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Asylum as Artifice: Race, Law and Capital as Regimes of Abstraction in the United Kingdom's Asylum Accommodation System

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ABSTRACT

Taking as its case study the category of the 'asylum seeker' in UK law, this paper develops on latent concerns in legal geographies with processes of abstraction. Following Bhandar and Toscano, race, law and capital are here understood as different, co-articulating modalities of abstraction, through which the 'asylum seeker' is constituted and reconstituted by spatial practice and law over time. The case study charts the history of the category in UK law with the corresponding developments in the material and spatial infrastructures of asylum accommodation, from the point at which the 'asylum seeker' was first codified in UK law in 1993 to the delegitimisation of asylum itself in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and the Illegal Migration Act 2023. As well as providing the application of Bhandar and Toscano's innovative methodology to a new empirical area, I further make the case that, as well as functioning as organisational nodes for race and capital, legal objects may also serve as *conduits*. In this way, these differing regimes of abstraction are put into mutually influential relationships with one another, with particularly concerning implications for the independence of law from capital. Though the case study and its legislative context are necessarily narrow in order to properly trace the contours of this particular legal object, the potential application of the theoretical arguments developed from this tight focus is broad, contributing to studies of immigration law, asylum reception and processing, as well as legal geographies more widely.

1 | Introduction

In 2022, asylum claimants accommodated in hotels in Glasgow, Scotland, were issued with updated occupancy agreements by the Mears Group. These contained a stipulation stating that the occupants of the hotel rooms must:

> ...agree to allow Mears representatives, contractors, Landlord and Landlord contractors access to the property at all times; this is an absolute right. *I accept that Mears will retain the right to enter the Property and the rooms without notice...*
>
> (Mears Group 2022, 2, emphasis added)

The Mears Group is a UK-based company that provides housing and property services to both private and public sectors, including maintenance, temporary accommodation and home care. Since 2019, Mears has also acted as one of the three private contractors to the UK Home Office, supplying accommodation across seven regional 'Dispersal' areas to asylum claimants,

alongside Serco and Clearsprings Ready Homes. Such accommodation is only provided to people who have a current asylum claim lodged with the Home Office. Those who have had claims determined, either with a refusal or a grant of refugee status, are not eligible for accommodation and the meagre weekly financial stipend that makes up 'asylum support'. From the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom in March 2020, these contractors moved thousands of asylum claimants into what the Home Office referred to as 'contingency accommodation'—barracks, barges and hotels where people were accommodated in large numbers with little scope for following social distancing and hygiene guidance. In October 2020, 9500 people were living in some form of 'contingency accommodation'. By March 2023, this number had grown to 47,500 people, equivalent to over 40% of the total number of people in receipt of asylum support (Gower 2023). In the context of such accommodation, what the above stipulation means is that Mears staff and contractors can walk into bedrooms at any time, day or night, with all the gravely concerning implications this has for the safety and dignity of the individuals forced to live in them. People seeking asylum have little choice but to sign these occupancy agreements, since not doing so can be registered by the contractor as a 'refusal' of accommodation, which in turn can lead to a termination of asylum support. The question of how the spatial practice of entering bedrooms with no notice became not only possible, but explicitly permissible, is the central concern of this article.

The appearance of a specific stipulation in a quasi-legal document enabling this spatial practice can be understood as marking a point on the trajectory of a mutually influential relationship between race, law and capital. Far from being unprecedented, the Mears occupancy agreement provides a formalisation of unofficial practices carried out previously by at least one other contractor, Serco (ASH Project 2019), whose staff routinely entered the homes of asylum claimants without warning, with the keys held by the contractor. Space is produced in this way because asylum accommodation in the United Kingdom entails both value-extractive and disciplinary functions (Coddington et al. 2020; Darling 2022; Martin 2021). As per their contract with the Home Office, staff and contractors employed by Mears require access to accommodation to carry out inspections and any necessary maintenance and repairs. Inspections comprise checks on the standard of the property and that the individuals living there are abiding by the terms of their asylum support, such as living within their (minimal) means, not working illegally and not engaging in criminal behaviour (Bales 2023; Home Office 2019). Owing to the geographic spread of accommodation and the staff time entailed in these operations, staff retain keys to properties and enter without warning as and when they choose, since arranging a mutually convenient time with the resident of the property or room would eat into staff time and, therefore, profit. People seeking asylum in the United Kingdom do not enjoy the same legal protections as citizens and other migrants, meaning that such practices, unthinkable in other forms of housing, are commonplace in asylum accommodation. As this paper will demonstrate, since the explicit codification into UK law in 1993 of the 'asylum seeker', the category and the group of people it categorises have, through successive rounds of legislation, been carved out and differentiated as a racialised Other against whom certain spatial practices and production are viable. Indeed, it is *because* this population are designated as 'asylum seekers' that such practices—expressive of disciplinary, logistical and value-extractive logics—are possible at all. Utilising a methodology innovated by Bhandar and Toscano (2015) in application to property law, I examine the 'asylum seeker' as a nexus point in a diverse set of relations and practices, through which abstract regimes of race, capital and law are articulated with and by one another.

The paper builds on and contributes to academic explorations of migrant statuses as abstractions, be that Bhagat's (2024) treatment of 'fantasy' or De Genova's (2002) exposition on migrant 'illegality' and 'deportability'. As Varsanyi and Nevins (2007, 225) write, 'the unauthorised migrant is perhaps...the embodied evidence of the Janus-faced nature of the neoliberal state'. For these authors, the privations visited on this subject are expressive of wider moves by nation-states towards a deregulated, borderless economic system with ease of mobility for some, alongside the simultaneous hardening of external borders, an extension of the reach and intensity of internal bordering practices and the offshoring of certain migration management functions, like detention and processing. These conceptualisations recognise the role of abstract categories as economic functions of the nation state, mediating political and labour relations, synthesising seemingly contradictory discursive threads of threat, invasion and vulnerability.

