

Refugee and Asylum Seeker Research in Scotland A Literature Review

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This literature review is an attempt to highlight the ‘state of the art’ with regard to asylum and refugee research in a Scottish context. It is worth prefacing all that is to come with the point that national demarcations are not always easy to operationalise. For example, the fact that policy decisions pertaining to asylum and refugee issues are predominantly reserved matters means that some research conducted on UK developments is required to give a context to the more Scottish specific work. In addition there is a growing literature on the position and impacts of the European Union (EU), and EU Accession nationals, research that generally acknowledges the lack of explicit distinctions made among policy makers and the public between migrant groups. This means that there are often ‘spill-over’ effects whereby research into one group of migrants has implications for another. These cautions will be highlighted wherever appropriate.

In terms of the methodology of the literature review this can be summarised as a three pronged approach. Literature used for previous work conducted for a PhD formed some of the contextual bedrock of the research. This was primarily academic research on UK immigration policy. In addition reports known to of staff at Scottish Refugee Council were then added to that literature. However, the primary source of data capture concerned new data searches. This was conducted using key word searches through the Bath Information Data Services, Emerald, Omnifile and Abi-Inform. Key search terms such as ‘Asylum seekers’, ‘Scotland’ and ‘Refugees’ produced a vast number of ‘hits’, although less so when Scotland was included as part of the search criteria. Overall there were some 1500 or so hits that were scanned and either read in full or discarded. Those of most relevance to the overall aims of the review are included and summarised below.

Thus the references included were somewhat circumscribed, particularly with regard to UK and European wide research. It was decided that due to the quantity of papers as well as the fluidity of this fast moving policy field, the review would

primarily focus on the more recent policy context. Although this does not provide evidence of the incremental nature of changes being made over a longer time period, it does mean that much of the more recent context is included. This is not to say the longer term context is not of interest, it is just to point not only to the volume of such data, but also to the fluidity of the policy sector, meaning that exactitudes constantly alter and rapidly become out of date, although the broader trends remain broadly the same.

Nevertheless, the volume of UK research is also vast and thus a selection process was still required. Those papers that either implicitly or explicitly acknowledge Scotland, or use some Scottish data, were more likely to be included than data solely focussed on the UK. In addition, more recent work was also considered better able to capture the present context and so these were included in larger numbers than more historical work. Topic specific rather than general research was also included in larger numbers in order that specific policy developments were highlighted.

The relative paucity of Scottish specific

research, especially regarding historical work, means that the Scottish data included here is mostly relatively recent. Research in the field of refugees and asylum seekers has become a more popular topic in recent years, and this has been reflected by output. Although part of the reasons for this is to be found in the relative lack of asylum seeking and refugee population in Scotland prior to dispersal in 2000, there remain large gaps in literature some 9 years after that dispersal. Even in terms of Scottish research, not all of the work that has been conducted is included in this review. Certain themes developed in the inductive process of researching the review and it is primarily work that related to those themes that are used. Nevertheless, gaps in research were evident in the compiling of the review and thus while the review focuses on themes, the gaps identified in the conclusions also take account of work conducted but not included in the review itself.

This review will take as its starting point the more generalist work that has been conducted, whether general in a multi-level governance sense or in terms of the interchangeability of migrant types. Part 2 briefly highlights some European developments while Part 3 begins to unravel some of the main UK wide issues. These primarily concern the issues of citizenship and social cohesion, reserved matters on the whole, as well as problems in accessing reliable data. Finally part 3 looks at the ‘twin’ policy developments of detention and deportation.

Broad Scottish specific issues and concerns will then be highlighted in Part 4. The devolutionary settlement is of crucial importance and the controversies and trajectory of that settlement will be touched upon next. The fluidity of that settlement is of continuing importance and will lead into more Scottish specific contextual factors.

Many of the current issues of most concern for asylum seekers are directly related to the existence of and barriers to accessing rights. Bridging the UK and Scottish contexts this inclusion/exclusion nexus will be highlighted in Part 5 and followed by evidence concerning general access to social services, and what research indicates this means for asylum seekers and refugees.

Education and health are not only important social policy issues that highlight to some degree the level of ‘social inclusion’, they also form key aspects of the devolved settlement in which the Scottish Government can differentiate themselves from Westminster. These key issues will lead into Scottish service provision, with some attention being given to the position of children and the social work issues that naturally accompany them.

Dispersal prompted an increase in Scottish focussed work. The dispersal process to deprived communities has impacted on all other aspects of asylum. The role of such communities in either welcoming or marginalising new arrivals has been of huge importance. This importance extends to the role of the voluntary sector and indeed the self-organising of asylum seekers and refugees. Thus the growing literature on Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs) as well as the role of voluntary sector organisations will be addressed next.

The atmosphere in which asylum seekers and refugees live is also impacted by broader attitudinal issues. This includes the hostility faced by many in the communities in which they live, but must also include the role of the media and politicians in fermenting hostility towards these, and indeed all migrant groups. Part 6 will therefore seek to highlight some of the current research concerning attitudes towards asylum seekers in Scotland as well as what informs these attitudes.

Finally Part 7 concludes by highlighting thematic gaps in the existing research literature. While some of these gaps are snap shot and specific, others call for larger, more ambitious research projects in the future.

The EU has not only become a key platform for the making of asylum and refugee policy, through for example directives on minimum reception standards, it has also conformed to many of the more restrictive proclivities of dominant member states. This section will primarily focus on broad externalisation¹ processes at the EU level.

Both the principles and practice of the international refugee protection regime have been under considerable pressure over recent years in Europe as well as further afield. Harvey succinctly sums up overall attacks on refugee protection measures stating that “my principle argument is that the institution of asylum is under serious attack from states intent on constructing walls of exclusion around their territories” (Harvey 2000 368). While that is the overall principle or driver, the means are described as

“the ritual humiliations of detention, fingerprinting, welfare restriction, backlogs and delays are the reality for asylum seekers within the ‘sophisticated’ northern systems. The picture is a bleak one and makes talk in the north of the universality of human rights very hollow indeed” (Ibid 372)

In European terms, the prime aim of policy and practice over the past ten years or so has been to make arrival into the territorial entity of the European Union more difficult. A meeting of EU leaders in Tampere in 1999 was theoretically based on the means by which an area of ‘freedom, security and justice’ could be created. However, the Tampere conclusions were the first to explicitly tie migration and external relations into EU policies.

Haddad points out that Regional Protection Programmes were one of the key innovations at this time, aimed at preventing asylum seekers from making their way to the EU where they would be able to make a claim for protection based on Convention criteria.

The European Commission presented proposals in September 2005 that essentially envisaged three ‘solutions’ to refugee movement to the Union, resettlement, repatriation or local integration (Haddad 2008 194). Part of the EU response’ was the AENEAS programme that provided financial help to states from which a large proportion of ‘illegal’ movement originated, or through which it transited. However, the AENEAS stream that funded these solutions also included the training of border guards in Eastern Europe, while in Tanzania money was given to the Government to improve conditions in camps and encourage repatriation (Ibid 196).

A form of burden shifting rather than sharing (Neumayer 2004 166) has come to dominate policy developments. These developments have been integral to the externalisation process, whereby so-called ‘safe third country’ and ‘safe’ country of origin provisions have enabled cases to be treated as unfounded, and readmission agreements with third countries have aided the removal of individuals from the EU to those countries. In addition sanctions against carriers bringing in asylum seekers without valid visas and other documentation make it increasingly difficult to travel to the EU in search of international protection.

These brief points are not intended to present an overall analysis of EU immigration procedures. They are merely provided in order to give a flavour of the overall approach, that of making arrival

¹ The externalisation of policy refers primarily to the diffusion of control measures. Non EU and non European nation states, as well as private bodies, would be charged with preventing the arrival of people to EU territories in return for financial help, sanctions or at the risk of deteriorating relationships.

to the EU more difficult. The policies and procedures at the national level, that the next section begins to develop, primarily concern what happens to those who have 'arrived', to some degree conforming to Hammar's conception of the differences between 'immigration policy' and 'immigrant policy' (Hammar 2006 239)

3.1 Citizenship, Cohesion and Social Capital

The search for protection is inextricably linked to a need for a sense of safety and belonging. While 'good race relations' have long been predicated on control of immigrant numbers, the Government over recent years have introduced 'cohesion' to the race relations lexicon. This has led to a questioning of multiculturalism and a search for a sense of 'Britishness'. This section will attempt to synthesise some of these developments within the rubric of citizenship, cohesion and social capital.

Citizenship issues have received growing attention over the past decade or so. McGhee has argued that David Blunkett's tenure as Home Secretary witnessed citizenship being problematised. Borrowing from communitarian thought regarding the balance of rights and responsibilities, Blunkett attempted to begin a process of unity through shared core values, which McGhee sees as inherently problematic (McGhee 2005 5), due at least in part to the unitarist notion inherent in such an approach. That is, it is questionable that there are or should be certain 'values' shared by all.

