

**EDUCATIONAL HIATUSES:
INTERSECTIONS OF IMMIGRATION
STATUS, GENDER AND LIFE COURSE
IN THE PRODUCTION OF
EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES**

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*Migration, Social Inequalities, Inter-
Generational Relations and Life Course
Transitions', UCL, 1st February 2018*

- **Introduction:** Immigration Status & Life Course

- **The Research:** 2 UK-based studies

- **Themes:**

- 'A lost window of opportunity'
- Narrative of surprise
- 'Stuck at home with no future in sight'

- **Conclusion**

- Full paper available:

- Oliver, C. and Hughes, V. (2018) 'Bordering education: migrants' entitlements to post-compulsory education in the United Kingdom'. *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, Special Issue on Migration, Borders, and Education.



1. INTRODUCTION

IMMIGRATION STATUS:

- is an overlooked category in the 'laundry lists of the vectors of subordination' (Bosniak, 2006:4).
- Increasingly precarious and short-term; subject to conditions.
- affects rights to access multiple services, including fee rates and financial support for post-compulsory education.

Operates:

- as an implicit bordering mechanism which forms part of the UK's hostile environment (Jones et al 2017).
- in intersection with other axes of difference (gender, life course) to produces educational inequalities;



1.INTRODUCTION:

We will show how immigration status:

- Becomes of significance at important moments of life course transitions for young women and young people (motherhood, adulthood)

And has consequences for:

- Structural and affective integration
- (Intergenerational) relationships within families, especially in relation to dependence and independence



THE RESEARCH

IMPACIM Project (COMPAS, Oliver):

- Exploring restrictions for **Family migrants** on post-entry access to services and benefits
- National and local: Birmingham and Reading
- Interviews held with 43 expert and policy stakeholders

Young, undocumented migrants (Hughes Goldsmiths):

- Ongoing doctoral research in London
- 10-month collaborative ethnographic approach including observation, semi-structured interviews and drama



COLLABORATIVE WORK:

Common issue:

- 'Civic stratification' or complex variations in legal status (Morris 2003, Sainsbury 2012)
- Means (some) migrants face restrictions to post-compulsory education; legally complex, but generally a delay to be able to access fees and funding until 3 years residency, or settled status proven;

Different vantage points:

- Varying experiences of how immigration status intersect with other social cleavages (age, gender, ethnicity)
- Analytical purchase of two studies demonstrates the insidious operation of immigration stratification



1. 'LOST WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY'

- Spousal migrants: restricted entitlement to full fee remissions for ESOL classes
- Three years post-entry a 'lost window of opportunity':

'that's the time when they are so vulnerable'
(Council officer, Reading)

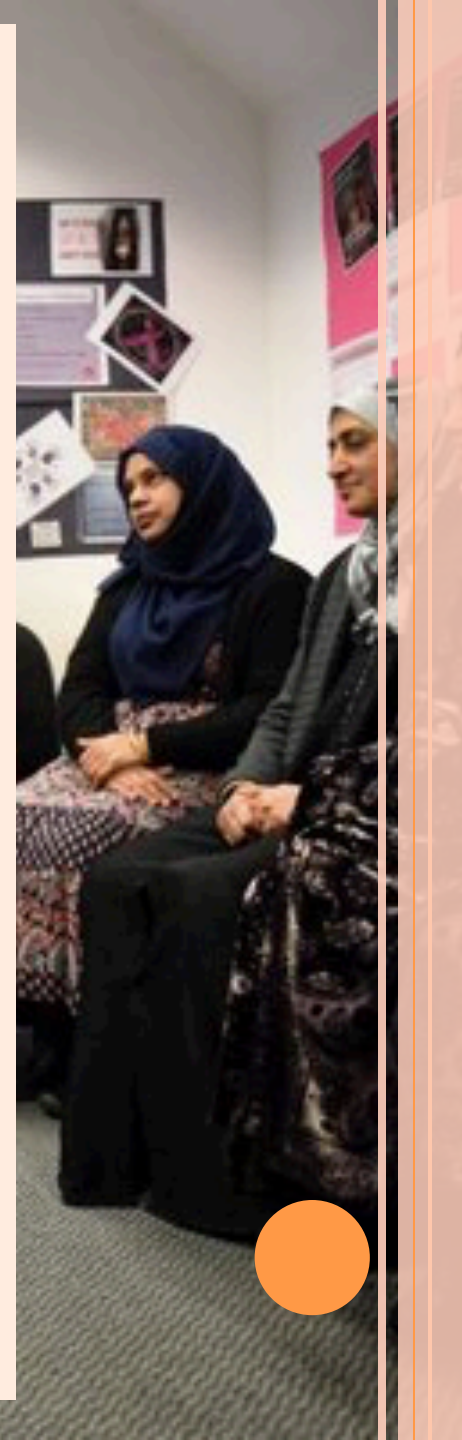
'they're in that gap when they're not learning anything'
(Director of community learning resource, Reading)