In addition, this paper further contributes to the legal geographic literature which attends to the ways in which the 'asylum seeker' category and its peculiarities result in particular spatial, infrastructural and material production, such as letters (Darling 2014), accommodation (Burridge 2023; Darling 2011, 2022; Zill et al. 2019), processing (Papada et al. 2020; Vianelli 2022), courts and tribunals (Gill and Good 2019). While anyone can claim *asylum*, gaining *refugee* status in 1951 Geneva Convention signatory states is reliant on the proving of a well-founded fear of persecution based on identity characteristics or membership of a particular social group (UNHCR 2010). This distinguishes both the 'asylum seeker' and the 'refugee' as categories from other forms of migration status, which can be achieved by meeting more objective administrative criteria. The fact that people seeking asylum must often wait for months or even years while decision-makers deliberate serves to further entrench and embed these forms of material, spatial and infrastructural production. Notably present in the United States, Australia and Europe, these are arguably borne out of 'deterrent'-based policy approaches, which seek to keep out the populations of the Global South (Mayblin 2017; Robinson and Musterd 2003), favouring privatised, outsourced and offshored solutions to reception, processing, accommodation, detention and removal (Darling 2016; Mountz 2020).

Despite the uniqueness of asylum as a legal category, other immigration statuses (including that of having no legal status at all) do, of course, enact punitive restrictions on people's labour, mobility, social integration and other freedoms. Scholars have therefore examined functions of migration management relevant to a variety of forms of status, such as detention and removal (Hiemstra 2013; Mountz et al. 2013; Mountz 2020). This also extends to considering the ways in which such spatial production and practices intersect with carcerality, through

measures such as reporting (Fisher et al. 2019), detention and imprisonment (Moran et al. 2013). This scholarship ultimately explores the dual, meshed dynamics of capital and immigration law, whereby legal restrictions on labour, mobility and liberty can be instrumentalised for the purposes of value extraction and applied differentially across racialised subjects (Gilmore 2002, 2007). For instance, private contractors derive profit from immigration detainees' use of services and labour within detention facilities under 'unfree' or 'coercive' conditions (Bales and Mayblin 2018; Conlon and Hiemstra 2016). Conglomerations of practices, space and materiality oriented around extracting value from migrant life are conceptualised by Martin (2021) as 'carceral economies of migration control', through which processes of basic social reproduction, labour and data are capitalised on (Martin and Tazzioli 2023).

So, while such economies or infrastructures are not uniquely or wholly shaped by asylum law, the diverse legal-geographic scholarship reviewed here is founded on the theoretical position that the operations of specific migration statuses, including that of the 'asylum seeker', are co-productive of particular geographies and economies. This means that a close examination of a single legal category, its 'contours' (Thomas 2021, 5) and their relationship to spatial and material production, could be both theoretically and empirically fruitful. By 'contours', I am referring to the 'accumulated layers of congealed decisions' (Thomas 2021, 10), which lend the category its specificity within the context of a domestic legislature and, in turn, enable the corresponding particularities of spatial production. While recognising the importance of calls for scholarship to extend analyses beyond framings of the 1951 Convention and nation-state borders (Coddington 2018; Cole 2021) this paper's context and its case study are admittedly narrow, being confined to the category of the 'asylum seeker' within the jurisdiction of the United Kingdom. So, while no doubt guilty of 'methodological nationalism' (Murrey and Mollett 2023, 763), this tight empirical focus enables the achievement of a theoretical contribution that is much broader in scope; namely, that legal instruments, as abstractions, have the capacity to serve as conduits between law and capital, through which these different regimes of abstraction may mutually influence each other. Readers will note a correspondingly narrow and specific understanding of 'value' utilised in the discussion section, referring to the exchange value applied to services provided to people seeking asylum within the context of the accommodation contracts.

Indeed, it is through precise attention to the historical trajectory of a single legal category in context that its operations both in law and capital and its racialised production can be traced. While many functions of migration management (such as biometric data handling) in the United Kingdom are privatised, the fact that the wholesale social reproduction of people seeking asylum has been transferred to private provision offers a compelling case study for the theoretical argument, as compared to the more piecemeal and fragmented services that are found in other areas of migration governance. The proposals made here can and should be applied to other forms of migrant status, other legal objects, other nation-state and transnational contexts; doing so, along with critique, will further develop and deepen any explanatory power and contribution this paper can offer.

The paper proceeds as follows: firstly, the contribution of theories of abstraction is assessed in relation to legal geographies as an interdisciplinary project. Next, the paper's methodology, as conceived by Bhandar and Toscano (2015) in relation to property law, is detailed: legal objects function as articulations of race, law and capital as interlocking but independent regimes of abstraction. The methodology's foundation in Marxist theories of 'real abstraction' is explored, which posit both that abstractions emerge from social praxis *prior* to thought (Sohn-Rethel 2021) and that the work of these abstractions has concrete and tangible effects in the world (Toscano 2008b). What this means, put simply, is that spatialised practice leads, with legal codifications and racialised production reformatting existing categorisations in response. The limitations of this approach—in ascribing these abstractions an overdetermining role in spatial production are also considered in light of insights from Black geographies (McKittrick 2007, 2011; Gilmore 2002).

Taking all this together, this theoretical argument is applied to a historical case study, charting the development of the category of the 'asylum seeker' in UK law in relation to the changing landscape of accommodation for people seeking asylum. This begins with the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act (1993), which first codified the 'asylum seeker' as a category in UK law, and ends with the 2023 Illegal Migration Act, which serves to dismantle the legal validity of asylum itself. This legal history is threaded through by the co-articulations of race and, from 2012, capital. This culminates in the assertion that so-called 'asylum hotels' were exposed to the far-right riots of 2024 and 2025 as sites of voracious capitalist extraction of formerly public service provision, made hyper-visible and vulnerable to targeting through the concentration of people carved out, dispossessed and racialised over decades of legislative reformatting of the 'asylum seeker'.

Indeed, the moment at which asylum accommodation was privatised in 2012 is understood as pivotal. This marks the point at which capital and law came into a mutually influential relationship through the nexus of the 'asylum seeker'/'service user'—the latter being the term by which asylum claimants are referred to, in the contracts between the Home Office and its accommodation providers. From here, the influence of capital on the reconstitution of the 'asylum seeker' in successive rounds of legislation is mapped out. Crucially, the aim of this discussion is not to demonstrate the dominance of race, law or capital as regimes of abstraction over one another, but rather to carefully trace their interactions. Rather than being expressive of a radical social constructivism when it comes to the 'asylum seeker', this charts the articulations of these regimes as they unfold in concrete reality, meeting contingencies and challenges as they do so. The paper concludes with a summary and some suggestions for further application of its arguments.