Nevertheless in place of older concepts of race relations and racial equality the New Labour Government adopted the concept of 'community cohesion'. According to Robinson this concept can be traced back directly to the disturbances in northern English towns in the summer of 2001 (Robinson 2005 1411), which largely informed the Cantle report.²

Links between 'good race relations' and immigration policy are evident in the trajectory of policy within the rubric of community cohesion. As Robinson points out "community cohesion is an agenda built on ideological assumptions regarding

disputed concepts such as 'community' and 'multiculturalism' (Ibid 1412). The lack of any forerunner to community cohesion prior to 2001 meant that "it represented an empty vessel into which the preoccupations of contemporary public policy were poured" (Ibid 1415). The result of policy and practice for Robinson has been to both over-blow the differences of ethnicity and to place the problems associated with community and multiculturalism on the shoulders of those within ethnic minority communities rather than any problems of the indigenous population and their reluctance to allow minority integration in its broadest sense (Ibid 1412).

The issue of 'community cohesion' is also addressed by Worley. She argues that the 'community cohesion' agenda has allowed language to become 'deracialized' which has produced a new focus on immigrant assimilation (Worley 2005 483), away from the previous multi-cultural perspective. She points out that

"talking about 'community' negates using racialized language. It enables practitioners and policy actors to avoid 'naming' which communities they are referring to, even though the reference points are clear" (Ibid 487).

That is, 'they' must ensure that 'they' integrate into the dominant culture, indicative of the more assimilationist approach mentioned by Worley.

While racial tensions were being heightened by British National Party activity in certain deprived areas, Back et al argue that the new populism inherent in Labour rhetoric over community cohesion

"tends to mollify rather than confront the sentiments demonstrated in increased

² The Cantle Report was commissioned by David Blunkett in 2001 and written later that year. It argued that different communities were leading 'Parallel Lives' and argued for community cohesion being created through shared values and citizenship.

support for the British National Party across the northern mill towns” (Back et al 2002 445).

These disturbances, for the authors, led to a move away from a celebration of multiculturalism to one with a focus on language and citizenship tests and a critique of arranged marriages (Ibid 446). One ramification was that “the mud of criminalisation sticks to all those seeking refuge”(Ibid 451).

The discursive criminalisation of the very process of seeking refuge has exacerbated any existing tensions. Harvey adds that “the link between security and asylum has had serious practical implications as asylum seeking is effectively ‘criminalized’ in Europe” (Harvey 2000 387).

Hampshire and Sagar point to the post hoc rationalisation of policy in stating that “the securitization of UK migration policy was already well under way before the bombers struck in London”, but that “there is little doubt the bombings gave an extra impetus to the securitization of migration policy discourse” (Hampshire and Sagar 2006)³. They point to the elements of the 5-year strategy⁴ aimed at strengthening border controls and increasing restriction,

“these measures include extended provisions for immigration officials and subcontractors to search aircraft, ships, and vehicles at ports of entry, and powers to enable immigration officers to verify and detain passengers’ identity documents and demand biometric information (such as fingerprints or eye-scan data)” (Ibid).

They add that although “attempts to restrict access to asylum predate the events of July 2005, the bombings undoubtedly made it easier for those who want further restrictions to link asylum with terrorism” (Ibid).

³ Emanating primarily from the Copenhagen School of peace studies the concept has been applied in numerous forms to immigration matters. The labelling of immigration as an existential threat and thus as a security matter allows that threat to be stated without being defined, and also allows for the use of extraordinary measures in order to ‘deal with’ the problem.

⁴ The Five-Year strategy ‘Controlling Our Borders - Making Migration Work for Britain’, was launched in February 2005. It was defined in the paper by the Prime Minister thus, “It shows how we are going to enforce strict controls to root out abuse. It will ensure Britain continues to benefit from people from abroad who work hard and add to our prosperity. And, importantly, it puts forward solutions to a difficult issue which are clear, workable and in the best interests of this country”.

It is worth pointing out that the definition of terrorism has been incrementally extended over recent years. Hampshire and Sagar highlight that as Prime Minister, Tony Blair raised the possibility that anyone could be denied access to the asylum process in stating that “anyone who has participated in terrorism or who has anything to do with it anywhere will automatically be refused asylum” (Ibid). Terrorism was, however, being ‘stretched’ to its definitional limits such that,

“the use or threat is designed to influence the government or to intimidate the public or a section of the public, and the use or threat is made for the purpose of advancing a political, religious or ideological cause” (Home Office Press Release February 2005).

Thus refugee protection could, in theory, be removed from anybody involved in any political movement that aims to change an existing Government.

Concepts of social cohesion and assimilation have inherent within them behavioural demands on those currently being excluded. This links into many of the assumptions of social capital and age old debates of structure and agency. Cheong et al address the recent focus on immigration and social capital. Importantly they point out that social capital as a concept is “episodic, socially constructed and value based, depending on the prevailing ideological climate” (Cheong et al 2007 24). Thus there are alternative conceptions and definitions. In the work of Cheong et al the social capital framework is used to address the social cohesion agenda, and the more assimilationist response to the 2001 civil unrest that led to the Cantle report. Language and citizenship classes, it was argued, would lead to more active citizenship. This, for Cheong et al has

“links to a communitarian agenda, adopted by New Labour, that privileges homogeneity, cohesion and consensus over approaches that emphasize material and cultural difference” (Ibid 28/9).

Linked to recent work of social psychology such as that of Kramer and Schermbrucker (Kramer and Schermbrucker 2006), Cheong et al emphasise that ‘difference’ does and should exist, and that there is therefore a need to integrate underlying issues of power to provide an alternative to the prevailing view of social capital. (Cheong et al 2007 40).

This has concrete ramifications for immigration as

“underpinning the current debate on immigration and diversity are enduring issues of integration, identity and citizenship that are influenced by political ideology”(Ibid 31).

However, this focus on integration is also affected by immigration producing binary opposites of ‘us’ and ‘them’, where ‘they’ are increasingly characterised by their relationship to crime, terrorism and security. This binary logic is seen to operate against the bridging potential of social capital (Ibid 36). Indeed Cheong et al utilise the work of Bourdieu in arguing that access to resources as a result of connections to particular groups can reproduce social inequalities (Ibid 37), and thus is linked to the “uneven and harsh realities of the reception experience of immigration”(Ibid 38).

Malloch and Stanley add that historic ‘othering’ has always had an element of assimilation. What is new is that the perspective now is that “‘they’ cannot be changed”(Malloch and Stanley 2005 56). This point is re-emphasised by Kundnani who points out that “the image of asylum seekers is defined not by what they are, but simply by the fact that they are ‘not one of

us’, and are, therefore, a threat to ‘our way of life’”(Ibid).

3.2. Detention and Deportation

The criminalisation of asylum seekers and refugees can therefore be used as a means to justify measures that would otherwise have been considered illegal and disproportionate. Detention and deportation are two such practices. Bloch and Schuster argue that in the UK the policies of deportation, detention and dispersal have been ‘normalised’ (Bloch and Schuster 2005 491), that is, they are no longer just reactive to certain events or crises.

The detention of asylum seekers has been one of the most controversial asylum related practices undertaken by the UK Government who have justified it according to the notion of harm. Malloch and Stanley point out that the association of asylum seekers in politics and the media with ‘danger’, ‘criminality’ and ‘risk’ has been used to justify the practice (Malloch and Stanley 2005 56). What is more the authors point out that the UK detains more people and for longer periods of time than any other EU state (Ibid). Bloch and Schuster add that detention is prohibited in international law, with one or two exceptions concerning the ‘control and removal of aliens’ (Bloch and Schuster 2005 497), emanating from 1920 Alien Restriction Act but given full force in 1971 Act. Despite its potential illegality, since the 1990s detention has become common across Europe. Unlike in other European nations, however, there are no statutory limits on the length of detention in the UK which, Bloch and Schuster point out, has an impact on legal access and thus on potential success at appeal (Ibid 501).

In terms of the Scottish context, the Dungavel detention centre opened in 2003 with the capacity to detain up to 90 asylum seekers at any one time. Although its opening represented a significant symbolic development, this should not be overstated.

Kelly highlights that detention was common in Scotland prior to the opening of Dungavel, with between 60 and 100 asylum seekers held each year in Saughton and Gateside (Kelly 2000 39). The average detention time was 110 days, although one detainee was incarcerated for some 540 days (Ibid).

The fluid and fast moving nature of this policy field has been one of the key issues for those researching it. That said, the 'permanency' and visibility of Dungavel did represent a significant development in detention policy on Scottish territory. Work by Crawley and Lister for Save the Children, while having a UK focus and concerning just the detention of children, did have a Scottish Focus in the shape of Dungavel. While some of the facilities at Dungavel were considered adequate the principle of detaining children, the problem of age disputes and the transferring of children around the detention estate were criticised. Access to legal representation was also raised as a significant issue. The authors cite a Prison Inspectorate report that argues that the detention of children should only ever be for a matter of days and should be subject to independent and regular assessments regarding the welfare, developmental and educational needs of each child (Crawley and Lister 2005 77). There was also concern regarding the length of time families were being detained in Dungavel and other detention centres (Crawley and Lister 2005).