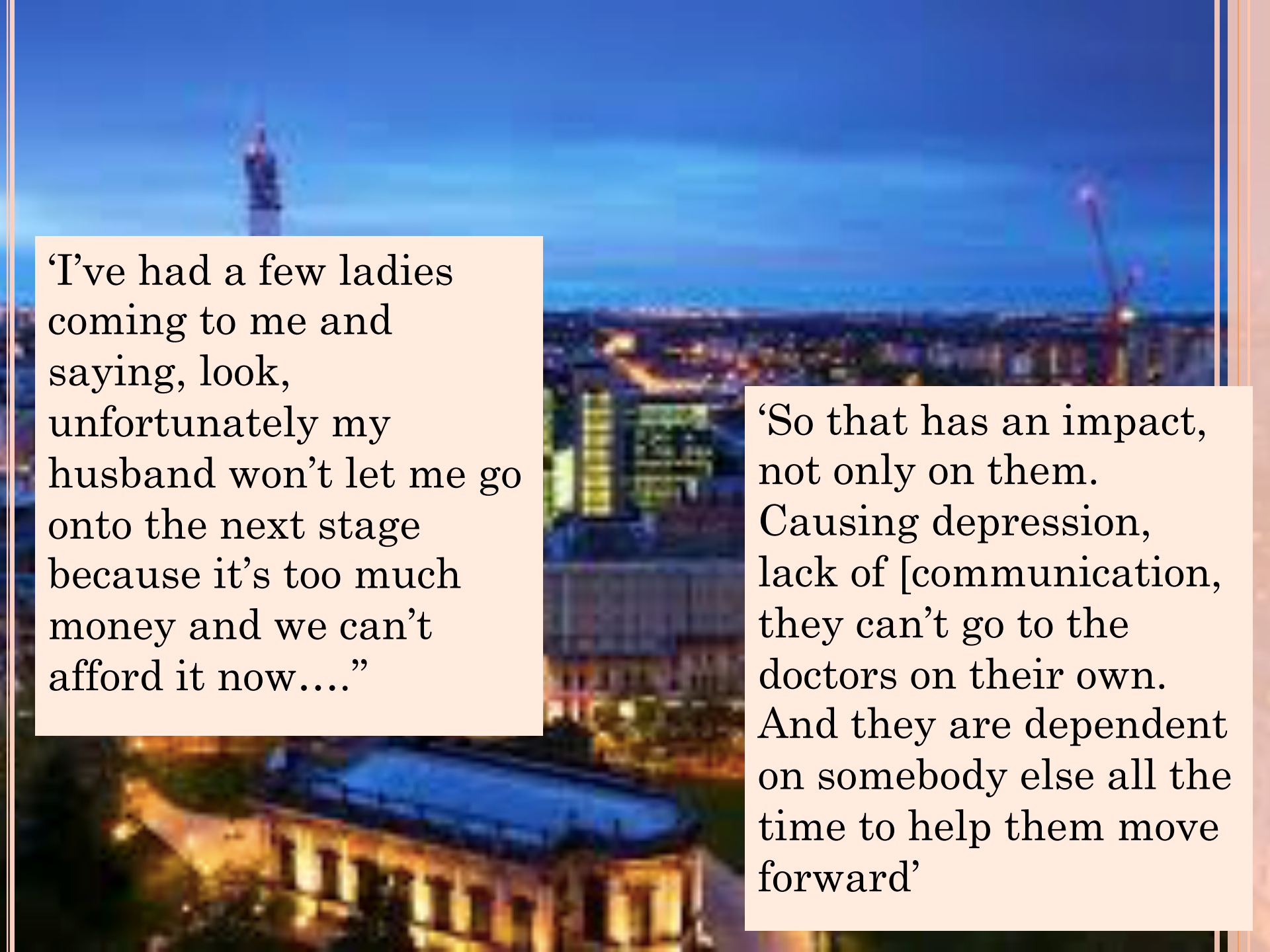


When they [spousal migrants] come to join a new husband and often live with the in-laws, first of all if they are denied English language provision that they can afford, they are trapped often inside the home. They may well in the first year in the UK feel isolated and not have an opportunity to meet with other people outside their immediate family members.

Then they may well decide to start a family. And once a young women in particular cultures has a small child, they are not expected to go out and follow further education opportunities - particularly ESOL - but any opportunities [...] Having started a family that may well continue, so that potential ESOL learner has been lost to ESOL provision perhaps until her children grow up and start school. Or perhaps even longer [when they] grow up and leave home.

(Spokesperson, national educational quango)



A nighttime photograph of a cityscape. In the foreground, a large stadium with a blue roof is illuminated. In the background, a tall tower with a red light at the top is visible against a dark blue sky. The city lights are blurred, creating a bokeh effect.

‘I’ve had a few ladies coming to me and saying, look, unfortunately my husband won’t let me go onto the next stage because it’s too much money and we can’t afford it now....”

‘So that has an impact, not only on them. Causing depression, lack of [communication, they can’t go to the doctors on their own. And they are dependent on somebody else all the time to help them move forward’

