8bc> (Accessed: 1 March 2011).
- Heron, L. (ed.) (1985) *Truth, dare or promise: girls growing up in the fifties*. London: Virago.
- Hickman, M., Morgan, S., Walter, B. and Bradley, J. (2005) 'The limitations of whiteness and the boundaries of Englishness: second-generation Irish identifications and positionings in multiethnic Britain', *Ethnicities*, 5 (2), pp. 161-182.
- Hickman, M., Crowley, H. and Mai, N. (2008) 'Immigration and social cohesion in the UK: the rhythms and realities of everyday life', *Joseph Rowntree Foundation* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/immigration-and-social-cohesion-uk> (Accessed: 21 July 2008).

- Hodge, M. (1975) 'The peoples of Trinidad and Tobago', in Anthony, M. and Carr, A. (eds.) *Trinidad and Tobago*. London: André Deutsch, pp. 31-40.
- Hoffman, E. (1991) *Lost in translation: a life in a new language*. 2nd edn. London: Minerva.
- Hoffman, E. (2005) *After such knowledge: a meditation on the aftermath of the holocaust*. London: Vintage.
- Hoffman, E. (2009) *Time*. London: Profile Books.
- Holstein, J. and J. Gubrium (1999) *The self we live by: narrative identity in a postmodern world*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- hooks, b. (2009) *Belonging: a culture of place*. London: Routledge.
- Hutton, S. (1993) *The Irish in London* in, Merriman, N. (ed.) *The peopling of London: fifteen thousand years of settlement from overseas*. London: Museum of London, pp. 118-128.
- Hyvärinen, M., Hydén, L-C., Saarenheimo, M. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) (2010) *Beyond narrative coherence*. Amsterdam, John Benjamins, Studies in Narrative Series, vol. 11.
- Idle, E. D. (1943) *War over West Ham: a story of community and adjustment*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Ifekwunigwe, J. O. (1999) *Scattered belongings: cultural paradoxes of 'race', nation and gender*. London: Routledge.
- Irwin, K. (2006) 'Into the dark heart of ethnography: the lived ethics and inequality of intimate field relationships', *Qualitative Sociology*, 29(2), pp. 155-175, University of Hawaii website [Online]. Available at: <http://socialsciences.people.hawaii.edu/faculty/?dept=soc&faculty=kirwin@hawaii.edu> (Accessed: 1 March 2011).
- Jackson, S. (2008) 'Diversity, identity and belonging: women's spaces of sociality', *The International Journal of Diversity in Organisations, Communities and Nations*, 8(3), pp. 147-154. Available at: <http://eprints.bbk.ac.uk/2203> (Accessed: 12 May 2011).
- Jenkins, R. (1997) *Rethinking ethnicity*. London: Sage.
- Jenkins, R. (2002) *Pierre Bourdieu*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
- Jenkins, R. (2008) *Social Identity*. 3rd edn. London: Routledge.
- Jerram, L. (2011) *Streetlife: the untold history of Europe's twentieth century*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Jewish Women's History Group (1983) 'You'd prefer me not to mention it...' *the lives of four Jewish daughters of refugees*. London: The Jewish Women's History Group.
- Jewish Women in London Group (eds.) (1989) *Generations of memories: voices of Jewish women*. London: The Women's Press.

- Josselson, R. (1996) 'On writing other people's lives: self-analytic reflections of a narrative researcher', in Josselson, R. (ed.) *Ethics and Process in the Narrative Study of Lives*. London: Sage.
- Josselson, R. (2004) 'The hermeneutics of faith and the hermeneutics of suspicion', *Narrative Inquiry*, 14(1), pp. 1-28.
- Josselson, R. (2011) "Bet you think this song is about you": whose narrative is it in narrative research?', *Narrative Works: Issues, Investigations, and Interventions*, 1(1) [Online]. Available at: <http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/NW/issue/view/1386> (Accessed: 2 February 2012).
- Karpf, A. (1997) *The war after: living with the holocaust*. London: Minerva.
- Kay, J. (2010) *Red dust road*. London: Picador.
- Kerr, D. (2003) "We know what the problem is": using oral history to develop a collaborative analysis of homelessness from the bottom up', *The oral history review*, 30(1), pp. 27-45.
- Kershen, A. (2005) *Strangers, aliens and Asians: Huguenots, Jews and Bangladeshis in Spitalfields 1660-2000*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Kitzinger, C. (2007) 'Feminist approaches', in Seale, C., Giampietro, G., Gubrium, J. F. and Silverman, D. (eds.) *Qualitative Research Practice*. 2nd edn. London: Sage, pp. 113-128.
- Koh, S.-Y. (2012) 'Everyday lives of the Malaysian diaspora. New Mandala: new perspectives on mainland Southeast Asia'. *LSE Research* [Online] Available at: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/44264/> (Accessed: 30 October 2012).
- Kramnick, M. (ed.) (1978) *Wollstonecraft: vindication of the rights of woman*. 2nd edn. Middlesex: Penguin.
- Krause, C. A. (1991) *Grandmothers, mothers and daughters: oral histories of three generations of ethnic American women*. Boston: Twayne.
- Kvale, S. (1996) *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Lanchester, J. (2013) *Capital*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Lawson, B. (2001) *The language of space*. Oxford: Architectural Press.
- Leach, N. (2002) 'Belonging: towards a theory of identification with space', in Hillier, J. and Rooksby, E. (eds.) *Habitus: a sense of place*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Leggett, I. (2001) *Uganda*. Oxford: Oxfam (Oxfam Country Profiles Series).
- Levy, A. (2004) *Small island*. London: Review.
- Lewis, G. (1985) 'From deepest Kilburn', in Heron, L. (ed.) *Truth, dare or promise: girls growing up in the fifties*. London: Virago.

- Lewis, G. (2009) 'Celebrating intersectionality? Debates on a multi-faceted concept in gender studies: themes from a conference', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 16(3), pp. 203-210, Open Research Online [Online]. Available at: <http://oro.open.ac.uk/24650/2/AF720D51.pdf> (Accessed: 1 July 2011).
- Lieberman, B. (2006) *Terrible fate: ethnic cleansing in the making of modern Europe*. Chicago: Ivan R. Dee.
- Lieblich, A. (1996) 'Some unforeseen outcomes of conducting narrative research with people of one's own culture', in Josselson, R. (ed.) *Ethics and process in the narrative study of lives*. London: Sage.
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R. and Zilber, T. (1998) *Narrative research: reading, analysis and interpretation*. London: Sage.
- Lin, J. and Mele, C. (2005) *The urban sociology reader*, London: Routledge.
- Linden, R. R. (1993) *Making stories, making selves: feminist reflections on the holocaust*. Columbus: Ohio State University Press
- Lister, R. (1997) *Citizenship: feminist perspectives*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Litvinoff, E. (1972) *Journey through a small planet*. Reprint, London: Penguin, 2008.
- Llewelyn Davies, M. (ed.) (1977) *Life as we have known it: by co-operative working women*. London: Virago.
- London Borough of Newham (no date) 'The Newham story: a short history of the London Borough of Newham', *London Borough of Newham* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.newham.gov.uk/nr/rdonlyres/52364e5a-4560-4650-86ad-da699bf7224e/0/newhamstory.pdf> (Accessed: 25 August 2009).
- London Borough of Newham, Newham Archives and Local Studies Library, *Stratford Library*, 3 The Grove, Stratford, London, E15 1EL.
- London Borough of Newham (2012) 'Green Street - east meets east', *London Borough of Newham* [Online]. Available at: http://www.newham.com/page/attractions_green_street_east_meets_east/834,10,0,0,0.html (Accessed: 10 October 2012).
- London Transport (no date) 'Generations: celebrating 50 years of Caribbean recruitment', *London Transport Museum* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.ltmuseum.co.uk/assets/downloads/Generations.pdf> (Accessed: 26 February 2012).
- Long, L. M. (2004) 'Learning to listen to the food voice: recipes as expressions of identity and carriers of memory', *Food, Culture and Society*, 7(1), pp. 118-122.
- López C., C. (2001) 'The British presence in the Malay world: a meeting of civilizational traditions', *Sari*, 19, pp. 3-33. Available at: <http://www.ukm.my/~penerbit/jsari19-01.pdf> (Accessed: 12 December 2011).