Amnesty International also conducted work on detention in the UK. Their work combined legal matters with case studies of those experiencing detention in a number of sites across the country. Of their case studies Dungavel was the only one that detained men, women and children. They highlight the rural nature of Dungavel that make it difficult for routine visits, and they also concur with the work of Crawley and Lister

above that movement around the detention estate exacerbates problems and makes the legal process more difficult to be taken to finality in a fair manner (Amnesty International 2005).

While there is an argument that liberal norms and international practice constrain what liberal democracies can do with regard to deportation (See Sassen and Soysal for examples of post-national citizenship), the tipping point target, whereby Tony Blair pledged that removals would outnumber new applications, was a sign of the fragility of those norms (Gibney 2008 157). Gibney points out that "state authorities in the UK have used policy innovations carefully and consciously to pursue their ends without directly violating liberal norms" (Ibid). Fast-tracking, non-suspensive appeals and non-compliance refusals are three ways in which such norms are procedurally undermined while detention also undermines such norms and militates against social integration (Ibid 160-162).

Bloch and Schuster point out that there are no Geneva Convention protections against deportation, only demands against non-refoulement⁵ (Bloch and Scuster 2005 496/7). However, there are difficulties in terms of removal. Indeed Gibney and Hansen see deportation as part of a 'noble lie' that states can remove those with no right to remain (Ibid 497). Gibney argues that while it is difficult to operationalise deportation due to problems in tracking and convincing other nations to accept an individual back, it is nevertheless a 'cruel power' (Ibid 147). The numbers removed have more than doubled in the period in which Tony Blair was in office. This increase is not just due to a rise in asylum claims as the numbers of removals remained high even as claims dropped (Ibid 149). However, the primary concern for Hyndman and Mounts concerns what they define as neo-refoulement, a new form of forced return.

⁵ UNHRC define non-refoulement thus "The principle of non-refoulement embodied in Article 33 encompasses any measure attributable to the State which could have the effect of returning an asylum seeker or refugee to the frontiers of territories where his or her life or freedom would be threatened, or where he or she is at risk of persecution, including interception, rejection at the frontier or indirect refoulement.

“Legal and extra-legal geographies of exclusion lead to neo-refoulement, that is, the return of asylum seekers and other migrants to transit countries or regions of origin before they reach the sovereign territory in which they could make a claim” (Hyndman and Mounts 2008 250).

This can be done via readmission agreements (in return for aid), safe third country agreements, aggressive visa regimes and detention (Ibid 253). Hampshire and Sagar also point to the extension of the remits of deportation. They show that the list of ‘unacceptable behaviors’ that justify detention has been incrementally extended to include

“fermenting, justifying, or glorifying terrorist violence; seeking to provoke terrorist acts; fomenting other serious criminal activity; and fostering hatred that might lead to inter-community violence” (Hampshire and Sagar 2006).

All would now be liable to deportation and revocation of citizenship. While the Human Rights Act in theory acts as a limit on this process, Hampshire and Sagar add that this restriction was partially bypassed through the signing of a ‘memoranda of understanding’ (MOU) with several countries that they would not torture returnees. The authors add, however, that

“Manfred Nowak, the UN special rapporteur on torture, observes, the very fact that such assurances are sought reveals that the UK government perceives a serious risk of torture or ill-treatment” (Ibid).

Bradley highlights the need for more attention and analysis of the concept of ‘just returns’. She argues that there has essentially been a legal monopoly of discussions of such returns, without the moral underpinning receiving due attention. The integration of the moral allows the principle of refugee choice to be

incorporated into any analysis.

“Just return is best understood as the restoration of a normal relationship of rights and duties between returnees and the state, such that returnees and their non-displaced co-nationals are rendered equal as citizens” (Bradley 2008 286). Bradley adds that there is a worthwhile debate to be had whether involuntary returns can ever be seen as morally just (Ibid 293).

Detention and deportation are part of the process of the move from a focus on rights to one on security (Hyndman and Mounts 2008 251). Essentially this has aided a shift from a paradigm of refugee protection to one whereby national security interests are prioritised, “stoked by political fear” (Ibid 253).

3.3. Data Problems

Although not a specifically Scottish issue, access to reliable data has a Scottish as well as UK salience.

Stewart highlights the deficiencies in the data on asylum in the UK that makes some research difficult to conduct (Stewart 2004 31). She points out that Immigration Nationality Directorate (IND) casework data would be invaluable to researchers were it to be released (Ibid 32). Research Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS) data also has its problems due to its generality, referring only to the principle applicant, although Stewart is clear that it is improving (Ibid 33). This contributes to what Robinson refers to as an ‘informational vacuum’ which allows disbelief and myth to develop (Ibid 37). Stewart suggests the possibility that “both disbelief and denial are created and sustained by a lack of data” (Ibid).

Although some data in such a fluid policy field is difficult to produce, Stewart argues that in terms of international comparisons UK data provision and dissemination is

lacking. There is a particular need to collect the kind of longitudinal data that is collected elsewhere. Her other primary recommendation is that a data collection and dissemination body should be separate from the Home Office and thus removed from general political decision making (Ibid 45).

In earlier work Rosengard et al point to the need for accurate data that impacts upon housing needs. There were no projections, for example, on the total numbers to be dispersed, on those likely to gain status or on those likely to remain in the UK. Additionally, family composition, key to satisfaction with housing tenure, was little planned for (Rosengard et al 2000).

Ghebrehewet et al agree that part of the problem in relation to service provision results from problems in data (Ghebrehewet et al 2002 223). The lack of information regarding total numbers, lack of notification of arrival, the lack of resources and interpreters and the lack of information regarding health needs contribute to service delivery problems. This is contrasted with the arrival of Kosovan refugees in 1999, 98% of whom had both a GP and full needs assessment within two weeks of arrival (Ibid 225/6). The authors argue that this better system was due to the central allocation of resources, cash benefits rather than vouchers, voluntary instead of forced dispersal, prior notification of numbers, sympathetic media coverage and clustering, meaning that language and culture practices could be maintained (Ibid). These lessons from the recent past, for Ghebrehewe et al, appear to have been forgotten.

While accepting that data provision has inherent difficulties, Stewart does not believe that this justifies current problems, and she argues that the negative results go beyond the myth making that result from this vacuum. These include problems in relation

to service provision (Ibid 38).

One example of such problems relates to refugee resettlement, that is for resettlement to be successful it is necessary to know the characteristics and needs of the population involved (Ibid 41). For the author data collection should take account of flows and the reasons for those flows, rather than just data for a 'short-term political agenda' (Ibid 39).

4.1. The Devolved Settlement

There is a relatively fluid relationship between reserved and devolved matters in Scotland that has ramifications for refugees and asylum seekers. While entry and status issues are reserved, the provision of services are devolved. This opens up the possibility of conflict between the two administrations, particularly after the election of the Scottish National Party in Scotland in 2007. Even in areas without open disagreements the fluidity of the devolved settlement creates potential changes in Scotland vis-à-vis the rest of the UK. This section seeks to highlight some of these possible tensions.

Cairney argues that it is inevitable that boundaries between policy areas get blurred when there is more than one actor operating in the policy field (Cairney 2006 429). He states that

“the overlap of responsibilities is most apparent in the implementation of reserved policies by devolved services. For example, the Home Office directs Scottish local authorities on immigration and controls the use of ‘dawn raids’ by police forces when removing unsuccessful asylum seekers”(Ibid 432).

Pressure from civil society encouraged the Scottish Executive to seek a formal protocol with the Home Office on the issue of dawn raids in order “to make the process more ‘humane’”. Although this approach was rebuffed by the Home Office (Ibid 441), it did signify changing policy priorities between administrations.

Skilling’s work focuses on the difference between Scottish policy developments and those emanating from Westminster. Although there is more of a case for difference in policy terms in relation to economic migration, tensions have

emerged over recent years with regard to the removal of Scottish legislation. For example, Kelly points out that the 1999 Act amended six pieces of Scottish legislation to prevent extra benefits being given to asylum seekers in Scotland. This prompted some debate within the Scottish Parliament and eventually led to the creation of the cross party parliamentary group as well as the demand for a review by the Equal Opportunities Commission (Kelly 2000 40). For Skilling the relationship between the devolved health and education policy and the reserved national security is especially clear with regard to protests against dawn raids and the Dungavel detention centre (Skilling 2007 115).

Williams and De Lima argue that the devolved settlement in the UK acts as a good test bed for the development of multicultural citizenship and race equality (Williams and De Lima 2006 498). While there has been a wide discourse that sees tolerance in both Scotland and Wales, when compared to England, they highlight figures that show the devolved states as less safe for ethnic minorities, partly due to their lower numbers (Ibid 500), but also raising questions the notion of Scotland as a tolerant society.