2 | 'Real Abstraction': Possibilities for Legal Geographies

Legal geographies, less a discipline than 'a truly interdisciplinary intellectual project', has been argued to have reached an impasse (Braverman et al. 2014, 1; Delaney 2010) despite its range of empirical explorations and theoretical developments

(Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2015; Valverde 2015). Put simply, legal geographies are concerned with the study of the mutual constitutivity of law and space (Braverman et al. 2014; Delaney 2015). However, Benson (2014) and Delaney (2015) have questioned the efficacy of scholarship in capturing both the simultaneity and lived expression of this mutual constitutivity. They argue that, in much legal geographic scholarship, law and space remain binaries, with a tendency to analyse either the spatial expression of legislative and judicial orders or the ways in which space is organised by law. As Benson (2014) formulates it, this results in inquiries from law-making forays into space and vice versa, rather than the two being truly thought together. In response to these critiques, scholars have called for greater attention to the ways in which the legal is '*worlded*' (Braverman et al. 2014, 1; Delaney 2010). In many ways, this presents a concern with how abstractions are situated and expressed in lived and material reality (Delaney 2010). These authors therefore call for a greater focus on the relational production of space, with relationality itself understood as 'fluid, nonlinear, and experiential practices produced through law' (Braverman et al. 2014, 17). Delaney (2010, 25) offers the concept of the 'nomosphere' as 'the cultural-material environs that are constituted by the reciprocal materialisation of "the legal," and the legal signification of the "socio-spatial," and the practical, performative engagements through which such constitutive moments happen and unfold'. Through this foregrounding of processual, social, relational and performative constitutivity, these authors reassert the mutual constitutivity of the legal and spatial through their simultaneity—both are produced together, through time.

Building on this expansion of legal production in socio-spatial, imaginative and even aesthetic terms (Jeffrey 2019), this paper isolates and develops these legal geographic understandings of the socio-spatial expression of abstraction. Delaney (2010, 59) defines 'nomic settings' as 'determinable segments of the material world that are socially fabricated by way of the inscription or assignment of traces of legal meanings', while Braverman et al. (2014, 1) see '[d]istinctively legal forms of meaning... projected onto every segment of the physical world'. While no doubt communicative, these notions of projection and inscription, even when understood as contingent and evolving through time (Delaney 2015), inevitably fall back on that 'topographical' thinking that Braverman et al. (2014, 17) critique as limiting early legal geographic work, in which the 'task was framed as one of inserting law onto...material surfaces'. This suggests that further interrogating the nature of the social, relational, performative and properly mutual constitution of space and law could be a worthwhile endeavour.

Legal geographic work increasingly grapples with the problematic of the relationship between the abstract and material, with attention to the dangers of allotting the abstract an overdetermining role in its ordering and shaping of the material. Instead, examinations of the material's capacity to disrupt and challenge the application of the former are important, as exemplified in Jeffrey's (2020) survey of the body as being both a site upon which the law acts, being codified as property or a container of rights, but also an agent of performance and disruption. Delaney (2010) proffers *nomospheric figures:* 'abstract, categorical social entit[ies] which [are] defined with reference to spatiality and nomicity (or legality)' (74), which 'insofar as they are effectively embodied and performed...do exist as entities in the material world in their various instantiations' (76). Here, Delaney is pointing to both the *realness* and the diversity of those abstract figures—the fact that the respective existences of and relationship between a landlord and a tenant, for example, cannot be merely dismissed as 'just' a set of rules structuring a kind of legal duel between participants of equal standing. Alternatively, Blomley (2023; see also: Blomley 2020) defines the abstract concept of property as 'a relational meshwork' (2023, 18), produced as space through performative practices of naming, bounding and talking. Property is therefore 'a metaphorical geography, an imaginary site through which differently positioned social subjects interact and negotiate the terms by which they can access and use land' (Blomley 2023, 24). Property, then, is *not just* a house or a piece of land, but also an abstract assemblage which structures social performance, relationality and lived reality.

Holding onto this notion of a relational meshwork, and integrating this with Delaney's (2010) nomospheric co-articulation of the socio-spatial and socio-legal, insights from Marxist political and economic theory offer further opportunity to interrogate the mutual constitutivity of law and space, as well as the influence of race as an abstraction. Rather than asking how legal forms co-constitute space, Bhandar and Toscano (2015, 11) address property law as an articulation between the 'distinct and sometimes independent modalities of abstraction' of race, law and capital. Bhandar and Toscano (2015, 11) examine the complex 'events', 'processes', 'practices' and 'logics' through which the law orders and conditions capitalist valorisation and accumulation, at the same time as race, following Gilmore (2002, 2007), transforms and organises difference into a hierarchy of the (in)human. In doing so, Bhandar and Toscano (2015, 13) 'continu[e] the excavation of how capitalist property relations preserve and rely upon other relations that are not ascribable within the "social relations of production"'; namely, race and law as organisational practices of abstraction. Utilising this methodology in application to an entirely different context, this paper considers the category of the 'asylum seeker' and the space of asylum accommodation in the UK as one such assemblage of co-articulations of race, law and capital as regimes of abstraction.

Bhandar and Toscano's (2015) formulation is founded on a particular Marxist interpretation of abstraction as a form of praxis, or 'real abstraction'. For Toscano (2008b, 274, original emphasis), 'real abstraction' represents 'a theoretical break with an empiricist or neopositivist use of "abstract" and "concrete"...Marx reformulates the distinction [between these] such that the sensible and the empirical appear as a final *achievement* rather than a presupposition-less starting point'. Abstraction thus cannot be considered as 'a mere mask, fantasy or diversion', but is enacted through practice, relationality and materiality, resulting in a 'force operative in the world' (Toscano 2008b, 274) that is identifiable in concrete, tangible forms. Toscano stakes his position on what he considers to be the most intriguing and potentially revolutionary treatments of 'real abstraction' post-Marx: Sohn-Rethel's (2021) location of abstraction as originating in the social praxis of commodity exchange. Abstract concepts, such as the commodity, value and so on, develop from this praxis and only *subsequently* appear in thought. As commodity exchange disseminates across society, the separation between use and exchange value becomes institutionalised (Lange 2022). For

Sohn-Rethel (2021, 40), the act of exchange, rather than use, is transformative in terms of our relationship with the material world and time itself: as he puts it, '[e]xchange empties time and space of their material contents and gives them contents of purely human significance connected with the social status of people and things'. That is to say, exchange *as a practice* renders spatio-temporal settings as homogenous, continuous and subject to mastery of people (Sohn-Rethel 2021).