- Ludvig, A. (2006) 'Differences between women? Intersecting voices in a female narrative', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), pp. 245-258, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/13/3/245> (Accessed: 21 March 2011).
- Make Bradford British* (2012) Episode 1, Channel 4 Television, 1 March 2012. Available at: <http://www.channel4.com/programmes/make-bradford-british/articles/home> (Accessed: 5 July 2012).
- Malouf, D. (2003) 'Made in England: Australia's British inheritance', *Quarterly Essay*, 12. Melbourne: Black Inc.
- Manzoor, S. (2007) *Greetings from Bury Park: race, religion and rock 'n' roll*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Marclay, C. (2010) *The clock*. Exhibition held at the White Cube Gallery, Mason's Yard, London, November 2010.
- Marriott, J. (1991) *The culture of labourism: The East End between the wars*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Marriott, J. (2012) *Beyond the tower: a history of East London*. London: Yale University press.
- Marsh, P., Bradley, S., Love, C., Alexander, P. and Norham, R. (2007) 'Belonging', *The Social Issues Research Centre* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.sirc.org/publik/belonging.pdf> (Accessed 29 March 2011).
- Marte, L. (2011) 'Afro-diasporic seasonings: food routes and Dominican place-making in New York City', *Food, Culture and Society*, 14(2), pp. 181-204.
- Maslow, A. (1943) 'A theory of human motivation', *Psychological Review*, 50(4), pp. 370-396, EBSCOhost [Online] Available at: <http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=4&hid=7&sid=3eacf6d3-d99a-435c-adf2-e2832e3742c1%40sessionmgr10> (Accessed: 22 November 2011).
- Massey, D. (1994) *Space, place and gender*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Massey, D. (2005) *For space*. London: Sage.
- May, V. (2011) 'Self, belonging and social change', *Sociology*, 45(3), pp. 363-378, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://soc.sagepub.com/content/45/3/363> (Accessed: 27 June 2011).
- Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.) (1994) *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- McAdams, D. P. (2003) 'Identity and the life story', in Fivush, R. and Haden, C. A. (eds.) *Autobiographical memory and the construction of a narrative self: developmental and cultural perspectives*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- McAdams, D. P., Josselson, R. and Lieblich, A. (2006) *Identity and story: creating self in narrative*. Washington: American Psychological Association.
- McClelland, N. (2011) *Internal geographies*. Counterpoint, Platforma Arts Festival, Club Row, Rochelle School Gallery, London, E2, 29 November - 4 December 2011. Available at: <http://nicolamcclelland.com/exhibitions/Internal-Geographies.html> (Accessed: 12 March 2012).

- McDougall, D. (1936) *Fifty years a borough: the story of West Ham*. London: County Borough Council West Ham.
- McIntosh, I., Sim, D. and Robertson, D. (2004) 'We hate the English, except for you, cos you're our pal': identification of the 'English' in Scotland', *Sociology*, 38 (1), pp. 43-59, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://soc.sagepub.com/content/38/1/43.full.pdf+html> (Accessed: 17 December 2011).
- Merriman, N. (ed.) (1993) *The peopling of London: fifteen thousand years of settlement from overseas*. London: Museum of London.
- Miller, D. (2005) 'Thinking a North London street', *University College London* [Online]. Available at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/people/academic_staff/d_miller/mil-16 (Accessed: 8 April 2009).
- Miller, D. (2008a) *The comfort of things*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Miller, D. (2008b) 'Paul Thompson and the problem of communities in London', *University College London* [Online]. Available at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/anthropology/people/academic_staff/d_miller/mil-15 (Accessed: 8 April 2009).
- Miller, D. (2009) Personal conversation with Daniel Miller, keynote speaker at FiLo (The Fieldwork in London Network) PhD Students Day Workshop held at the Institute of Contemporary European Studies, Regents College London, 18 September 2009.
- Miller, D. and Woodward, S. (2012) *Blue jeans: the art of the ordinary*. London: University of California Press.
- Mills, C. W. (1959) *The sociological imagination*. Reprint, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.
- Mills, T. (1975) 'The Food', in Anthony, M. and Carr, A. (eds.) *Trinidad and Tobago*. London: André Deutsch, pp. 189-197.
- Mishler, E. (1999) *Storylines: craftartists' narratives of identity*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Mishler, E. (2003) 'Representing discourse: the rhetoric of transcription', in Lincoln, Y.S. and Denzin, N.K. (eds.) *Turning points in qualitative research: tying knots in a handkerchief*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press, pp. 297-326.
- Mishler, E. (2004) 'Historians of the self: restorying lives, revising identities', *Research in Human Development*, 1(1+2), pp. 101-121.
- Modood, T. (2010) *Still not easy being British: struggles for a multicultural citizenship*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham.
- Modood, T. and Salt, J. (eds.) (2011) *Global Migration, Ethnicity and Britishness*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mumford, K. and Power, A. (2003) *East Enders: family and community in East London*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Munday, J. (2009) 'Gendered citizenship', *Sociology Compass*, 3(2), pp. 249-266.