The relationship between migration and demography became particularly evident in Scotland during debates after the 2001 census. Findlay points out that this showed Scotland to have lower fertility and faster population decline than anywhere else in Europe but he adds that “Scotland has seldom experienced such a healthy migration balance both in relation to the UK and the rest of the world”(Findlay 2004 2). Such an argument perhaps inadvertently supports Mullan’s thesis that the ‘demographic time bomb’ is a construction for the purpose of contracting the welfare

state, that is, it has no inherent characteristics that raise its importance to the levels it has received (Mullan 2002). Nevertheless the identified demographic concerns provided a different context for the Scottish case, in comparison with the UK as a whole, and contributed to the 'One Scotland'⁶ campaign and the 'Fresh Talent' initiative⁷, with the aim of projecting Scotland as a 'good place to live' (Williams and De Lima 2006 508). Although there has been more investment into race equality issues, and organisations such as Black and Ethnic Minority Infrastructure in Scotland (BEMIS) and Council of Ethnic Minority Voluntary Sector Organisations (CEMVO) have resulted, the lack of Scotland wide framework lessens clarity of goals and allows some overlap. Problems are exacerbated by the lack of strong, local ethnic minority structures, meaning the peak sector bodies have a weaker "democratic force to underpin their work" (Ibid 509). Indeed a review of race equality work in 2004 found a lack of strategy and meagre resources (Ibid). Williams and De Lima also add that the focus on inclusion has been dominated by the labour market (Ibid 510). At present, with the country going through an economic downturn, the viewing of all migrants as more or less productive units of labour is problematic for inclusion.

Davis points out the degree of distinctiveness of Scottish policies in relation to 'wanted' economic migration. These include 'Fresh Talent', encouraging the return of expatriate Scots and retaining graduate students, although the parsimony of ambition is also criticised (Davis 2008 16). However, it seems that part of the problems, particularly with the Fresh Talent programme, resulted from resistance on the part of the Home Office, signifying again a contrast in terms of wants and needs between Scotland and the rest of the UK.

Wren also highlights some 'difference' in

context between asylum arrivals in Scotland and the rest of the UK. The main points of difference are Scotland's declining population, the lower BME population and the Scottish Parliament's integration and cohesion responsibilities. Wren conducted her research in 2003 and found that there were approximately 10,000 asylum seekers in Glasgow from some 70 countries (Wren 2007 395). The figures are approximations due to the fact that only NASS supported asylum seekers are counted, highlighting Stewart's point made above. In terms of decision making she found that there were 'relatively high' recognition rates for those whose cases were heard in Scotland due to the nature of those dispersed to Glasgow (Ibid). That is, the nationality and familial make up of those arriving in Glasgow made their claims more likely to succeed than elsewhere.

Cohen also raises some important issues regarding the relationship between central and local authorities. He argues that the linking of the administration of welfare services and immigration status essentially integrated local authorities into internal immigration controls. This has led to a "transformation of local government into an arm of the Home Office" (Cohen quoted in Davis 2008 13). This will be returned to in terms of voluntary sector agencies below.

4.2. The Scottish Context

Bowes and Sim complain of the lack of attention being paid to what is happening within the asylum system below the level of the UK Government. They argue that more attention should be paid to the experiences of receiving people and institutions (Bowes and Sim 2008 2). Such micro level analysis is required as

"gaps in the literature emphasize the need to explore how the real experiences of asylum seekers, the communities they join and the agencies which support them are affected by

⁶'One Scotland' was the Scottish Executives campaign to address the problems of racism.

⁷'Fresh Talent' was the Executives plan to attract and retain people to live in work in Scotland. It was essentially the Executive's response to Scotland's demographic problems of a falling working age population.

and affect the wider picture”(Ibid).

While there is a growing literature on community cohesion and what it means in relation to the more or less supporting environment being created for multiculturalism, Netto points out that in the Scottish context there is a difference in that national self definition may create new dimensions to that environment (Netto 2008 47). There is a widespread perception of a degree of ‘difference’ between Scotland and England in relation to both attitudes and sense of self. Netto points out that one possible reason for this difference concerns the fact that England has historically acted as ‘the other’ for Scots whereas presumably England sought an ‘other’ among newer populations. However, this has not prevented difficulties arising in terms of access for BME communities in Scotland. Cohen’s seminal work is used to show culture as being fluid in that it “refers to a decision people make to depict themselves or others symbolically as the bearers of a certain cultural identity”(quoted in Netto 2008 50).

Ager and Strang agree on the contested nature of language, while their focus is on integration (Ager and Strang 2008 167). There are numerous variables that combine to contribute to integration including employment, housing, health, education and neighbours and neighbourhood (Ibid 170-171). The importance of these factors has been heightened by a recent UK wide debate on nationhood, partly as a result of devolution. Ager and Strang point out that

“to develop an effective policy on integration, governments need to clearly articulate policy on nationhood and citizenship, and thus the rights accorded to refugees” (Ibid 175).

Citizenship is thus seen as a key foundation of integration (Ibid 176). Additionally Ager and Strang highlight core domains for

integration that have subsequently been used by the Home Office, Scottish Executive and Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR). These are; access to employment, housing, education and health, assumptions and practices relating to citizenship and rights, processes of social connection within and between groups in the community and barriers to connections for reasons of language/culture or safety/ security (Ibid 184-185).

Bowes and Sim argue that the devolved settlement in and of itself, as well as any difference in terms of discourse in Scotland, make it an interesting case to study (Bowes and Sim 2008 6). They essentially come up with three sets of findings, those relating to the experiences of agencies, those focussed on community relations and those that relate directly to the asylum seekers themselves (Ibid 9).

The role of NASS has dominated the agency side of things up until its current reincarnation as the UKBA. NASS operated as an agency that tried to both control asylum seekers as well as the services available to them (Ibid)⁸. There were some problems familiar to observers of advice services more generally, that some agencies gave false advice leading to confusion on the part of all parties regarding what support was available. In addition there was a lack of acknowledgement of the complexity of the needs of new arrivals (Ibid 11). These issues were exacerbated by the fact that local communities had not been prepared for the arrival of asylum seekers in their areas (Ibid 9). Although there was some Scottish Executive acknowledgement of the need for networks of support and services, resources for referrals were lacking, furthering the problem of false information provision (Ibid 12).

In terms of the communities themselves, the fact that asylum seekers were placed in

⁸ Periodic ‘reforms’ of the Home Office in general led to continual change in the field of asylum and immigration. This meant the IND and its parallel social security section National Asylum Support Service (NASS) later became the Shadow Borders and Immigration Agency, then the Borders and Immigration Agency and most recently the United Kingdom Borders Agency

empty homes in deprived areas meant that these homes often required some refurbishment, leading to the spreading of myths and contributing to tensions (Ibid 13). Local groups themselves attempted to present more positive images which showed some, although limited, signs of improved media coverage and thus also had an impact on community relations (Ibid). Nevertheless the neglect of existing communities meant that tensions were inevitable.

Finally Bowes and Sim found that for asylum seekers themselves experiences were diverse. A large number of asylum seekers focussed on the friendliness of locals and good schools (Ibid 14/5). Indeed the ability to make new friends was key to positive experiences (Ibid 15). Others mentioned harassment and drug and alcohol levels in their neighbourhoods. Although clearly of direct concern there was an acknowledgement that existing services were under pressure (Ibid 16). Interestingly there were no experiential differences among cohort groups by, gender, ethnicity or household structure (Ibid 17).

Netto and Fraser highlight wider issues of integration in their work. In a Scottish study they found that on receiving status about two thirds of research participants said they were 'very likely' to stay in Glasgow. "However, others expressed an attraction towards London, towards existing networks, families and friends"(Netto and Fraser 2008 10). Data on both the numbers of those receiving status who leave Scotland and their reasons for doing so are lacking. Analysis of such onward migration would uncover another part of the puzzle.

Skilling adds that Scottish opposition to some legislative proposals developed a nationalist tone, that opposition was in essence that Scottish soil was being used to implement inhumane UK policy (Skilling 2007 115). He adds that the Scottish Executive "is in the invidious position of not

being able to articulate a 'humane' and 'ethical' response to the operation of a facility on its own soil" (Ibid). First Minister Jack McConnell's request for a formal protocol to prevent dawn raids was, for example, rejected by the Home Office. In addition the Fresh Talent Initiative, according to Skilling, was not seen as a Scottish solution to a Scottish problem but a Scottish solution to a British problem occurring in Scotland (Ibid 116).