For legal geographies, this treatment of abstraction becomes all the more intriguing when considered, as Bhandar and Toscano (2015) do, alongside the work of legal theorist Yan Thomas (2021). For Thomas (2021, 9, original emphasis), the juridical operation is a spatio-temporally grounded social praxis for the purposes of creating

> categories of qualification [which] do not serve to know things but rather to evaluate things in order to settle the disputes that have arisen over them – and thus to *produce things differently* from what they are outside of law and its narrow and precise measure.

As well as functioning as a conditioning and ordering principle for the valorisation and accumulation of capital (Bhandar and Toscano 2015), Thomas' (2021) conceptualisation of law is particularly potent when considered with regards to the creation of a *legal persona*—in this case, the 'asylum seeker'. As will be demonstrated in the discussion, this particular legal category and the individuals addressed by it are not only subjected to 'state-sanctioned and extra-legal' racism as that dynamic, 'death-dealing displacement of difference into hierarchies' (Gilmore 2002, 16). For Mayblin (2017, 37), contemporary Western asylum policy also serves to erase the histories and influence of historic colonialism in the contemporary politics of asylum, naturalising forced migrants as people simply 'out of place in the spatial organisation of modernity'. Thus, in addition to the work of juridical procedure as ordering and conditioning, particularly relevant to capital accumulation and flow, the law also serves to *create* abstract objects and persons that are differentially positioned in relation to the law itself, as well as within the political-economy of its jurisdiction. Echoing Delaney, Bhandar and Toscano (2015, 13) note that '[t]he abstractions of race are…not just real, but lived'.

Indeed, noting this *lived* and *worlded* aspect of abstractions points to a limitation of the methodological approach applied here and its empirical focus; namely, insurgent practices of resistance against violent praxes of abstraction. Though unfortunately out of the scope of this article, insights from Black geographies (Gilmore 2002, 2007; McKittrick 2007) offer both further theoretical bolstering and vital counterpoints to Bhandar and Toscano's (2015) conceptualisation of race, law and capital as co-articulating regimes of abstraction as social praxis. For instance, Murrey and Mollett (2023, 762) present decolonial liminalities as a buttress against the violence of environmental extractivism. Their argument that the dynamics of colonial extractivism 'must be known in praxis' is suggestive that purely ideal appreciations of the violence of abstraction miss the point. Indeed, resistance is forged through the *practice* of daily living in such circumstances, which generate situated knowledges. Moreover, McKittrick (2011, 948) emphasises that studies of race which are preoccupied with structures of oppression—not to mention the suffering of racialised people that provides evidence of this oppression—risk rehearsing the very systems of racist epistemological domination that give rise to the phenomena they analyse. By contrast, 'collective history[ies] of [racial] encounter – a difficult interrelatedness' would pave the way towards more ethical critical analyses and a fuller account of the production of space.

3 | Asylum as Artifice: Tracing the Contours of the Category

Tying this all together, the discussion that follows examines the 'asylum seeker' from its genesis as a category in UK law in 1993 to the Illegal Migration Act of 2023, ending with the far-right riots targeting asylum accommodation in 2024 and 2025. This narrative charts this evolving legal constitution on one side and the social reproduction of people seeking asylum on the other; in other words, the operational realities of infrastructural assemblages, spatial practices, resource allocation and geographical dispersal. What this oscillating narrative structure aims to communicate is that the regimes of law, capital and race *as practices of abstraction* co-articulate, producing a particular legal geography of asylum accommodation. These articulations of race, law and capital also meet considerable contingency, including, for example, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and the opportunities these presented for private contractors.

Furthermore, narrative, chronological structuring of this account does not amount to a teleological explanatory framework. Rather, this approach is intended to reveal what is a key contribution of this paper—that the abstract legal category of the 'asylum seeker' serves as a conduit between law and capital and, in doing so, enables the mutual influence of each of these regimes of abstraction on the others. This is of note towards the end of the discussion, in which it is argued that the Nationality and Borders Act 2023 and the Illegal Migration Act of 2024 constitute the 'asylum seeker' as an 'illegal migrant' *in response to* the excesses of capitalist value extraction and accumulation in 'contingency accommodation', enabled through decades of legislative, spatial and infrastructural carving out of asylum claimants as racialised Others.

Before beginning, a primer on the genesis of the category of the 'asylum seeker' in UK law is useful in demonstrating both the category's artificiality, its obscuring of both colonial histories and neocolonial presents (Mayblin 2017), and its essential function as an instrument to mediate entry to the United Kingdom and access to its resources and the labour market (Balibar 2015; De Genova 2002). Despite ratifying the Geneva Convention in 1951 and its Protocol in 1967, the United Kingdom had no formal procedures for responding to asylum claims until the mid-1980s. Prior to this, the Immigration Act 1971, as well as the statutory instruments made under it, had simply noted 'that full account was to be taken of the UK's obligations under the 1951 Refugee Convention' (Macdonald and Toal 2014, 13–14) in dealing with asylum applicants. Claimants would be interviewed on arrival, the Home Office informed via a report that would then be used to decide (with no right of appeal) on the claim.

Individuals who *could* fit the requirements of the category of 'asylum-seeker' had, however, long been present in the United Kingdom. As Macdonald and Toal (2014) note, in the 1950s and 60s, the United Kingdom and Europe actively sought migrants from Africa and Asia to help rebuild their war-ravaged economies. Though many would have been eligible for refugee status under the Convention, migration facilitated by the desperate requirement for cheap labour meant that asylum was not relevant as a motive. By the 1990s, however, technological improvements and falling prices in communications and travel, as well as histories of previous migration to Europe, enabled movements of people who could readily fit the category of 'asylum seeker' but whose labour was, crucially, no longer desirable (Robinson and Musterd 2003).