- My Street* (2008) Channel 4 Television, 21 February.
- Nava, M. (2007) *Visceral cosmopolitanism: gender, culture and the normalisation of difference*. Oxford: Berg.
- Newham History Workshop (1986) *A marsh and a gasworks: one hundred years of life in West Ham*. London: Newham Parents' Centre (Publication No. 46).
- Ní Laoire, C., Carpena-Méndez, F., Tyrrell, N. and White, A. (2010) 'Introduction: childhood and migration – mobilities, homes and belongings', *Childhood*, 17(2), pp. 155-162, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://chd.sagepub.com/content/17/2/155> (Accessed: 27 October 2011).
- Obama, B. (2008) *Dreams from my father: a story of race and inheritance*. 2nd edn. Edinburgh: Canongate.
- Olaniyan, R. (1982) *African history and culture*. Harlow: Longman.
- Olwig, K. F. (2002) 'The ethnographic field revisited: towards a study of common and not do common fields of belonging', in Amit, V. (ed.) *Realizing community: concepts, social relationships and sentiments*. London: Routledge, pp. 124-145.
- Ottley, C. R. (1975) 'A brief history', in Anthony, M. and Carr, A. (eds.) *Trinidad and Tobago*. London: André Deutsch, pp. 24-30.
- Passerini, L. (2007) 'Gender, subjectivity, Europe: a constellation for the future. Acts of subjectivity', in Passerini, L., Lyon, D., Capussotti, E. and Laliotou, I. (eds.) *Women migrants from East to West: gender, mobility and belonging in contemporary Europe*. Oxford: Berghahn.
- Pateman, C. (1988) *The sexual contract*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- Pateman, C. (1989) *The disorder of women*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Peach, C. (1991) 'The Caribbean in Europe: contrasting patterns of migration and settlement in Britain, France and The Netherlands'. Research Paper in Ethnic Relations No.15. *Centre for Research in Ethnic Relations University of Warwick* [Online]. Available at: http://web.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/CRER_RC/publications/pdfs/Research%20Papers%20in%20Ethnic%20Relations/RP%20No.15.pdf Accessed: (4 March 2011).
- Pember Reeves, M. (1979) *Round about a pound a week*. London: Virago.
- Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds.) (2006) *The oral history reader*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
- Perry, W.G. (1984) *A West Ham life: an autobiography*. London: Newham Parents' Centre (Publication No. 36).
- Phillips, C. (1985) *The final passage*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Phillips, C. (ed.) (1997) *Extravagant strangers: a literature of belonging*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Phillips, C. (2001) *A new world order: selected essays*. London: Secker and Warburg.

- Phillips, T. (2005) 'After 7/7: sleepwalking to segregation', speech at Manchester Council for Community Relations, 22 September. Available at: <http://www.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/socialchange/research/social-change/summer-workshops/documents/sleepwalking.pdf> (Accessed: 3 February 2010).
- Phillipson, R. (1992) *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Phoenix, A. (1994) 'Practising feminist research: the intersection of gender and 'race' in the research process', in Maynard, M. and Purvis, J. (eds.) *Researching women's lives from a feminist perspective*. London: Taylor and Francis.
- Phoenix, A. (2008) 'Analysing narrative contexts', in Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage, pp. 64-85.
- Phoenix, A. and Pattynama, P. (2006) 'Intersectionality: editorial', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), pp. 187-192, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/13/3.toc> (Accessed: 29 June 2011).
- Pilcher, J. (1998) *Women of their time: generation, gender issues and feminism*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Pinson, H., Arnot, M. and Candappa, M. (2010) *Education, asylum and the 'non-citizen' child: the politics of compassion and belonging*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 163-182.
- Plummer, K. (2001) *Documents of life 2*. London: Sage.
- Plummer, K. (2010) *Sociology: the basics*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Poland, B. (2001) 'Transcription quality', in Gubrium, J. and Holstein, J. (eds.) *Handbook of Interview Research*. London: Sage, pp. 629-649.
- Pool, H. (2006) *My fathers' daughter: a story of family and belonging*. London: Penguin.
- Portelli, A. (1991) *The death of Luigi Trastulli and other stories: form and meaning in oral history*. State University of New York: Albany.
- Portelli, A. (1997) *The battle of Valle Giulia: oral history and the art of dialogue*. Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Portelli, A. (2006) 'What makes oral history different', in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds.) *The oral history reader*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
- Powell, E. (1968) 'Rivers of blood', speech, Conservative Association meeting, Birmingham, 20 April 1968, reprinted 6 November 2007 in *The Telegraph*. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3643823/Enoch-Powells-Rivers-of-Blood-speech.html> (Accessed: 4 august 2012).
- Powell, W.R. (ed.) (1973) Victoria County history: a history of the County of Essex, volume VI. *British History* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=283> (Accessed: 21 August 2009).
- Powell, W. R. (ed.) (1986) *West Ham 1886-1986: A volume to commemorate the centenary of the incorporation of West Ham as a municipal borough in 1886*. London: London Borough of Newham.

- Preece, R. (2008) *Sins of the flesh: a history of ethical vegetarian thought*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia.
- Prigent-Simonin A-H. and Héroult-Fournier, C. (2005) 'The role of trust in the perception of the quality of local food products: with particular reference to direct relationships between producer and consumer', *Anthropology of food* [Online]. Available at: <http://aof.revues.org/204> (Accessed: 28 October 2012).
- Prins, B. (2006) 'Narrative accounts of origins: a blind spot in the intersectional approach?', *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 13(3), pp. 277–290, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://ejw.sagepub.com/content/18/1/51> (Accessed: 21 March 2011).
- Probyn, E. (1996) *Outside belongings*. London: Routledge.
- Rabikowska, M. (2010) 'The ritualisation of food, home and national identity among Polish migrants in London', *Social Identities*, 16(3), pp. 377-398.
- Raman, P. (2011) 'Me in place, and the place in me': a migrant's tale of food, home and belonging', *Food, Culture and Society*, 14,(2), pp. 165-180.
- Ramazanoğlu, C. with Holland, J. (2002) *Feminist methodology: challenges and choices*. London: Sage.
- Ramblings* (2012) BBC Radio 4, series 21, programme 3: Alnmouth, Northumberland, 16 June. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b01jhjrv> (Accessed: 16 June 2012).
- Reay, D. (1996) 'Insider perspectives or stealing the words out of women's mouths: interpretation in the research process', *Feminist Review*, 53, pp. 57-73.
- Reynolds, T. (2006) 'Families, social capital and ethnic identities: report on the Caribbean' in Golbourne, H. (ed.) *Families, Social Capital and Ethnic Identities of Caribbeans, South Asians and South Europeans*. London: South Bank University (Families and Social Capital ESRC Research Group).
- Rickard, W. (2003) 'Collaborating with sex workers in oral history', *The Oral History Review*, 30(1), pp. 47-59.
- Ricoeur, P. (1967) *The symbolism of evil*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Ricoeur, P. (1991a) 'Life in quest of narrative' in Wood, D. (ed.) *On Paul Ricoeur: narrative and interpretation*. London: Routledge, pp. 20-33.
- Ricoeur, P. (1991b) 'Narrative Identity' in Wood, D. (ed.) *On Paul Ricoeur: narrative and interpretation*. London: Routledge, pp. 188-199.
- Riessman, C. (2005) 'Exporting ethics: a narrative about narrative research in South India', *Health*, 9(4), pp. 473-490.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008) *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. London: Sage.
- Roberts, B. (2002) *Biographical research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