McFarland and Walsh, writing at the time of the arrival of Bosnian refugees to Scotland highlight the lack of specialist refugee legal services (McFarland and Walsh 1994 96), a situation familiar to observers of present day Scottish immigration policy and indicative of a lack of policy learning in the past decade or so. That is, there is congruence between the problems experienced in the early 1990s and those experienced in the late 1990s and subsequently. This also highlights the lack of research conducted in the intervening period. Thus gaps in the literature are evident at all points when there was not substantial refugee movement. The movements from Bosnia and later Kosovo highlight the lack of work in that intervening period. Kelly concluded that the ad hoc infrastructure in Scotland with regard to both the integration of minorities and the challenging of racism was too fragile to stand the strains of increased population movements (Kelly 2000 41). For example there was a lack of legal advice and interpretation services on the arrival of asylum seekers to Scotland in 1999 (Ibid). In addition the paucity of general reception programmes led to resentments on both sides of the evolving communities (Ibid 42).

Craig et al examine a different aspect of the legal system in Scotland, that of appeals (Craig et al 2008). While appeals against initial Home Office decisions go to the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT), there is the possibility for a further stage of appeal, the 'reconsideration and onward

appeals' procedure'. This is the one mechanism available for challenging AIT decisions, but they also rely on the granting of permission to make such a challenge. A senior AIT judge will first 'filter' applications whereby, if it is refused, the appellant can then apply to the Court of Session at the 'opt-in' stage. If either of these stages is successful then the case will be re-heard by the AIT. Craig et al point to the opaqueness of the devolution settlement in that the UK appeals procedures in a sense collide with the distinctive Scottish legal system. Over a two-year period they found that 26% of cases were successful at the filter stage and 24% at the opt-in stage (Craig et al 2008 109). The first major issue of concern the authors raise is the fact that few of those refused at the filter stage subsequently went on to the opt-in stage, indicating a lack of accessibility of the Court of Session. This is a particular concern given that a larger proportion of opt-in cases were successful than filter cases.

Craig et al recommend specialist judges at the Court of Appeal to hear opt-in cases, but caution against a 'case hardened' approach. In addition they found that the five-day time limit between a refusal and application for reconsideration was unduly tight, meaning that it did not "strike the correct balance between speed and fairness" (Ibid 113). This, along with resource constraints, hampers the ability of solicitors to fully challenge decisions. There were also concerns pertaining to the partiality, or perceptions of partiality, of those hearing cases, not helped by the situating of cases within the same building as the Home Office.

This section has sought to provide some general context of the main themes of existing Scottish research. The next section develops some of these general issues, while also focussing more directly on specific pieces of research within more discreet policy fields.

The Voluntary Sector; the rights based approach and Access to Social Services

05

5.1. The Voluntary Sector and Refugee Community Organisations

The voluntary sector has been a key player in asylum and refugee issues. Not only have they directly provided services, they have also been key advocates for 'better' policy solutions. This section will focus on some of that service provision, particularly the role of RCOs in relation to that provision, but also in relation to their 'empowerment' role.

Work by McFarland and Walsh going back to the arrival of Bosnian refugees in Glasgow in the early 1990s showed that Local Authorities and the voluntary sector were largely left to provide services on their own without any central support. Interestingly the arrival of these refugees was a non-Government affair, with Islamic Relief responsible for this population movement (McFarland and Walsh 1994). Kelly highlights the 'testing' of refugee forums by the arrival of these Bosnian refugees. She argues that while there was support provided in relation to access to employment and health care, there was also widespread racial harassment and poor accommodation provision (Kelly 2000 38).

The lack of existing Bosnian community, the economic recession and their insecure tenure in the country meant that this group of refugees did not fall into the quota basis being talked of in the aftermath of the Vietnamese and Chilean refugee movements, nor the more spontaneous arrivals. In addition the Government labelling this group as evacuees exemplified their short term status (McFarland and Walsh 1994 94). Nevertheless what this case also showed was that despite the efforts of local agencies the most pressing issues remained

out-with local control and influence, firmly at the level of central Government (Ibid 96).

Kelly essentially contrasts the treatment, despite the problems, of this group of refugees to what would later become institutionalised. She argues that the multi-agency approach and legislation at this point 'allowed them to be humane' (Kelly 2000 37). There were, however, problems with the approach as "while working towards sustainable multi-agency refugee forums, the Scottish authorities were moving too slowly on tackling racism" (Ibid 38), highlighted by the murder of a Somali refugee in Edinburgh in 1989 (Ibid).

Ghebrehewe et al address the provision of services to the later arrival of Kosovan refugees. They argue that "necessary political commitment and provision of adequate resources by the UK government made it possible to provide a more formalised service provision and coordinated response for the Kosovan refugees" (Ghebrehewe et al 2002 223). Although this response is compared favourably with the present day by Ghebrehewe et al, it is worth pointing out that the Government's initial response was to try and keep 'them' over 'there' due to their perspective that to take such refugees would be tantamount to carrying out ethnic cleansing on behalf of the Milosovic regime (see for example Clare Short in Hansard May 12th 1999 Col 309).

Nevertheless the arrival of Kosovans was not greeted by a great deal of hostility. As Kelly point out "for once there was a unity of purpose between government and people – loathing the brutal Milosovic regime and their crimes against humanity" (Kelly 2000 40). This allowed for more substantive

Government support. However, there were strong indications that this support would not be available to any other group of arrivals (Ibid). Kelly adds that there was some implicit pressure on Kosovan refugees to return home, at least partly due to the way they could see other asylum seekers being treated (Ibid), and presumably therefore also the developing hostile political and public atmosphere.

Findlay et al also examine the role of voluntary sector organisations but from the perspective of questioning the neo-liberal 'shadow state', whereby the state incrementally withdraws from provision with voluntary organisations picking up the slack. In examining voluntary sector work with refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow and Manchester, they find that

"in some areas of service delivery it therefore appears that the state and the voluntary sector have 'changed places' in terms of their roles" (Findlay et al 2007 55).

Wren also implicitly touches upon this notion of the 'shadow state', although she reaches some different conclusions with regards to supportive networks. Although acknowledging the importance of 'multi-agency networks', Wren points to concerns that voluntary services have had to be overly reactive. The provision of services for asylum seekers by the voluntary sector goes back to the arrival of Ugandan Asians in the early 1970s, through to Vietnamese, Bosnians and Kosovans but its present form is linked by Wren to a neo-liberal perspective whereby there is a blurring of the gap between the statutory and voluntary sectors (Wren 2007 393). Some commentators have argued that this has been a deliberate strategy on the part of the Government, where they have exploited the responsibility felt by the voluntary sector.

Zetter et al look at community networks through the prism of social capital and

Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs). Although there are no Scottish case studies in their work, their findings are interesting and relevant nevertheless. They argue that the 'RCO paradigm' sees such organisations as reconstructing the lost sense of identity and cohesion for refugees and asylum seekers, as well as acting as a mediating institution between the refugee community and the host society. Although there were existing problems, from factionalism to weak institutional apparatuses, the increase in spontaneous arrivals from the early 1990s saw the issue re-emerge, particularly due to the impact of dispersal. Zetter et al looked at the impact of dispersal on 40 RCOs. Recently established RCOs are faced with uncertainty due to the fluidity of their situation (Zetter et al 2005 175). This encourages informal, non-institutionalized and marginal status which is a challenge to the 'paradigm' in two ways, the integrative function has been sacrificed for a defensive role so they are less of a mediator in integration, and there is a tendency to resist institutionalized forms of development (Ibid 177).

In a mapping exercise Findlay et al set out to ascertain the characteristics of voluntary sector organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers in a number of locations, one of which was Glasgow. They found that in Glasgow, most such organisations were fairly young, with 38% established in the previous 5 years, while many that were older had only started to work with refugees and asylum seekers in recent years (Findlay et al 2007 63). Two thirds had either no paid staff or between one and ten employees while over half depended on state funding for survival, supporting the notion of the 'shadow state'. Nevertheless the notion of the 'shadow state' is questioned by two developments. First, RCOs were mostly responsive to policy developments. And second, there was evidence of resistance to their co-opting (Ibid 70). However, the complexity of both

voluntary organisations as well as the fluid nature of refugee movement means that there are some areas of ‘spatial mismatch’, where recognisable refugee or asylum seeking communities exist without any parallel community organisations (Ibid 62).

There is some concern that immediacy is being addressed to the detriment of the future. While Glasgow witnessed a large increase in its BME population as a result of dispersal, and was pro-active in facilitating the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum (SRIF),

“concern exists amongst some community organisations that emphasis on immediate needs has prevented local organisations from engaging in longer-term strategic planning” (Flynn 2006 12),

meaning once more that defensive practices dominate transformative ones⁹. The problems are exacerbated by existing gaps in the ‘social inclusion’ agenda. The barriers facing RCOs in bridging these gaps is worsened by existing social exclusion, leading community organisations to focus almost entirely on poverty and its effects (Ibid 15).