Responding to these global shifts, the United Kingdom made further changes to its Immigration Rules in 1990 in terms of facilitating the entry and claims of asylum applicants, at which point claims were already totalling 26,000 a year (York 2022). This is suggestive that, rather than humanitarian concerns being proactively prioritised, the 'asylum seeker' as a category was to be reactively constituted. Indeed, it wasn't until 1993 that the Geneva Convention definition was finally corralled into UK law for the management of rising asylum applications from increased numbers of people arriving from the Global South who could not or chose not to apply through existing migration routes. Thereafter, the United Kingdom has followed the path taken by many Western nation states in adopting policies of deterrence at the border (Phillips and Kmak 2024), rather than allowing such migrants to fill labour market shortages or addressing root causes of forced migration. Such policies seek to restrict access to employment, welfare and other rights as means of impeding new arrivals, alongside more immediately brutal methods, such as failing to prevent deaths (LaFleur et al. 2025; Prieto-Flores 2025), push- and pullbacks (Delaney 2010). As a result, the exclusionary principles of the Geneva Convention definition are therefore instrumentalised as an artifice to mediate access of populations from the Global South to Western nation-state labour markets and welfare provision. For those that do manage to cross borders and claim asylum, their lived realities are profoundly shaped by this mediation, and the continued reformatting of the category depends on how the social reproduction of the asylum-seeking population occurs.

From here, the development of the category in law and the corresponding operational and material infrastructures for the reception, processing and accommodation of people seeking asylum is charted across three parts. Part 1 examines the genesis of the category in the United Kingdom, demonstrating that access to resources for people seeking asylum was always highly partial and contested, with government withdrawing resources resulting in informal practices by Local Authorities of dispersing people seeking asylum across the country. Part 2 focusses on the highly significant effects of the Immigration and Asylum Act (1999) up until the privatisation of accommodation in 2012. While the 1999 Act formalised dispersal and enacted the total severance of people seeking asylum from the UK labour market and welfare system, privatisation from 2012 onwards capitalised on this carving out by profiting from services delivered to essentially 'captive consumers' (Conlon and Hiemstra 2016). Crucially, the introduction of the 'service user' as the abstract counterpart to the legal category of the 'asylum seeker' creates these abstract objects as a conduit between the regimes of law and capital. Part 3 considers the effects of the development of this nexus point, arguing that the COVID-19 pandemic presented opportunities for private providers to maximise profit through the creation of 'contingency accommodation' (such as hotels, barracks and barges). These moves have contributed to highly punitive rounds of legislation in 2022 and 2023 respectively, reformatting the 'asylum seeker' as an 'illegal immigrant'. These latter legislative Acts serve to delegitimise and racialise asylum ever further, making permissible more voracious capitalist extraction from abstract migrant life (Martin 2021) and ever worsening treatment of people seeking asylum.

4 | Part 1 (1993–1999): The Creation and Dispersal of The 'Asylum Seeker'

Part of law's alchemic power in creating defined abstractions is that these 'provide social life with a form' (Thomas 2021, 8). As Delaney (2010, 76) writes, '[t]he activity of figuring radically reduces personhood to the parameters of abstract categories and criteria of membership which can be determined and manipulated'. Precisely because abstract categories apply to and shape the realities of material forms and real individuals, these may become 'facts' to which the law responds in its reformatting of its objects (Thomas 2021). In the case of the 'asylum seeker' in UK law, the category was, from its genesis in the 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act, constituted as having highly partial and contested access to the welfare state and labour market; access which was quickly eroded over successive Acts. While people seeking asylum were able to access social housing, the 1993 Act charged Local Authorities with the responsibility of assessing whether or not asylum-seeking individuals had any other accommodation available to them, 'however temporary' (1993 Act, Section 4 (1)). If they were believed to have other housing options, the Local Authority was not obligated to house them. The 'asylum seeker' is, in other words, effectively excluded from the protections of homelessness legislation and constructed *from its genesis* both as a consumer of resources and as having only partial and contested access to those resources. In addition, this serves to dispossess a racialised group of people of vital protections, who are in turn made more visible and further racialised by the fact of that dispossession. Through the 1993 Act, the 'asylum seeker' is constituted in law and thus *created as* a surplus requirement for Local Authorities to deal with and, in addition, an individual who has less claim to housing than others. This has spatial, operational and social consequences, as well as circumscribing the lives of people seeking asylum.

Amending the 'asylum seeker' into United Kingdom as a surplus population enables political and media discourse to characterise the asylum population as a 'burden' (Tyler 2013), setting the foundation for the much more dramatic actions of the subsequent Immigration Asylum and Nationality (1996) Act, where lesser claims to housing were reconstituted as no claims at all. In one sweep, the Act restricted employment from people seeking asylum and further gave powers for social security regulations to exclude people seeking asylum from jobseeker's allowance, income support, housing and council tax benefits. There were no alternative support measures put in place; York writes that:

'[t]he impact was immediate. Single in-country asylum-seekers were overnight reduced to sleeping on the street and rooting for food in dustbins' (York 2022, 76). This brutal set of moves was subjected to legal challenges, which the High Court upheld in October 1996, legally requiring Local Authorities to provide accommodation and basic support to people seeking asylum, on the basis that they qualified as 'vulnerable' under the definition of the 1948, National Assistance Act (Darling 2022). Once again, though this strategic litigation did at least provide some protections through this qualification, the addition of further bureaucracy, not to mention the definition of 'vulnerability', further serves to racially inscribe and create the asylum population as a burdensome surplus.

With the edge of the 1996 Act blunted, the Home Office responded by subjecting Local Authorities to considerable resource pressure, thereby disabling them from adequately providing for people seeking asylum. This resulted in what Darling calls 'dispersal by stealth' (Darling 2022, 41), whereby Local Authorities began to accommodate people outside of London and the South East in order to cut costs, despite the receiving Local Authorities having little resource, no appropriate expertise or infrastructure with which to support these new arrivals (Darling 2022). Though the 1996 Act could not totally remove people seeking asylum from the provision of the welfare state, the passing of the Act and its effective amendment through litigation, resulted in the geographical dispersal of people seeking asylum throughout the United Kingdom, thereby severing community ties with already established migrant groups in the more diverse capital. Darling (2022) notes further fragmenting effects of this informal dispersal: responsibility was devolved to regional Local Authorities for the sourcing of accommodation according to economic, rather than humanitarian, logics, because of the financial constraints that Local Authorities faced. As a final consequence, 'asylum seekers' were construed negatively, as a burden on the receiving areas that were much less racially and ethnically diverse than London. In a sense, though the 1996 Act was unsuccessful in reformatting the 'asylum seeker' as an individual with no claim to resources whatsoever, its spatial, material and social contingent effects were such that the 'asylum seeker' was reproduced UK-wide as a racialised, surplus population, with important implications for the manufacture of consent for future, broader anti-immigration politics. Indeed, precisely because receiving Local Authorities lacked the resources, infrastructure and specialist experience, 'asylum seekers' are again constituted *materially* as a racialised surplus population. The notion of the 'burden' is not thus only a figure of political discourse but also an operational and social reality, reproduced daily in Local Authority interactions with individuals cut off from any legal means of socially reproducing themselves. Such facts are then critical in subsequent reconstitutions of the category, which will then be formulated in response to said 'burden'.