- Rogaly, B. and Taylor, B. (2009) *Moving histories of class and community: identity, place and belonging in contemporary England*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. (Identity studies in the Social Sciences).
- Roth, L. K. (2005) 'Beef. It's what's for dinner': vegetarians, meat-eaters and the negotiation of familial relationships', *Food, Culture and Society*, 8(2), pp. 181-200.
- Sacks, O. (1986) *The man who mistook his wife for a hat*. London: Picador.
- Sacks, O. (2013) 'Speak, memory'. *New York Review of Books*, 21 February [Online]. Available at: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/feb/21/speak-memory/?pagination=false> (Accessed: 3 March 2013).
- Said, E. (2000) *Out of place: a memoir*. 2nd edn. London: Granta.
- Sales, R. (2010) 'What is 'Britishness', and is it important?' in Calder, G., Cole, P, and Seglow, J. (eds.) *Citizenship acquisition and national belonging migration: membership and the liberal democratic state*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 123-140.
- Salmon, P. and Riessman C. K. (2008) 'Looking back on narrative research: an exchange', in Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage, pp. 78-85.
- Samson, N. (2007) *Speaking of Home: Bangladeshi women in London's East End reflect on belonging*. BA Dissertation, *Rising East*, University of East London [Online]. Available at: <http://www.uel.ac.uk/risingeast/archive07/academic/samson.htm> (Accessed: 19 July 2011).
- Samson, N. (2008a) *'If it hadn't been for Hitler I wouldn't have been born': second generation Jewish refugee women in East London reflect on their belonging*. Unpublished MA Dissertation. University of Sussex.
- Samson, N. (2008b) *Going back to mother: revisiting an interview to explore issues of interpretation and shared authority*. Unpublished MA Essay. University of Sussex.
- Samuel, R. (1998) Perils of the transcript, in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds.) *The oral history reader*. London: Routledge, pp. 389-392.
- Sandie, E. (2011) *Just one street*. York: Elizabeth Sandie.
- Saunders, G. (2002) *A history of Brunei*. 2nd edn. London: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Savage, M., Bagnall, G. and Longhurst, B. (2005) *Globalization and belonging*. London: Sage.
- Savage, M. (2008) 'Histories, belonging, communities', *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 11(2), pp. 151-162.
- Savage, M. (2010) 'The politics of elective of belonging', *Housing, Theory and Society*, 27(2), pp.115-135.

- Savage, M., Devine, F., Cunningham, N., Taylor, M., Li, Y., Hjellbrekke, J., Le Roux, B., Friedman, S. and Miles A. (2013) 'A new model of social class? Findings from the BBC's great British class survey experiment', *Sociology*, 0(0), pp. 1–32. Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://soc.sagepub.com/content/early/2013/03/12/0038038513481128.full.pdf+html> (Accessed: 3 April 2013).
- Schmidt, K. J. (1995) *An atlas and survey of South Asian history*. New York: M. E. Sharpe (Sources and Studies in World History).
- Scott, W. (1805) 'The lay of the last minstrel', *The Walter Scott Digital Archive, Edinburgh University Library* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.walterscott.lib.ed.ac.uk/works/poetry/minstrel.html> (Accessed: 5 May 2011).
- Scourfield, J., Dicks, B., Drakeford, M. and Davies, A. (2006a) *Children, place and identity: nation and identity in middle childhood*. E-Book Library, UEL [Online] Available at: <http://uel.ebib.com/patron/FullRecord.aspx?p=355981> (Accessed: 20 November 2011).
- Scourfield, J. Dicks, B., Holland, S. and Drakeford, M. (2006b) 'The significance of place in middle childhood', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 57(4), pp. 577-596.
- Seidler, V. J. (2000) *Shadows of the Shoah: Jewish identity and belonging*. Oxford: Berg.
- Sejersen, T. B. (2008) "I vow to thee my countries": the expansion of dual citizenship in the 21st century', *The International Migration Review*, 4(3), pp. 523-549.
- Sheridan, D. (ed.) (1990) *Wartime women: a Mass Observation anthology, 1937-1945*. Reprint, London: Phoenix, 2002.
- Shopes, L. (2003) 'Commentary: sharing authority', *The Oral History Review*, 30(1), pp. 103-110.
- Silverman, D. (2011) *Interpreting qualitative data*. 4th edn. London: Sage.
- Sitzia, L. (1999) 'Telling Arthur's story: oral history relationships and shared authority', *Oral History*, Autumn, pp. 58-67.
- Sitzia, L. (2003) A shared authority: an impossible goal?', *The Oral History Review*, 30(1), pp. 87-101.
- Sizoo, E. (1997) *Women's lifeworlds: women's narratives on shaping their realities*. London: Routledge.
- Skey, M. (2010) 'A sense of where you belong in the world': national belonging, ontological security and the status of the ethnic majority in England', *Nation and Nationalisms*, 16(4), pp. 715-733.
- Skey, M. (2011a) *National belonging and everyday life: the significance of nationhood in an uncertain world*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Skey, M. (2011b) "I like living here because it is my country": exploring narratives of belonging and entitlement in contemporary England', *Centre for Narrative Research Seminar*, University of East London, 15 March.

- Skey, M. (2012) 'The significance of (national) belonging', *Everyday belongings: theorising the self, society and change symposium*. Morgan Centre for the Study of Relationships and Personal Life, University of Manchester, and Centre for Research on Migration, Refugees and Belonging, University of East London, at the University of Manchester, 17 February.
- Skrbiš, Z., Baldassar, L. and Poynting, S. (2007) 'Introduction – negotiating belonging: migrations and generations', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 28 (3), pp. 261-269.
- Squire, C. (2008) 'Experience-centred and culturally oriented approaches to narrative', in Andrews, M., Squire, C. and Tamboukou, M. (eds.) *Doing narrative research*. London: Sage, pp. 41-63.
- Stoetzler, M. and Yuval-Davis, N. (2002) 'Standpoint theory, situated knowledge and the situated imagination', *Feminist Theory*, 3(3), pp. 315-333.
- Stone, J. (2007) *When she was white: the true story of a family divided by race*. New York: Hyperion.
- Stourton, E. (2011) *Diary of a dog-walker: time spent following a lead*. London: Doubleday.
- Tamboukou, M. (2003) *Women, education and the self: a Foucauldian perspective*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Tamboukou, M. (2010) *Visual lives: Carrington's letters, drawings and paintings*. Oxford: BSA Auto/Biography Monograph Series.
- Tamboukou, M. (2011a) 'Rethinking the private hypothesis: epistolary topographies in Carrington's letters', *Emotion, Space and Society*, 4, pp. 25-34.
- Tamboukou, M. (2011b) 'Introductory comment', Looking backwards, looking forwards: commemorating ten years of CNR. Centre of Narrative Research 10th anniversary conference, 10 November 2010, Marx Memorial Library, London, *Narrative Works*, 1(1), pp. 4-32 [Online]. Available at: <http://journals.hil.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/18471/19969> (Accessed: 15 July 2011).
- Tamboukou, M. and Ball, S. J. (eds.) (2003) *Dangerous encounters: genealogy and ethnography*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Tate Britain (2012) *Migrations: journeys into British art*, January-August 2012, Millbank, London, SW1P 4RG.
- Taylor, H. (2009a) *Narratives of loss, longing and daily life: the meaning of home for Cypriot refugees in London*. Unpublished PhD thesis. University of East London.
- Taylor, J. (2011) 'The intimate insider: negotiating the ethics of friendship when doing insider research', *Qualitative Research*, 11(1), pp. 3-22, Sage [Online]. Available at: <http://qrj.sagepub.com/content/11/1/3.full.pdf+html> (Accessed: 1 March 2011).
- Taylor, S. (2009b) *Narratives of identity and place*. London: Routledge.
- The Mass Observation Archive, Special Collections, The Library, University of Sussex, Brighton, BN1 9QL.