Netto seeks to look at the engagement of four BME communities within the context of the Scottish Executive’s new cultural policy being established in early 2006. What she found was that all BME groups saw the preservation of their language and culture as key to their psychological well-being, but they add that this was particularly the case for older members of the community and/or first generation immigrants (Netto 2008 54). Among the young there was more of a feeling of being between two cultures, although this should not necessarily be seen in negative terms.

The use of the arts to encourage community involvement among minority ethnic

communities is also raised by Netto. While there is evidence of such communities seeking involvement themselves in the arts, particularly those based around their own ethnic background, their ability to do so is constrained by their lack of power in terms of access to resources. Thus while the arts were viewed as a means of providing a contrast to wider negative stereotypes (Ibid 59), there were identified barriers to engagement that included few opportunities for participation and lower rates of economic activity (Ibid 56).

The expanding role of the voluntary sector, as well as some variations by location, is highlighted by Findlay et al. They found that while most voluntary organisations working with asylum seekers and refugees offered advice on employment, health, housing and education, there were differences by region. Although recognising the limitations of the small sample size the authors argue that there was a marked difference between London and the more ‘peripheral’ Glasgow and Manchester in that London was more advice based while Glasgow and Manchester saw empowerment and support as a major part of their role (Findlay et al 2007 70).

A key question for new RCOs is raised by Bowes and Sim in this regard. They studied this advocacy role among BME organisations and discovered that although some were seen as means of promoting social justice for disadvantaged groups, other BME services used by the BME community reinforced their marginalization. Some of the BME groups examined were established by and for asylum seekers in Glasgow and so are relevant to this review. In terms of organisational make up, ethnicity and language were seen as the most important aspects of an advocacy group (Bowes and Sim 2005 1217). The main difference between asylum seeking and refugee BME groups and other BME groups concerned where help was sought. While

⁹The work on RCOs engages with a literature on community organisations more generally. An idealistic approach sees such organisations as capable of transforming the lives of those involved in a positive direction whereas the defensive or the pragmatic approach sees activities as being dominated by essentially trying to prevent things from getting worse.

existing BME groups often had family nearby and would use them as the first call for help, that luxury was not always available to asylum seeking or refugee groups, and so they exhibited more of an internal reliance (Ibid 1218/9)

While the dispersal process was supposed to operate according to 'cluster groups', allowing some linguistic affinities among those dispersed, according to Wren,

“most agencies agree that the dispersal process was chaotic in Glasgow and that asylum seekers have not been clustered in language groups” (Wren 2007 396).

This initially inhibited the establishment of networks and hampered the development of RCOs. She highlights the lack of clusters as well as the placing of asylum seekers into existing areas of deprivation, raising issues regarding competition for resources. Racial harassment was widespread and “there has been little locally based expertise in the provision of culturally sensitive services, either within the statutory sector or within voluntary agencies (Beirens et al 2007 396). Beirens et al also implicitly address some of the work on social capital. Existing bonds, often ethnically based, are often more productive in terms of well-being than any attempt to establish bridges between new and existing communities. Indeed the attitudes of the host society mean that many asylum seekers and refugees will rely on those existing bonds far more than new bridges (Ibid 225). Kelly re-emphasises that

“Scotland has failed to develop strategies to challenge racism and support ethnic diversity; Scotland has failed to close the gulf between rich and poor; Scotland has failed to deal with its democratic deficit” (Kelly 2002 1).

She points out that these pre-existing problems were exacerbated by the dispersal of asylum seekers to deprived

neighbourhoods, with even less infrastructural capacity to cope, but crucially with empty homes. She adds that Glasgow City Council's asylum support team was only established after dispersal had begun, indicating again the lack of preparatory work. The forums developed in earlier years had been disbanded and there was no initial monitoring of local responses and reactions. It was only after the murder of Firsat Dag that the leader of the Local Authority Charlie Gordon was prepared to meet with a delegation of asylum seekers (Ibid 15), indicating a political and well as institutional lack of engagement. Kelly points out that “dispersal can work, but not if it is accommodation-led to the exclusion of social planning and investment” (Ibid 8), especially problematic if central Government are leading a negative discourse.

However, Wren also highlights some of the positive work done in Glasgow. The long history of community activism meant that communities could be energised and organised more easily. This meant that “despite the negative reactions in some areas, there has also been a large reservoir of community support for asylum seekers” (Wren 2007 396), presumably helped by the advocacy role taken on by voluntary agencies. Among the refugee communities themselves the establishment of RCOs is seen as adding a crucial community engagement. For example, a report by Her Majesties Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) alludes to the opportunities to 'get involved' that emerge from the Framework For Dialogue groups¹⁰ (HMIE 2007 12).

The multi-agency aspect of the Glasgow arrangements was not just a voluntary one but also had statutory underpinnings. Scottish Refugee Council, Glasgow City Council, Social Inclusion Partnerships and other parts of the voluntary sector were all involved in the process. Between 2000 and 2003 ten local networks were established.

¹⁰ Framework for Dialogue Groups are funded by the Scottish Government and delivered by Glasgow City Council and the Scottish Refugee Council. The aim is to maintain dialogue between asylum seekers, their neighbours and the agencies that provide services in order to aid the process of integration.

Wren adds that

“smaller community organizations and voluntary agencies have been able to play an integral part in community development work with asylum seekers in a way which promotes social cohesion in communities where they have been dispersed” (Wren 2007 396),

although the success of this varied by location (Ibid 397). Wren adds that the initial housing provision lacked any long term focus, and thus any notion of a cohesive future, belied by the high recognition rates as well as the proportion deciding to stay on gaining refugee status.

“The way that asylum seekers are supported during the waiting period while their claims are being determined was considered of key importance for longer-term integration” (Ibid 410).

Wren’s review of ten Glasgow networks re-emphasises the general feeling of a lack of preparation for the initial dispersal in 2000, and further that finite resources led to competition between networks (Ibid 400). The extra work required of the statutory sector meant that there was confusion over who was responsible for what, leading many new arrivals to feel let down. Interestingly this failure at the level of the Council provoked a move towards more independence among these new communities, independence from both the Local Authority and from NASS (Ibid 402). Wren concludes that despite poor planning, UK policy more generally and high levels of deprivation in the communities in which asylum seekers were housed, “the Glasgow case demonstrates the advantages of coordinating and delivering services through the mechanism of multi-agency networks” (Wren 2007 409). The voluntary sector was important in this regard, although cooperation was hampered by negative views of both NASS and Glasgow City

Council (Ibid).

Flynn adds that existing migrant community organisations are either too regionally or too locally focused. The solution is greater coordination of civil society organisations in order to more fully integrate the local with the regional. More solidarity work between different groups of migrants is also suggested (Flynn 2006 8). As far as social capital is concerned Flynn is aware that the dominant literature has tended to be pessimistic about the ability of migrant communities to build bridges. However, the empirical, Scottish based part of the study looked at the way community organisations were responding to a comparatively sanguine political climate (Ibid 12).

5.2. The Stratification of Rights and Access to Social Services

A key issue that in some ways straddles all others regarding asylum seekers and refugees is that of the existence and ability to activate rights. This section will examine both the equality perspective regarding rights as well as what this means in terms of the provision of social services, key to integration, cohesion and sense of belonging.

Sales has argued that British asylum and refugee policy has increasingly dichotomised two sets of arrivals, the deserving refugee and the undeserving asylum seeker (Sales 2002 456).

This focus on deserved-ness has coincided with general move to restrict access to welfare services (Ibid 458), based on the non-empirically shown assumption of ‘pull factors’. However, although race and desirability bring in new factors to the story, such a process should not be analytically separated from wider UK Government held positions. They involve moves from beliefs in equality to one in social inclusion and a move from citizenship based on rights to one based on responsibilities (Ibid 459),

along the lines of some communitarian thinking.

Framing asylum seekers as ‘undeserving’, is utilised as a device that allows more of a free hand in terms of control measures. Sales points out that there is a circularity to the process of deserved-ness (Ibid 465). Asylum seekers are characterised as placing strains on social services through their undeserved access to welfare. Yet simultaneously the denial of the right to work forces that welfare access upon the asylum seeker which is then highlighted as a rationale for further restriction. Sales adds that in terms of citizenship asylum seekers are placed in something of a twilight zone, between different categories but belonging to none. Access to some welfare provision but a lack of political or civil citizenship act to blur the boundaries of belonging (Ibid).

In a broad study that had numerous Scottish case study locations Flynn found that

“to better understand the need for migrant rights, the position of migrants needs to be more clearly understood in the communities in which they reside. This means looking at the way organisations and networks are established amongst migrants, how bridges are built with the wider community, how recognition of essential needs is obtained from local authorities and public service providers, and generally how civil society works to increase either the empowerment or the disadvantage of newly-arrived people” (Flynn 2006 2).

The issue of rights was absolutely key to this research and led to the establishment of the Migrants Rights Network. One of the key findings was that, contrary to UK Government declarations, rights should not be perceived as being a zero sum game whereby an increase in the rights of one group has a concomitant impact on the rights of others (Ibid 7).