This dynamic is clear in the passing of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, which was notably brought in just a year after the Home Office was finally defeated in the courts on the strategic litigation challenges raised against the 1996 Act (Darling 2022). The 1999 Act created the National Asylum Support Service (NASS), as a 'complete parallel system' (York 2022, 78) for the accommodation and support of people seeking asylum. This formalised the informal operational solution of 'dispersal by stealth', giving Government the power to assign regional areas as 'reception zones' (in the language of the Act). Local Authorities outside of London and the South East now received targeted Home Office funding to accommodate and support the people dispersed, on a no-choice basis, to these areas. Although formalised in law, people seeking asylum still faced (and continue to face) highly uneven geographies of dispersal, with significant differences in the experiences of those accommodated in rural, as opposed to urban, settings (Darling 2022). With all access to benefits and employment finally ended, people seeking asylum were instead provided with financial support equivalent to 70% of mainstream income support. As the previous Conservative government had failed to entirely dispense with state responsibility to provide for people seeking asylum, the New Labour government opted for a different tack in the reconfiguration of the 'asylum seeker'. As well as entirely devolving responsibility to Local Authorities rather than central government and reaffirming, following Darling (2022), that economic considerations should trump humanitarian care in asylum reception and processing, the creation of NASS as a parallel system also serves to constitute the 'asylum seeker' as *entirely* separate from the citizen and other migrant categories.

5 | Part 2 (1999–2012): The 'Service User' as The Law/Capital Nexus

Though still at this point managed by Local Authorities, a further distinction and separation is wrought in the administration of welfare and accommodation of the 'asylum seeker', vis-à-vis other groups. Under the 1999 Act, the accommodation and support services were formulated as contracts, which were put out for tender (Darling 2022). As was characteristic of New Labour's 'Third Way' governance style (Newman 2001), Local Authorities won the largest proportion of these, in addition to a mix of private and charity providers taking responsibility for a smaller percentage. These contracts defined the 'asylum seeker', for the purposes of operational delivery, as a 'service user'. The creation of this contractual counterpart to the 'asylum seeker' should be understood as the abstract technology through which capital would later be yoked to the legal category. In addition to cutting out and defining entities for the purposes of judgement (Thomas 2021), the law has also cut out and defined an entity to which ascribe value for exchange of services, which later will take place for profit. Dispersal also arguably disseminated a set of practices such that spatial transformation was, following Sohn-Rethel (2021), marked by features of homogeneity and continuity. To be clear, this did not mean the delivery of asylum accommodation across the United Kingdom was identical, rather that space was instrumentalised according to a particular set of economic logics, contrasting private rental sector, owner-occupier or social housing arrangements. Indeed, this homogeneity and continuity of spatial practice can be identified as precisely the point at which spatial practices of resistance and alterity need to be explored (McKittrick 2011; Murrey and Mollett 2023). Dispersal was also a source of significant intercommunal tension. Given that Local Authorities often sought difficult-to-let or even condemned housing in deprived communities, perceptions abounded in Dispersal regions, abetted by political and media discourse, that people seeking asylum were

receiving preferential treatment in terms of resource allocation (Darling 2022; Hill et al. 2021; Robinson and Musterd 2003).

In 2012, the then Conservative-Liberal Democrat Coalition Government opened the tendering of the asylum support and accommodation contracts to the private sector, which resulted in a consortium of providers, including Serco and G4S, taking responsibility for the various regional Dispersal Areas. This arrangement continues, albeit with a retendering of new contracts in 2019 and a new roster of corporations engaged to deliver them. Most significantly, the formula that manages the maintenance of 'service users' has remained the same since 2012, with providers paid on a per head per night basis for the accommodation of people seeking asylum. The delivery of services is contingent on the asylum claim—once an asylum claim has been determined, either positively or negatively,[1] the provider can no longer charge the Home Office for services provided and is thus incentivised to evict people remaining in the accommodation it leases. The cost of this highly temporary, basic social reproduction in the 2019 Asylum Accommodation and Support Contract is formulated as follows:

'The "per person per night cost" will be inclusive of all costs associated with that individual including, but not limited to the following:

a. The accommodation;
b. The cost of all furnishings;
c. The cost of any and all utilities consumed;
d. Necessary certification and licences;
e. Cost of Welfare Support Offices; and
f. Cost of Maintenance Staff and Maintenance' (Home Office 2019, 277)

Through this breakdown, the 'service user' (and thus the 'asylum seeker') is constituted as requiring a rudimentary package for their social reproduction, now entirely untethered from standards and requirements in legislation that provide protection to private and social housing tenants. Given the contracts have, since 2012, been run for profit, contractors are incentivised to run accommodation and related services at lowest cost to exact the highest possible renumeration. These newer operational realities, distinct again from NASS provision, constitute those now associated with the 'asylum seeker'. People seeking asylum are now subjects entirely disabled from other legal means of survival, rendered as a 'captive consumers' (Conlon and Hiemstra 2016) and reproduced through highly impoverished services, which hinge from 1 day to the next on the determination of their asylum claim.

As well as later opening up social reproduction of claimants to aggressive forms of profit-driven delivery and the bleak humanitarian consequences this entails, privatisation ushers in the constitution of the 'service user' according to the logics of exchange value. Capital may then influence the constitution of the 'asylum seeker' on the ground, with the abstract nexus of 'asylum seeker'/'service user' acting as a conduit through which operational feedback can flow from the private contractor to the Home Office as the government department responsible for administering the contracts. Once again, this also enables and disseminates continuous (though not uniform) spatio-temporal transformation, which arises from the abstract praxis of exchange as identified by Sohn-Rethel (2021) and is institutionalised by law. Such an assertion should, of course, be tempered by the fact that localised delivery and contingency affect the rollout of delivery; nonetheless, identifiable material and social similarities exist across provision, which create a highly punitive and disciplinary infrastructure UK-wide.