- The Photographers' Gallery (2013) *Mass Observation: this is your photo*, 2 August - 29 September, 16 - 18 Ramillies Street, London, W1F 7LW.
- The Street* (2006; 2007; 2009) Series 1, 2, 3. BBC. Writer, Jimmy McGovern, Granada Ventures Ltd (ITV DVD).
- Thompson, L. (2001) *A history of South Africa*. 3rd edn. New Haven: Yale Note Bene, Yale University Press.
- Thompson, P. (2000) *The voice of the past: oral history*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 3rd edn.
- Thomson, A. (1999) 'Moving stories: oral history and migration studies', *Oral History*, 27(1), pp. 24-37.
- Thomson, A. and Perks, R. (2006) *The oral history reader*. 2nd edn. London: Routledge.
- Travis, A. (2012) 'UK migrants to face 'patriotic' citizenship test', *The Guardian*, 1 July 2012, *Guardian* [Online]. Available at: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2012/jul/01/uk-migrants-patriotic-citizenship-test?INTCMP=SRCH> (Accessed: 16 May 2012).
- Urry, J. (2000) *Sociology beyond societies: mobilities for the twenty-first century*. London: Routledge.
- van Oers, R. (2010) 'Citizenship tests in the Netherlands, Germany and the UK', in van Oers, R, Ersbøll, E. and Kostakopoulou, D. (eds.), *A re-definition of belonging?: language and integration tests in Europe*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 51-105. (Immigration and asylum law and policy in Europe series, volume 20.
- van Oers, R., Ersbøll, E. and Kostakopoulou, D. (2010) 'Mapping the redefinition of belonging in Europe', in van Oers, R, Ersbøll, E. and Kostakopoulou, D. (eds.), *A re-definition of belonging?: Language and integration tests in Europe*. Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff, pp. 307-331. (Immigration and asylum law and policy in Europe series, volume 20.)
- Vera-Larrucea, C. (2012) 'Dual citizenship, double membership?: membership and belonging of immigrants' descendants in France and Sweden', *Journal Of International Migration and Integration*, 13(2), pp. 165-186.
- Vertovec, S. (2007) 'Super-diversity and its implications', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 30(6), pp. 1024-1054.
- Visram, R. (1986) *Ayahs, lascars and princes: Indians in Britain 1700-1947*. London: Pluto Press.
- Visram, R. (1993) 'South Asians in London' in Merriman, N. (ed.) *The peopling of London: fifteen thousand years of settlement from overseas*. London: Museum of London, pp. 169-178.
- Visram, R. (2002) *Asians in Britain: 400 years of history*. London: Pluto.
- Voet, R. (1998) *Feminism and citizenship*. London: Sage.
- Walby, S. (1997) *Gender transformations*. London: Routledge.

- Wandycz, P. (1993) *The price of freedom: a history of east central Europe from the middle ages to the present*. London: Routledge, pp. 219-249.
- Ware, V. (2007) *Who cares about Britishness?: a global view of the national identity debate*. London: Arcadia.
- Waterman, S. and Kosmin, B. (1986) 'Mapping an unenumerated ethnic population: Jews in London', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 9(4), pp. 484-501.
- Watt, P. (2009) 'Living in an oasis: middle-class disaffiliation and selective belonging in an English suburb', *Environment and Planning A*, 41, pp. 2874-2892.
- Watt, P. (2010) 'Unravelling the narratives and politics of belonging to place', *Housing, Theory and Society*, 27(2), pp. 153-159.
- Webster, W. (1998) *Imagining home; gender, 'race' and national identity, 1945-64*. London: Routledge.
- Wemyss, G. (2006) 'The Power to tolerate: contests over Britishness and belonging in East London', *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), pp. 215-236.
- Wemyss, G. (2009) *The invisible empire: white discourse, tolerance and belonging*. Farnham: Surrey.
- Wessendorf, S. (2010) 'Commonplace diversity: social Interactions in a super-diverse context'. Working Papers WP 10-11 *Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity* (MMG), Department for Socio-Cultural Diversity, Göttingen. Available at: <http://www.mmg.mpg.de/publications/working-papers/2010/wp-10-11/> (Accessed: 23 June 2011).
- Westwood, S. and Phizacklea, A. (2000) *Trans-nationalism and the politics of belonging*. London: Routledge.
- White, J. (2001) *London in the twentieth century: a city and its people*. Reprint, London: Vintage, 2008.
- White, J. (2007) *London in the nineteenth century: a human awful wonder of God*. Reprint, London: Vintage, 2008.
- Widdowson, J. and Block, H. (no date, c.1985) *People who moved to Newham*. London: London Borough of Newham.
- Wilson, A. (2006) *Dreams, questions, struggles: South Asian women in Britain*. London: Pluto.
- Winder, R. (2005) *Bloody foreigners: the story of immigration to Britain*. London: Abacus.
- Witter, S. (2004) *Breaking the silence: memory books and succession planning- the experience of NACWOLA and Save the Children UK in Uganda*. London: Save the Children. Available at: <http://documents.nacwola.or.ug/Breaking%20Silence.pdf> (Accessed: 3 January 2012).
- Young, M. and Willmott, P. (1957) *Family and kinship in East London*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul. Reprint, London: Peregrine, 1986.

- Younge, G. (2010) *Who we are – and should it matter in the 21st century?* London: Viking.
- Yow, V.R. (2005) *Recording oral history: a guide for the humanities and social sciences*. 2nd ed. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Yow, V.R. (2006) ‘Do I like them too much?’: effects of the oral history interview on the interviewer and vice-versa’, in Perks, R. and Thomson, A. (eds.) *The oral history reader*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, pp. 54-72.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (1997) ‘Women, citizenship and difference’, *Feminist Review*, 57, pp. 4-27.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2004) ‘Borders, boundaries and the politics of belonging’ in S. May, T. Modood and J. Squires (eds.) *Ethnicity, nationalism and minority rights*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006a) ‘Belonging and the politics of belonging’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 40(3), pp. 197-214.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2006b) ‘Intersectionality and Feminist Politics’, *European Journal of Women’s Studies*, 13(3), pp. 193-209.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2007) ‘Intersectionality, citizenship and contemporary politics of belonging’, *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy*, 10(4), pp. 561-574 [Online]. Available at: DOI: 10.1080/13698230701660220 (Accessed: 7 April 2009).
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2008) ‘Racism, cosmopolitanism and contemporary politics of belonging’, in Davison, S. and Rutherford, J. (eds.) *Race, Identity and Belonging*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2010) ‘Theorizing identity: beyond the ‘us’ and ‘them’ dichotomy’, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 44(3), pp. 261–280. DOI: 10.1080/0031322X.2010.489736 (Accessed: 20 November 2011).
- Yuval-Davis, N. (2011) *The politics of belonging: intersectional contestations*. London: Sage.
- Yuval-Davis, N., Anthias, F. and Kofman, E. (2005) ‘Secure borders and safe haven and the gendered politics of belonging: beyond social cohesion’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 28(3), pp. 513-535.
- Yuval-Davis, N., Kannabiran, K. and Vieten, U. (eds.) (2006) *The situated politics of belonging*. London: Sage, pp. 42-53. (Studies in International Sociology 55).
- Zammit, J., Kessel, D. and Amery, D. (1999) *Outsider Poems*. London: Outsider Poets.