An overall absence of rights, or at least lack of being able to access them, is exacerbated for those on Section 4 support¹¹. In work for the Refugee Council Doyle found that some clients had existed on Section 4 vouchers for a number of years (Doyle 2008 11), despite the fact that Government legislation states that such a situation would be temporary. The destitution that life on such support brings is highlighted. Among organisations working with those on Section 4 support, 69% reported that their clients were unable to buy enough food and 73% said they were experiencing hunger (Ibid 12). This institutionalisation of poverty was made worse by the fact that vouchers could not buy culturally specific goods such as Halal meat, largely as a result of vouchers not being usable in small BME establishments. Indeed the distance many of those on Section 4 support are required to travel in order to use their vouchers is also highlighted by organisations working with such people with 78% of respondents reporting difficulties for their clients in getting to shops that accepts vouchers (Ibid 15). Inability to pursue cases is also raised. 75% said they were unable to keep in touch with their legal representatives as mobile phone top ups or travel are not payable by vouchers (Ibid 16).

In an Oxfam/Refugee Survival Trust paper on the causes of destitutions in Scotland identified three key factors. These were administrative errors and procedural delay, policy and ‘other’ circumstances (Oxfam 2005 1). The latter of these refers to separations, theft, loss of ARC cards and other broad personal issues, while policy causes referred primarily to Section 55 removal of support. The effects were similar to those identified by Doyle, homelessness, lack of access to food and a regressive effect on health and well-being (Ibid 2).

Green also conducted work on destitution

¹¹ Section 4 Support is available to refused asylum seekers who are considered to be taking all appropriate steps to leave the UK, or who are unable to be returned at present.

for Scottish Refugee Council, primarily in response to the voluntary sector experience of increased demands on their support services resulting from an increase in the number of destitute asylum seekers (Green 2006). She found that over a 4 week period in 2006 154 asylum seekers and refugees were destitute, including 25 children (Green 2006 2). Oxfam/RST work found that one of the main causes of destitution concerned administrative matters at NASS (Oxfam/RST 2005). This widely led to both homelessness and lack of food. Nearly half of their destitute sample were from people who either had dependent children or were expecting a child.

Identity is key to this balance of inclusion and rights in that it attempts to identify who 'we' are as opposed to who 'they' are. McCrone and Bechhofer define national identity as "the political-cultural identification with territory"(McCrone and Bechhofer 2008 1245). However, identity concerns more than just spatial location as

"national identity can affect life chances insofar as being considered 'one of us' matters as regards our social, political and cultural participation in wider society"(Ibid 1246).

Thus self identity is but part of the story. This broader identity formation, especially when done to rather than by comparatively new migrant groups, can lead to 'othering'.

This issue is taken up by De Lima who argues that

"language used in placing individuals and groups into specific ethnic categories results in some groups being identified as 'the Other', in contrast to the 'invisibility of whiteness'"(De Lima 2003 654).

While UK Government reports acknowledge race and racism as being factors in social

exclusion, De Lima argues that the soft version of exclusion places the responsibility for the exclusion on the character of the excluded (Ibid 661).

Although exclusion can impact upon any migrant groups, or indeed existing deprived populations, Phillimore and Goodson argue that the UK has been part of an overall trend to exclude asylum seekers from mainstream society, highlighting the notion of 'stratified rights' (Phillimore and Goodson 2006 1715). This has involved dispersal to deprived areas contributing to unemployment and underemployment. Although the work by Phillimore and Goodson involved an area of the West Midlands, there are lessons for Scottish policy makers and practitioners. Not only is there a more general 'right' to work, of benefit to asylum seekers, they also argue that that right to work can benefit the deprived areas in which asylum seekers and refugees tend to live (Ibid). Further they argue that in all contested definitions of social inclusion, employment is always a key component. Indeed for deprived indigenous communities there is recognition that employment is, perhaps, the key to integration (Ibid 1719). Bloch points out, though, that successful settlement, and presumably therefore integration, is tied closely to refugee rights, particularly labour market participation (Bloch 2000 75), and thus the lack of right to work sits squarely against any possibility of integrating into new communities.

Stewart also points to the exclusion of asylum seekers from many 'spaces' open to the host society. For example, lack of disposable income means they are excluded from commercial spaces in cities (Stewart 2005b 507). It could be added that other public 'spaces' may also be off limits due to barriers such as attitudes, and thus also fear of accessing such spaces.

Prior to the start of the dispersal programme, and at a time when the employment concession was still in existence, Phillimore and Goodson point out that unemployment of asylum seekers still stood at somewhere between 60% and 90%, with women being worse affected than men (Phillimore and Goodson 2006 1720). Thus the right to work does not necessarily lead to inclusion, as wider exclusion can operate against that right. Psoinos points out that while a large proportion of refugees are very well educated, many are unemployed or underemployed (Psoinos 2007 835). Of those who have work

“the majority work in informal, short-term, low-paid, menial jobs, while only a small proportion of refugees has a steady career pattern”(Ibid 837).

Such realities could have an effect on both social cohesion and the health and well being of the refugees themselves.

There is considerable evidence of integration being hampered by numerous barriers. For example, Stewart points to the underemployment of qualified doctors despite reduced fees for accreditation and some financial assistance programmes (Stewart 2005 3). Some of the barriers in this Scottish study were related to wider issues of refugee unemployment and underemployment, but these problems were exacerbated by structural issues within the National Health Service (Ibid 15).

In 2004 the Scottish Executive, in conjunction with Scottish Refugee Council conducted a ‘Skills and Aspirations Audit’ with the aim of confronting negative public perceptions and highlighting the contribution that asylum seekers and refugees do make and could make should the environment change. This study found that for the most part asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland were well qualified (Charlaff et al 2004 6). Most wanted to stay in Scotland

and improve their English language skills while access to employment was highlighted as a key barrier (Ibid).

Nevertheless work by the Fraser of Allander Institute for COSLA shows that the existence of asylum seekers in Scotland, but Glasgow in particular, has had a significant and positive economic impact (FOA 2005 13). They conclude that the benefits paid to asylum seekers had had the knock on effect of supporting 471.9 jobs (Ibid 16).

Phillimore and Goodson also highlight the structural barriers to employment commensurate with skills in that well qualified asylum seekers and refugees are unable to apply for existing employment migration schemes, as those applications must emanate from overseas (Phillimore and Goodson 2006 1721). The gaps are furthered by the deskilling that can result in waiting for a decision, joining other barriers such as language issues, lack of work experience, difficulty regarding the recognition of qualifications, discrimination and lack of confidence and knowledge of national systems (Ibid 1722).

While some of the barriers to employment commensurate with skill levels concern the attributes of the refugees themselves, such as language and confidence, there are wider societal barriers mentioned by Psoinos, with the negative perceptions of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK thought to have an impact (Psoinos 2007 838). Refugees themselves in this study linked much of the problem to discrimination. While there is little evidence to support this point Psoinos adds that there is a need for longitudinal work comparing the position of refugees to other disadvantaged groups in order to ascertain the degree to which discriminatory barriers are preventing access to work (Ibid 848).

Adding to problems of unemployment and

underemployment is the issue of low wages. Interestingly Phillimore and Goodson found that there was some evidence, although limited, that staff in Job Centre Plus “often steer refugees towards low-skilled work because it takes less time than trying to explore more suitable options” (Phillimore and Goodson 2006 1731). Such institutional factors would require further investigation in order to make any broader claims as to their existence and impact.

5.3. Housing

As already mentioned, the dispersal process placed asylum seekers into areas where empty homes were available which meant that most were in poor condition in deprived areas. This, combined with housing issues being a key integration indicator, makes housing an important issue for asylum seekers and refugees, and therefore also for research.

There is some limited research regarding housing issues for refugees and asylum seekers. In a Scottish wide study Netto and Fraser point out that “refugees have the same entitlements as all other UK citizens to housing” (Netto and Fraser 2008 13), although asylum seekers are not. While the Glasgow Asylum Seekers Support Project (GASSP) was established in order to ensure that asylum seekers were able to access basic services, including accommodation of a suitable standard (Ibid 16), and Communities Scotland has a statutory duty to promote equality, results for both are mixed (Ibid 17).

Netto and Fraser examine the lack of accommodation in areas perceived by refugees as being safe, as well as the paucity of houses big enough for the larger families many refugees have (Ibid 7). These problems are exacerbated by widespread misunderstandings of the processes of accessing housing on the part of both refugees and service providers, problems exacerbated by housing providers failing to

take the required actions to tackle existing harassment. Thus discrimination has a major impact on feelings towards existing housing tenure among refugees, joined by issues of overcrowding and isolation for some communities (Ibid 42/3).