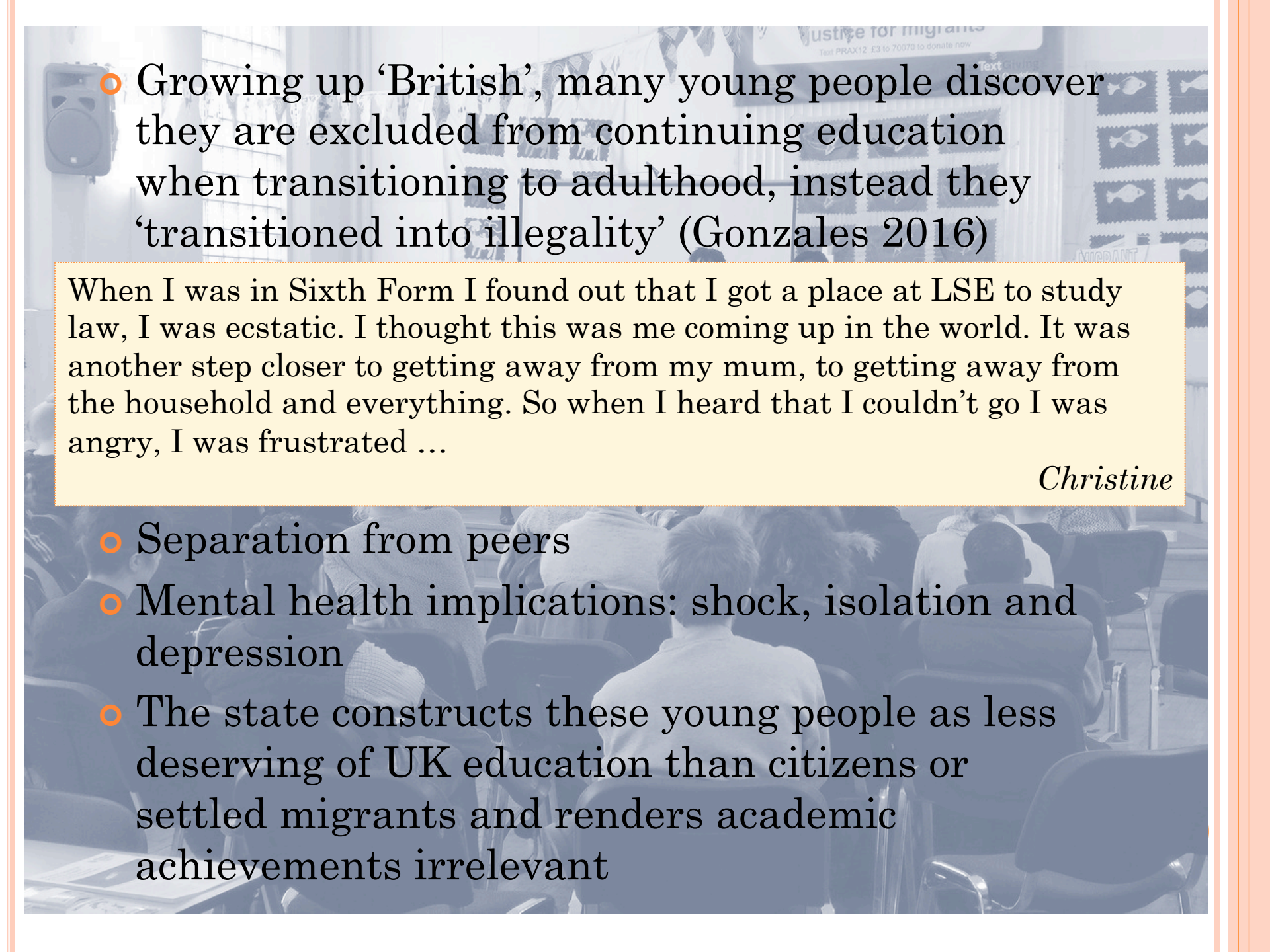
2. THE NARRATIVE OF SURPRISE

- Legal categories catch people unawares, transforming immigration status into ‘master status’ (ibid.)

I did brilliantly in GCSEs and scored five A* and four As. When we were finally granted what’s called ‘Limited Leave to Remain’, at the start of year 12 in 2014, I thought that I was on a roll. I had it all planned, I worked really hard to gain my place at medical school. I was looking forward to five years of studying. That was when I found out that even though I now had status I needed to have had it for three years before I could qualify for a student loan.

Maria



- 
- Growing up ‘British’, many young people discover they are excluded from continuing education when transitioning to adulthood, instead they ‘transitioned into illegality’ (Gonzales 2016)

When I was in Sixth Form I found out that I got a place at LSE to study law, I was ecstatic. I thought this was me coming up in the world. It was another step closer to getting away from my mum, to getting away from the household and everything. So when I heard that I couldn't go I was angry, I was frustrated ...

Christine

- Separation from peers
- Mental health implications: shock, isolation and depression
- The state constructs these young people as less deserving of UK education than citizens or settled migrants and renders academic achievements irrelevant

3. '...I WAS STUCK AT HOME WITH NO FUTURE IN SIGHT'

- Bordering through restricting access to student finance and categorised as overseas students
- Forced to take multiple gap years
- Crucial junction where future career and labour market opportunities are determined