Primary sources:

Individual interviews undertaken during 2010 with:

Agnes, Angelique, Elaine, Frederica, Imogen, Jessica, Julie, Mary, Meena, Monique, Peigi, Samina, Sarah, Tendo.

Appendices

Appendix I: Interviewee profiles

	age at interview	country of birth	came to Britain	age on arrival	arrival in Newham	years in Newham	arrival in street	years in street	children at interview	tenure at interview
Agnes	42	Poland	1995	27	1997	13	1999	11	under 18s	council tenant
Angelique	40	Trinidad	1988	18	1988	22	1990	20	under 18s	owner occupier
Elaine	76	Scotland	1966 (return)	32	1969	41	1984	26	none	owner occupier
Frederica	58	Malaya	1972	20	1978	32	1990	20	over 18s	owner occupier
Imogen	71	N. Rhodesia	1969	30	1969	41	1984	26	none	owner occupier
Jessica	24	England	n/a	n/a	1996	39	1996	14	none	owner occupier
Julie	61	England	n/a	n/a	1984	26	1984	26	over 18s	owner occupier
Mary	64	Australia	1969	23	1971	39	1980	30	over 18s	owner occupier
Meena	24	Nepal	2009	23	2009	1½	2010	2 months	none	private tenant
Monique	50	Brunei	1966	6	1990	20	2006	4	under 18s	owner occupier
Peigi	33	England	n/a	n/a	2003	7	2010	4 months	under 18s	owner occupier
Samina	26	England	n/a	n/a	2008	1½	2008	1½	under 18s	owner occupier
Sarah	44	England	n/a	n/a	2002	8	2002	8	under 18s	owner occupier
Tendo	36	Uganda	1991	17	1991	19	2007	3	under 18s	owner occupier

Appendix II: Interviewee citizenship/ethnicity

	Country/ies of birth and childhood	Citizenship at birth	Citizenship at interview	Ethnicity stated at interview	Parent nationality	British links with countries lived in
Agnes	Poland	Polish	Polish	Polish	Polish	EU since 2004
Angelique	Trinidad	Trinidadian	British/ Trinidadian	Trinidadian	Trinidadian (g'parents: Carib Indian, Indian, Portuguese, Chinese, Venezuelan)	Commonwealth
Elaine	Scotland, England, Kuwait, N. Rhodesia	British	British	British Scottish	British (Scottish)	Commonwealth, British Protected State (BPS)
Frederica	Malaya	Malaysian	British	'human race community' (Chinese Malaysian)	Chinese	Commonwealth
Imogen	N. Rhodesia S. Rhodesia, S. Africa	British	British	UK (for ease) (previously: White African)	father S. African mother British (English)	Commonwealth
Jessica	England	British	British	London	British (English)	n/a
Julie	England	British	British	British: English, Celtic, N. Irish	British (English)	n/a
Mary	Australia	Australian	British/ Australian	Australian/London/ Northern European	Australian	Commonwealth
Meena	Nepal	Nepalese	Nepalese	Nepalese	Nepalese	British Protected State
Monique	Brunei, Nigeria, England	British	British	British	mother French father British (English)	Commonwealth
Peigi	England	British	British	Half-Scottish half-Indian/ London	mother British (Scottish) father Indian	parent Commonwealth
Samina	England	British	British	British Bengali	Bengali	parent Commonwealth
Sarah	England	British	British	London	mother British (English) father British (Scottish)	n/a
Tendo	Uganda	Ugandan	Ugandan	Ugandan	Ugandan	Commonwealth
Growing up:	7x outside Britain 5x in Britain 2x in and out of Britain	Citizenship at birth:	Citizenship at interview:	28 parents of the 14 interviewees:		British links with countries lived in:
	8x British 6x non-British	9x British 2x dual British/non-British 3x non-British	2x Australian 2x Bengali 2x Chinese 7x English	1x French 1x Indian 2x Nepalese 2x Polish	4x Scottish 1x S. African 2x Trinidadian 2x Ugandan	10 of 14 women with C'wealth/BPS links: 6x migrant from C'wealth or BPS 2x British-born and childhood (or part) in C'wealth/BPS 2x British with parents from C'wealth.

Appendix III: Letter to neighbours

Dear Neighbour,

My name is Nicola Samson and I live at [number, street] where I have been now for nine years. You may have seen me during summer months cutting the front lawn and bushes! I have lived and worked in East London altogether over 30 years - most of my adult life.

When I was fifty years old (and my children were teenagers) I began a degree course at the University of East London in psychosocial studies. This course enabled me to work on an idea I had always been very interested in, the idea of belonging. By that I mean where, or how, we as individuals feel we belong. I think people experience belonging in different ways. It can be a sense of belonging in a place such as where we live or where we have lived in the past. And that might be, for example, a street, a part of a city, a village or a country. We might find a sense of belonging in a specific community such as a religious community, or as a group of parents, or in a particular interest that we share with others. And it can also be how we find a sense of belonging with the people we know, such as family, friends or work mates.

I completed my degree in 2007 and I am now doing a PhD research project (also at the University of East London) on women's ideas about belonging, and have decided to base the whole project on our street. I wonder how many of us have a sense of belonging in the street? Do we know many of our neighbours? Or is our sense of belonging not connected to where we live?

I have already interviewed a number of women in the street and am writing to see if you might be interested to take part. The interviews are based on me asking you questions, for example about your childhood, family, religion or culture, and any stories you may want to tell me. There are no questionnaires to fill in. I do need to record the interviews but I do not use people's real names.

I want to include all interested women so you are very welcome to take part however old you are (above 18 years), and wherever you or your family come from.

If you would like to talk to me about taking part, ask me anything about the interviewing, or find out more generally, I would be delighted to answer your questions. You can contact me by phone, email or come and knock at my door!

Landline: [.....] Mobile: [.....] email: nicolasamson@gmail.com

Over the next few weeks I will be following up this letter by knocking at your door so I hope to see you then, if you have not already been in contact with me.

Thank you very much for taking the trouble to read my letter, I hope you will be inspired to take part!