6 | Part 3 (2012–2023): From the 'Asylum Seeker' to the 'Illegal Migrant', 'Small Boats' and Offshoring

Having established the 'service user'/'asylum seeker' relationship as the nexus between law and capital in the delivery of asylum accommodation, later developments indicate that this link provides the means for capital to influence further iterations of asylum law. A trajectory can be drawn from the extraordinary changes in private asylum accommodation provision precipitated and enabled by the global COVID-19 pandemic, to the ensuing, highly punitive legislative responses in the 2022 Nationality and Borders and 2023 Illegal Migration Acts. Here, the material realities produced by earlier rafts of legislation are reformatted by the 2022 and 2023 Acts, such that asylum processing and reception is approached as a costly service economy which requires wholesale offshoring, entailing further spatio-temporal abstraction and transformation (Sohn-Rethel 2021), aimed beyond the borders of the United Kingdom. Such a turn is only enabled through the complete and total separation of the 'asylum seeker' from the provision of the welfare state, and the category's constitution not just as a legal abstraction but also a function operating as an organising principle for the circulation of capital flows. However, we see here the law working in the service of capital—for offshoring to take place, the 'asylum seeker' must necessarily be legally reformatted as an 'illegal migrant'. At the same time, this reformatting also enables ever more invasive spatial practice to be both formalised and normalised, as seen in Mears' staff making unannounced entries into bedrooms of people accommodated in hotels.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic in the United Kingdom, people seeking asylum were, in most cases, accommodated in own-door flats and houses in Dispersal Areas, which were largely leased by the housing provider from private landlords, with a smaller percentage leased from providers of Registered Social Housing. The exception was Initial Accommodation, where people seeking asylum are placed temporarily just after they have been dispersed, before being moved to their more permanent Dispersal Accommodation. As above, when the first lockdown in response to rising COVID-19 cases was announced in the United Kingdom in March 2020, contractors began moving people from across the accommodation estate into hotels in Dispersal Areas that had been left empty because of the pandemic, and, later, to military barracks on Ministry Of Defence sites. The reasoning from both housing providers and Government respectively was contradictory, vague, and shifting. Initially, providers claimed that the constraints of safe delivery of services during the lockdown necessitated the moves to 'contingency accommodation', despite journalists, charities and campaigners raising obvious issues

concerning the use of shared rooms, dormitories and communal dining, as well as a lack of basic hygienic practices and access to primary health care (Goodwin 2020; Refugee Council 2022). The Government, on the other hand, has taken the line that the provision of 'contingency accommodation' is necessary in order for it fulfil its statutory obligations to destitute people seeking asylum (Gower 2023), in the context of sharply rising numbers of asylum applicants (Neal 2022), increasingly characterised in policy as 'small boat arrivals' (Home Office 2024). While Mort and Morris (2024) note that 2022 saw the highest number of new claims (at 81,130 applications) since the early 2000s, they emphasise that Home Office failed to match these numbers with increased capacity in decision-making and processing, meaning that claimants are forced to spend longer in the system awaiting a decision on theirclaim. Not insignificantly, greater numbers and longer stays in asylum accommodation also result in larger profits for private providers. Furthermore, historic and compounding backlogs, as well as the Home Office's failure (or inability) to meet new demands on its capacity, point to the fact that the rise in corporate strength and power in public service provision is paralleled by a hollowing out of state bodies through austerity measures and other fiscal constraints. In such a context, the pandemic provided an opportunity for private contractors to rapidly concentrate and expand the provision of accommodation, against an authority which has not held the expertise nor the capacity to take back responsibility for the contracts since at least 2012.

The acquisition of large-scale sites was already legislated for by both the 1999 Act and the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004, as well as being explicitly stipulated under the terms of the AASC contracts, meaning that contractors were free to act quickly and take advantage of hotels left empty by the shutdown of tourism during the period of the pandemic. Using the per head per night formula broken down above, hotel and barrack accommodation would enable faster, leaner value creation and accumulation than the prior convention of own-door Dispersed Accommodation. As noted in the Introduction to this paper, staffing costs are reduced by the greatly decreased geographical areas requiring cover, while maintenance costs decreased when these cover a hotel room per one or two people or a dormitory housing more. Thus the very constitution of the 'service user' as requiring such scant services, within contracts run for profit, leans inexorably towards large-scale, mass accommodation, as well as invasive practices, such as unbidden entries to rooms or properties.

The framing of hotel and barrack accommodation by providers as a 'crisis response' lead to enormous costs for the Home Office, with asylum support costing £4.7 billion in the year 2023/24, of which £3.1 billion was spent on hotel accommodation alone (NAO 2024). Mort and Morris (2024, 9) write that 'the government's failure to adequately budget for [contract costs] has contributed significantly to the reported £22 billion black hole in the public finances' further enabling the tendency for the 'asylum seeker' to be formulated politically and discursively as a 'burden' and, increasingly, as a racialised 'threat'. This is amplified by a spatial reconfiguration of the asylum accommodation estate into hyper-visible, concentrated and sometimes remote sites, contrasting the previous convention of leasing Dispersed Accommodation throughout local communities. Coupled with hysterical media coverage of 'small boat arrivals', such sites and treatment produce once again material and operational realities, further distorted by a racist and racialising image economy, to which the ensuing Nationality and Borders and Illegal Migration Acts were to respond to.

Taken together, the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 and Illegal Migration Act 2023 legislated for the removal of asylum applicants who have not come directly from their country of origin (thus specifically targeting 'small boat arrivals') to a 'safe third country' for the processing of their claim. Neither the Conservative Government that passed these Acts nor the Labour Government which followed it have yet been successful in securing the agreements of 'safe third countries' (be that Rwanda, Albania or indeed any others) to action offshore processing. As a result, claimants found to have passed through a 'safe third country' may have their claims certified as 'inadmissible' resulting in an extended legal limbo in which their claims cannot be determined in the United Kingdom, but neither can they be removed to another country. Not insignificantly, this results in longer stays in asylum accommodation and further value extraction for providers. Though the Acts have not been entirely successful in their stated aims, what is crucial to identify here is the role which capital has played in their development, in addition to a related discursive and political project of creating a racialised Other. The political perception of extortionate cost of 'warehousing' people seeking asylum (Vianelli 2022), as well as their spatial reorganisation into a concentrated, identifiable racialised 'threat' has led to a legislative response in the 2022 and 2023 Acts to delegitimise and therefore offshore asylum altogether. In some ways, whether 2022 and 2023 Acts result in the removal of people seeking asylum for processing or not, their effects remain potent. The dangers of this ongoing hyper-visible and concentrated spatial organisation of the asylum population and racist rhetorical framing were realised in the far-right riots across the United Kingdom in the summers of 2024 and 2025. The extent to which the 'asylum seeker' in the United Kingdom has now been associated with racialised 'threat' can be seen especially in the 2025 riots, which were ignited after a teenager in Southport stabbed and killed three young children and injured ten others. Far-right social media accounts spread the false claim that the assailant was a Muslim 'asylum seeker', leading to attacks on mosques and hotels accommodating people in the asylum system, with attempts made to set these alight. The truth, it seemed, mattered far less than the urgency of reprisals against the figure of a confected racial threat that is constituted specifically as Muslim and an 'asylum seeker', expressive of further racialised stratification according to 'hierarchies of origin and religious belief' (Gilmore 2002, 20).