It was really hard watching everyone else go off to university because I had always planned my life in stages, saying 'in three years' time, this is where I need to be', so it was like a hick-up, like 'how can this happen?' I have to go off track. And that made me feel like I lost a sense of control.

Christine

This was a pretty dark time for me, I would go days without saying a word to anyone... It didn't help you know seeing the pictures and the posts of all my friends at their universities having a good time, whilst I was stuck at home with no future in sight.

Michael

- Affected their sense of belonging and identity and reversed ‘integration’
- Many felt a sense of injustice and betrayal, especially long-term migrants and pointed out double standards: paying taxes, working and joining the British army was ok, education wasn’t

‘...although not being granted student finance was how we found each other, immigration was what connected us’

Dayo



CONCLUSION: EDUCATIONAL HIATUSES

- Immigration status creates implicit bordering mechanisms to restrict access to education
- The role of gender and life course is significant with women, especially young mothers, and young people disproportionately affected

Consequences:

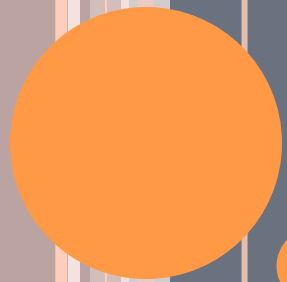
- Both groups face longer-term truncated educational futures from short-term restrictions
- Affects broader family and social relationships
- Impacts on structural and affective integration: counterproductive to stated 'integration' policy rationales?



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THANK YOU!