Best wishes,
Nicola Samson

Appendix IV: Local Living questionnaire

Where do you mostly buy: Fruit & vegetables?	Corner shop	local high st	Green Street	Queen's Market	other high st	Veg box delivery	Internet	Supermarket where?	Elsewhere:
Other food & household?	Corner shop	local high st	Green Street	Queen's Market	other high st		Internet	Supermarket where?	Elsewhere:
Clothes?	Corner shop	local high st	Green Street	Queen's Market	other high st		Internet	Where?	Elsewhere:
Electrical/ Furniture?	Corner shop	local high st	Green Street		other high st		Internet	Supermarket where?	Elsewhere:
Computer supplies?	Corner shop	local high st	Green Street		other high st		Internet	Supermarket where?	Elsewhere:
Do you use internet cafes in:	local high st	Green Street	other high st	Ilford	Stratford			Elsewhere:	
Where do you get your haircut?	local high st	Green Street	other high st	Ilford	Stratford			Elsewhere:	
Where is your doctor's surgery?	local surgery	local high street	other high st	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:				

Appendix IV continued

Where is your dentist's surgery?	local surgery	local high st	other high st	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	Elsewhere:
If you eat out, do you most often eat out in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Do you go to bars or pubs in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Do you attend classes of any sort in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Are you involved in voluntary work in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Are you involved in organised social/ cultural groups in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Do you attend a church/ mosque/temple/synagogue in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Do/did your children go to school in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	N/A:	
Are/were your children involved in any groups in:	neighbourhood:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere in Newham:	Elsewhere:	None	N/A:

Appendix V: Ethics approval

Dr Molly Andrews
School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Stratford



ETH/11/33

25 August 2009

Dear Molly,

Application to the Research Ethics Committee: Narratives of Women's Belonging: life Stories from an East London Street (N Samson)

I advise that Members of the Research Ethics Committee have now approved the above application on the terms previously advised to you. The Research Ethics Committee should be informed of any significant changes that take place after approval has been given. Examples of such changes include any change to the scope, methodology or composition of investigative team. These examples are not exclusive and the person responsible for the programme must exercise proper judgement in determining what should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

In accepting the terms previously advised to you I would be grateful if you could return the declaration form below, duly signed and dated, confirming that you will inform the committee of any changes to your approved programme.

Yours sincerely

Simiso Jubane
Admission and Ethics Officer
s.jubane@uel.ac.uk
02082232976

Research Ethics Committee: ETH/11/33

I hereby agree to inform the Research Ethics Committee of any changes to be made to the above approved programme and any adverse incidents that arise during the conduct of the programme.

Signed:.....Date:

Please Print Name:

Appendix VI: Participant information/consent form

Nicola Samson, University of East London, Docklands Campus, University Way, E16 2RD

Landline: [] mobile: [] email: nicolasamson@gmail.com

Participant information for the PhD research:

Narratives of Women's Belonging: Life Stories from an East London Street

The life history interviews I am undertaking will form the basis of my PhD research. I will be interviewing up to 15 women who all live in the same street as myself, in the Hollybarn neighbourhood of North Newham.

The purpose of the research is to explore what belonging means to different women through them telling stories about their lives. My interest is in finding out not just whether the women feel they belong or not, but how they belong, that is, what gives them a sense of belonging.

Interviews will be undertaken with women of various ethnicities and classes, aged 18 years upward. I hope to interview women of three generations. The research is based in the one street because it is home to a wide range of people whose families originate from many parts of the world. This situation offers the opportunity to consider the similarities and differences of people's lives and their experience of belonging from a perspective of them all now living in the same place. The study will analyse how ethnicity, generation and class intersect to inform women's experience of belonging.

As a participant you would be interviewed by me at a time and in a place of your choosing. The questions I ask will be quite general about different aspects of your life such as your childhood, family, religion and culture. There are no questionnaires. There is no fixed time length for interviews, they will last as long as you want to talk to me, but they are unlikely to last longer than three hours, and may well be shorter. To follow up on aspects of the stories you have told me, and to clarify any points, I would like to undertake at least one, possibly two, further interview over the next few weeks.

Interviews will be recorded on a small digital recorder and will then be transcribed by me. You will be offered a copy of your transcript and you will be able to comment on or amend the transcript as you see fit. It is important to me that you are satisfied with the content of the transcript.

You have the right to stop the interviews or to withdraw from the project at any time, and to withdraw permission for any material created by that time, to be used. Pseudonyms will be used in all written material but it is important to be aware that total anonymity cannot be guaranteed, not least as all the participants are neighbours.

The transcript and recording will be confidential and will remain in my possession, stored on my personal computer which is password protected. They will be retained for possible future academic use by me and potentially for archiving as life history material, unless you request that your interview should not be archived.

Should you have concerns at any point regarding the conduct of the project please contact: Secretary of the University Research Ethics Committee: Simiso Jubane Administrative Officer for Research, Graduate School, University of East London, Docklands Campus. London E16 2RD (telephone: 020 8223 2976, e-mail: S.Jubane@uel.ac.uk)

Appendix VI continued

Consent to Participate in the Research Project:

Narratives of Women's Belonging: Life Stories from an East London Street

I have read the information sheet relating to the above research project in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and what is required of me as an interviewee.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researcher involved in the study will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen to the data once the research programme has been completed.

I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's name
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Participant's signature

Researcher's name

Researcher's signature

Date:

Appendix VII: Interview Questions

Would you tell me a bit about your early life?

- where did you grow up and when?
- would you describe the environment in which you grew up as a 'community'?

How did you feel as a child in terms of your belonging?

- were you comfortable with your sense of who you were?
- did you have any sense of being different from others?

Who did you think of as 'family' when you were a child?

- what does family mean to you now?

Where is your family now?

- how much contact do you have with family members?

What were the circumstances of you or your family coming to England?

What does being [ethnicity] mean to you?

- how important are [ethnic] custom and tradition to you?
- are there rituals and/or holidays which you celebrate?
- do these have any particular significance for you in terms of who you are?
- how would you feel if you didn't celebrate them?

Are you a British citizen?

- what meaning does/would that citizenship have for you?

How important is religion to you?

What meaning does food have to your sense of belonging?

Do you speak different languages?

- where and with whom?
- does it affect where you feel you belong when you're speaking a particular language?

Appendix VII continued

How did you or your family come to live in this street?

Can you describe your relationship to the local area?

- would you say you 'belonged' here?
- do you feel that others regard you as someone who 'belongs' here?

What sort of belonging to you feel to any other places?

Do you feel part of any community?

With whom, or to what, do you feel you 'belong'?

Do you think class impacts on your sense of belonging?

How important are friends to your sense of belonging?

Is your work meaningful to you in terms of your belonging?

What significance do your politics have to your sense of belonging?

What is the importance of the arts in your life?

Has being a parent affected your sense of belonging?

Has your sense of belonging in any way changed over time?

Appendix VIII: Responses about relationship to the area

These are the more detailed responses to questions about the women's relationship and belonging in the locality (Chapter 6, p. 190).

Agnes

Agnes, liking the street for its appearance:

... [I] like the area, lovely houses around, really nice pleasant street, houses to look at, which is very important when you're coming home. [...]

but makes very clear that her pleasure in the street is the extent of her relationship to it:

No. I haven't . any relation to this street. I just know people because, because you meet them every, every day, or very often. [...] I don't know them by name, just faces. [...] Yuh. So I don't know anybody.

She had only minimal neighbourly contact with people in other flats in the house and knew no others after living there 11 years. With regard to her belonging she said:

. Not, not to this area. Er no. . No I mean, it's again hard question. Yes I do because I've got everything around. Schools, church and erm . a place where I live. My home is here.

Her immediate response was that she did not belong to the area but reflected that school, church and home have given her some form of belonging. Owning a property was paramount for her however, and she imagined a greater belonging where she had a place of her own.

Angelique

For Angelique the local area extended to the 'corner' shops on a nearby main road:

I feel it's very familiar. I'm, I'm used to a lot of the local businesses and the shopkeepers, I like that.