By differentiating essentially between those that arrive by plane and those that arrive by boat,[2] the 2022 and 2023 Acts delegitimise and reformat 'asylum' as 'illegal migration', enabling persecutory spatial practice and intensifying racialisation. As per Vianelli's (2022) diagnosis of the 'logistification' of reception, humanitarian obligations are reduced to a set of processes and movements from which value can be extracted, either within the United Kingdom or abroad. The more asylum itself is delegitimised, the lows that are permissible and enacted in terms of provision grow simultaneously more inventive and entrenched. Whether accommodation is offshored or remains within the

United Kingdom, these Acts enable providers to extract more value in sites at lower labour and welfare costs, with less oversight. These co-articulations of race, law and capital as regimes of abstract praxis produce continuous carceral space across uneven geographical dispersal, innovating to extract more and more value, which requires both the racialisation and the illegitimisation of asylum claimants in order to proceed.

7 | Conclusion

This paper has presented a novel theoretical conceptualisation of the category of the 'asylum seeker', understood here as referring not to an individual fleeing persecution, but as an abstraction of race, law and capital. The intertwined historical account of the category's genesis and development in UK law, alongside the operational delivery of asylum accommodation, has aimed to reveal not only the trajectory of these strands as they co-articulate and mutually constitute law and space, but moreover provides evidence of the mutually influential relationship between them. Rather than the legislative reformatting of the 'asylum seeker' representing the 'abstract' function of law and the reception, processing and accommodation of people its 'concrete' manifestation, both may be understood as diverse praxes of abstraction, occurring across a range of different contexts and co-articulating with race throughout. Though the origins of the category can be traced to the exclusionary 'humanitarian' principles (Balibar 2015) of the Geneva Convention, what its amendment in UK law initially enabled was a framework for decision-making and judgement for access to resources and labour, which has now transformed into a set of ordering principles for the capital valorised and accumulated from the dispossession of people seeking asylum (Bhandar and Toscano 2015). Understanding law, capital and race as *praxes* of abstraction enables us to see how these regimes co-articulate in the rolling constitution and re-constitution of the 'asylum seeker' on the ground, through time. The way that the 'asylum seeker' is constituted through spatial practice—such as in unbidden entries to bedrooms—in hotels or barracks across the United Kingdom is of vital importance. The law is responsive to the realities to which it gives rise, meaning that the reformatting of categories develops not only on legal precedent but on the contingent socio-spatial realities which the law's earlier iterations precipitate, but, crucially, cannot determine. Indeed, because the law is understood to co-articulate with race and capital, its unforeseen consequences and what it enables are of as much concern as what it sanctions.

On this point, there are limitations to this approach which invite further critique, collaboration and the application of this paper's arguments to a wider range of contexts. Firstly, the paper's 'methodological nationalism' (Murrey and Mollett 2023, 763), necessary for the detailed examination of a case study that provides the empirical grounding for the paper's theoretical contributions, prevents the analysis from benefitting from the kind of productive cross-fertilisation that multiple empirical contexts would offer, as exemplified by Murrey and Mollett (2023), as well as failing to address analogous patterns in the provision of support to people seeking asylum in other nation-states. Secondly, the focus on the UK's legislature explores how the violence of abstraction is committed through the production of continuous (though not necessarily uniform) space, as an articulation of race, law and capital. What this does not attend to is how this space is *otherwise* and *additionally* constituted; the ways in which people seeking asylum experience and forge these spaces, the encounters (McKittrick 2011) that take place between housing provider staff and people seeking asylum, as well as with the wider communities around asylum accommodation. Of particular relevance here is a nascent identification that if regimes of abstraction are first and foremost rooted in praxis (Sohn-Rethel 2021; Toscano 2008b) then they may be best understood and their violence resisted through practices of daily living (Murrey and Mollett 2023; McKittrick 2011).

Indeed, the proposition that the 'asylum seeker' is constituted through praxes of abstraction is what enables examples of the kind of malign innovation and informality at the ground level which opened this article. As the movement of the analysis above demonstrates, oscillating between law and practice, this mutual co-constitutivity of space is replete with opportunism, contingency and unforeseen consequences. While this article opened with the caveat that the narrative chronology presented should not be supposed to suggest the inevitability of the category's trajectory, what is nonetheless apparent in this account is a sense that, in this context, race, law and capital as regimes of abstraction appear to reinforce one another's extremities. These extremities include entering rooms and buildings without consent and, in doing so, constituting the 'asylum seeker' as a person undeserving of safety. Such practices may then be subsumed, disseminated and normalised through legal and policy formalisation, altering the realm of possibility (and, indeed, permissibility) with every re-constitution of the category. This can be seen in the way that informal dispersal paved the way for the policies of the 1999 Act, which in turn set the scene for privatisation; or, in the way that the COVID-19 pandemic offered the opportunity for accommodation providers to seize on latent aspects of existing legislation to maximise their profits. It is this patterning that should be of grave concern to academics, policymakers, and civil society alike, as there is no suggestion that this is a process with inherent limits.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The data that support the findings of this study are largely publicly available. Any others are available from the author upon reasonable request.

Endnotes

[1] At the time of writing, newly recognised refugees have a 28-day notice period to move out of their asylum accommodation, while people have had their claim refused have just 21 days.

[2] Notwithstanding that no safe and universal routes to asylum exist, bar the Refugee Resettlement routes, which enable the United Kingdom to essentially select refugees who apply from UN administered refugee camps.

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