She speaks at length about the importance of having a connection with local businesses, particularly now that she has a young child who should grow up knowing the area in which he lives. But in thinking about her belonging she notes her lack of connection with others:

Appendix VIII continued

[sigh] Phw. . Yes and no. I think I know more shopkeepers than I know residents. .. That's bad. [...] I feel I bel, I Do I belong here. I feel comfortable here. I feel the familiarity keeps me . safe.

Her belonging is expressed very much in relation to feeling safe, in large part knowing amenities and perhaps as discussed in the previous section, that in the houses she feels on 'home ground'.

Elaine

Feeling at home is Elaine's immediate response to her relationship locally, suggesting that she could be induced to leave for a larger property.

Well I do feel at home here now, and er . I can't say that NOTHING would make me move out of here.

But her first response regarding belonging does not reflect place itself:

.. Well mainly it's just this [disability group], that's what we belong to here. Yes, I'd say we belonged to that.

The disability group is linked to place in that it is a Newham organisation but it is based some miles away. When asked if she had a sense of belonging 'here' she assumed the street:

.... I suppose a bit now, yes. I don't think you can live in a place for 26 years without feeling that when you come into the street, you're coming home [laugh].

But her 26 years in the street have bought her little contact with her neighbours about whom she is equivocal, stating, 'I wouldn't mind if I knew them, I don't mind if I don't'.

Frederica

Frederica links local relationship to people in the street but with whom she has little connection:

I know a few people to speak to. Er er probably one or two people I can call on . for help. But in the main I think . erm . they are strangers.

Appendix VIII continued

She struggles to think of what would give her a sense of belonging anywhere saying, 'I think a part of me is always apart', including when she is in Malaysia which she sees as 'an essential part' of her. She has lived in the street for 20 years and more than 30 years in Newham. She says of it:

..... In some senses, in the way of life, in the way that there are plenty of restaurants, in the way that there are markets, because that is what I KNOW from growing up. In that . very loose sense . yes meaning I like that kind of life and I like living here for that reason, but as to, do I really belong here? What is there to make me belong here, I don't know.

Imogen

Like Elaine, Imogen also responds to the locality relationship question by talking about her involvement in the disability group. She has 'affection' for the street in particular its wildlife and trees from which she gains, 'a great sense of belonging' but questions a deeper sense of belonging:

Erm ... I don't know, because of my background, am I ever going to feel I belong anywhere? I . I don't know. ... Erm, it's hard to say.

Having said that however she is also emphatic about not wanting to leave Newham:

Yeah, I think, not this immediate neighbourhood, but my connections in the borough, I would not like to leave this borough, definitely not.

which she makes clear refers to the links she has made in over 40 years in Newham.

Jessica

Jessica feels neither a particular relationship with the area, nor has any sense of belonging though she has lived here since she was ten years old.

I didn't really want to live here. And then I didn't go to school here, so I guess like, I don't really have any . connection with North Newham I don't think. [...] I don't hate it or anything but I don't particularly think fondly of North Newham, whereas I kind of do about Bow.

Having spent her first ten years in Bow it is there, and in East London generally that are more meaningful to her.

Appendix VIII continued

Julie

Julie firmly places her relationship to the area in a community she no longer has:

I felt very much part of the community when my kids were at school. And I don't feel part of the community really any more. ...

Her children are now grown up and though she hankers after a sense of belonging as an artist locally, she feels 'pushed out' in a borough where:

there's no cultural heart [...]. Everything is based on low level stuff or it has to be allied to a particular community. [...] I have no belonging, no place, there is no place for me here, culturally.

Mary

'It's where I live', is how Mary initially replies to the question of local relationship but continues more reflectively saying that her relationship is with and through the local politics of the area in which she has been involved for many years. Her sense of belonging relates to her politics and friends in the area of which she says, 'It's not necessarily somewhere we PARTICULARLY love but it's convenient [...]'. In answering what feelings she had about the place itself she responds by asking what I mean by place. About the street she said,

I don't . give much of a fig for the street in particular. It's all right, you know, these houses are quite nice, it's pleasant enough...

and of the immediate locality:

Not a lot. What is there? You know, the doctor's [laugh] erm Tesco's, you know, what is there, there's nothing much in the immediate locality to, to kind of get a grip on.

Meena

Only two months in the street, Meena has had little chance to settle in but is very conscious of how people, including herself, have little time to communicate with each other. She has no relationship with the locality apart from greeting neighbours in the back garden and for this reason says she has no sense of belonging. However, she also speaks of having belonging

Appendix VIII continued

through being a resident; that is, as one who lives in the street she has a duty to help others in need, because she now belongs to the area.

Monique

From the outset Monique differentiates in her relationship to the local area:

Mmm. ... erm ... I don't think I like the local area. I like my immediate local area and I have nice friends in the area, and you know if you look around this, you know, the Hollybarn neighbourhood is very pretty although it's becoming less so, and it's much quieter than I, than we used to have and but I'm not sold on North Newham. I think it's getting worse rather than better.

Liking her immediate estate environment but not the wider one of the high street nor neighbourhood, she also finds trying to understand her sense of belonging quite perplexing:

Erm in my heart no, but obviously I've lived here for twenty years so I guess I must in some way. But I think I resist belonging here. It's not where I want to be .. erm .. [...] I don't think I do, I don't want to belong here but maybe I do. Maybe I'm just kidding myself.

Peigi

Peigi describes herself as being 'quite familiar' with the local area having lived in North Newham for seven years, though in the street only a matter of months. However, she finds it difficult to express any real sense of belonging saying that it is 'too soon', though she does feel comfortable in the area; home is still North-west London where she grew up.

Samina

Samina did not mention her relationship to the area outside of her difficult relationship with other Bengalis locally. Considering her sense of belonging she found it a difficult question to answer saying:

I, I to be honest, I never thought of myself where I belong or where I don't. [...] I live in this area but I wouldn't think to myself this is the area I belong to, because I'm living here. I wouldn't think myself like that because there's no stability to how long I'm going to live in this area for.

Appendix VIII continued

Sarah

Answering the question of her relationship to the local area, Sarah describes her first year in the area being either at work, socialising in Central London, or being at home. She says she only began to have any local connections after leaving work and getting a dog and later after having a baby. However she is very definite that eight years in the street has not given her any sense of belonging:

N: Would you say that you belonged here?

S: No. No.

N: That was very definite. Why is that?

S: Erm . well we thought we would ... and . erm ... [whispered] do I belong here? In some sets of people I think we do belong here.

N: Tell me about what you meant, you thought you would belong.

S: We thought ... well we thought that . erm, well there isn't really anything on the high street for us, I think that's probably the thing that makes us feel the most that we don't really belong here. I mean I said no quite quickly then but, I suppose yes in a way that, I do feel at home.

Tendo

After three years in the street, Tendo says she feels no connection to this area but remains connected to the south of the borough where she previously lived, clearly differentiating between neighbourhoods.

Erm, I've lived here now, how many years, coming to three years, and I feel I am NOT connected to this area. I'm still in South Newham, haven't left South Newham so more or less, the connection, [laugh] the connection I have in this street, even in this area, is just you, really.

Regarding her sense of belonging she says she belongs in the street only in so far as she lives in it.