Those in GASSP accommodation who obtain refugee status have the option of converting to a Glasgow City Council tenancy, allowing them to stay in the same accommodation (Ibid 25). However, Netto and Fraser found knowledge of rights lacking in that some refugees were not fully aware that they had some degree of choice in terms of the accommodation they would live in. There was perhaps a feeling that not accepting the first accommodation offered would lead to no further offers (Ibid 26), an issue particularly acute for those offered their first permanent housing (Ibid 28).

Netto and Fraser also highlight some concerns over the length of notice to leave being given by both the YMCA and Angel, two of the three housing providers for asylum seekers in Glasgow (Ibid 27). While this on its own would be an issue, moving homes also has ramifications for the accessing of benefits due to the need to change Job Centre and so the problems are exacerbated and threaten wider access issues.

5.4. Education

Education is a key factor for both ‘inclusion’ in a societal sense, and for individual well-being. What is more, issues of education stretch across age groups. As a key social policy issue it is also one of the differentiating factors between Scotland and the rest of the UK. This section will examine the Scottish research on asylum seeker and refugee education, focussing particularly on the perceptions of those involved.

Reakes argues that there is a limited literature on the education of asylum seekers in the UK, while a public discourse has

emerged that focuses on the impact asylum seeking is having on a range of social services that includes schools. He finds that although asylum seeking children's experiences are generally characterised by difference, there are some commonalities. Such children will likely have greater emotional needs and may show signs of trauma, they will likely have language difficulties that may be exacerbated by their isolation, and they will likely have had a lack of schooling (Reakes 2007 93).

Smyth has addressed the issue of the educational needs of asylum seeker children in Glasgow as well as some of the methods employed by schools to cope with pupils with the new and varying needs identified by Reakes. In an ethnographic study of an historically 'white' school, she found that as a result of dispersal it had

[“changed from a monolingual primary school into a daily multilingual conference where the pupils work as both participants, presenters and simultaneous translators”](#)(Smyth 2006 101).

In the space of just a few years this school went from being mono-lingual to half of the school being bilingual. The schools approach was to teach some classes in the mainstream school and some in a separate unit, until such point as the children's English has improved enough to be integrated fully. Teacher creativity had managed to overcome some of the lack of national policy related to bilingual students in Smyth's work (Smyth 2006 102). Smyth also found that collaborative teaching and extra-curricular clubs (Ibid 106) were of utmost importance in terms of the educational development of the pupils as well as their integration into the school and wider community.

Reakes also points at evidence in his case studies, one of which was in Scotland, that the presence of asylum seeking children

in schools can be a positive and rewarding experience for the schools involved (Reakes 2007 93). Nevertheless, there are challenges that should not be overlooked. These include the lack of experience among teachers of working with children with extra needs, the very range of those needs, including extra language needs and the psychological and emotional needs of children who may have suffered hugely traumatic experiences.

In Candappa's work, twenty eight children and fourteen parents in two Scottish cities were interviewed and a number of general issues raised. These were that mainstreaming was of more merit than withdrawal; there was sometimes insufficient understanding in schools of the refugee experience; some teachers had low expectations of asylum seeking and refugee students; and there was a need for an understanding of the stress of immigration status and the way that this can impact on educational performance (Candappa 2007 5).

Respondents in Candappa's study were most positive about their initial welcome in schools (Ibid 20), while help with English was also widely appreciated (Ibid 21). Interpretation services were also appreciated but there was some concern that letters sent to home with children were written in English only, meaning that translations then had to be actively sought (Ibid 22)

In 2006 Her Majesties Inspectorate of Education (HMIE) conducted an inspection of the services available to the children of asylum seekers in Glasgow. It found that attendance at schools was high, with almost all asylum seeking children developing their confidence and learning as a result. The extra-curricular activities provided by schools were also highly thought of. A fairly obvious point but one worth making is that

[“the achievement of children was often related to their length of stay in the United](#)

Kingdom and their competence in English language” (HMIE 2007 6).

Almost all children made good English progress and there were also positive results in both science and maths (Ibid 7). Indeed in 2006 asylum seeking children did better than average in SQA exams. The HMIE also found significant achievement in Further Education but there was considerable frustration about the lack of opportunities in Higher Education (Ibid), a finding replicated in Candappa’s work (Candappa 2007).

Hume and Moran highlighted some discrepancy in nursery provision for the children of asylum seekers. While Glasgow City Council supply part time places in nurseries for under 5 year old children of asylum seekers, they do not have entitlement on the same basis as the host community. That is, access to the standard process of nursery allocation is limited as such children are only allocated after all other 3 and 4 year olds have a place (Hume and Moran 2006 1). This means that asylum seeker children of nursery age are often required to travel significant distances to access nursery services which, the authors point out, is a particular problem when there is a fear of travelling around among asylum seeking families. This problem is also presumably added to by the extra costs incurred by such travel. The complicated nature of under-fives provision combine with the trauma associated with fleeing are also mentioned by Save the Children research (Save the Children 2006 2). They additionally point out that problems with pre-five care was leading to parents dropping out of their own education (Ibid 5).

Other disjuncture’s between what is available to school age and nursery age pupils are raised by Hume and Moran. Unlike in schools there is no help available to bilingual under fives (Hume and Moran 2006 1). A final issue raised concerned the gap in

provision for older children. While nursery places are provided by the Local Authority for all 3 and 4 year olds, and are joined by the right of 5-16 year olds to go to school, 16-18 year olds can do only part time study up to HND level (Ibid 3).

Good local initiatives such as the Glasgow Girls were highlighted by HMIE, although many of the possible activities were stunted by “lower levels of income and exclusion from employment”, which “affected families’ sense of inclusion and belonging in the wider community”(Ibid). The sense of inclusion was also affected by anti-social behaviour and racial harassment (Ibid).

Work by Save the Children have also raises issues of social capital. Opinions of parents were mixed and communication issues raised as a potential impediment to the development of positive relationships (Save the Children 2006 1).

5.5. Children’s Rights and Social Work Provision

[Moving on from the education of children in asylum seeking and refugee families, both the rights of children and the position of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children \(UASC\) are also research areas of huge interest. This section will look at the research done on UASC, rights, and the issue of social work provision for asylum seeking and refugee children.](#)

Scottish based and focussed work on Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) is scant. Work by Hopkins and Hill on behalf of Scottish Refugee Council began the process of researching UASC in Scotland (Hopkins and Hill 2006). Part of the reason for a lack of empirical work into pre-flight experiences in particular is due to reluctance, on the part of the children, to discuss those experiences, particularly evident among young women (Hopkins and Hill 2008 259). Of the UASC in work

conducted by Hopkins and Hill, few knew where they were going on their flight and so there was no positive wish to come to Scotland, contrary to the notion of pull factors mentioned earlier. Interestingly Hopkins and Hill also point out that there was often confusion among service providers regarding the difference between trafficking and smuggling (Hopkins and Hill 2008 265), placing UASC in something of a vacuum.

At the time of Hopkins and Hill's work the largest group of UASC were from Somalia (Hopkins and Hill 2008 259). Work by HMIE found that there were approximately 150 UASC in Glasgow (HMIE 2007 3), most of whom were in residential care. While there was a lack of available fostering, residential care was generally well received among younger children. However, care was found to be more varied for 16-18 year olds, some of whom were, at the time, supported by the Homeless Young Peoples Team. There was not always an appropriate level of assessment (Ibid 8) and there was a lack of resources for children's care, due to parents being on 70% of income support, particularly acute with regard to the provision of warm clothes (Ibid).

Much in terms of provision was left to chance. "A growing body of research reveals a lottery in terms of treatment, with very variable standards and commitment" (Ibid), so some children did not get full needs assessment or culturally appropriate provision. For example there were some children placed in adult hostels. This is partly due to 16 and 17 year olds being included under Section 17 rather than Section 20 of the Children's Act, meaning that "instead of being 'looked after'", these youngsters "are not accorded rights to protection as children" (Cemlyn and Briskman 2003 168). Such youngsters were often dealt with by adult teams rather than children's teams. The authors add that "this

discrimination is government led, since significantly lower grant aid is provided for 16 and 17 year olds" (Ibid). This financially motivated decision leads to isolation which is particularly visible regarding young girls who, because they are fewer in numbers, also lack peer group support (Ibid 169).

In terms of the UASC themselves Kohli and Mather argue, on the basis of their UK research, that they are both vulnerable and resourceful (Kohli and Mather 2003 201). They argue that there is a need "to enter the young people's inner and outer worlds with therapeutic care, to aid the process of self recovery" (Ibid). There are essentially three psychological barriers facing UASC on arrival, they may not know rules and customs, they may be traumatized or haunted by the past, and there are a maze of systems of care and protection that they must traverse (Ibid). However, in relation to their resilience Kohli and Mather argue that compared to indigenous children in care, asylum seeking children "are not as psychologically dishevelled", due to fact that becoming a refugee is "a purposeful act of strength and capability" (Ibid 204).

Kohli and Mather describe UASC as having a series of fractures in their past, present and future lives that need to be healed (Ibid 202). The lack of adults at all stages exacerbates the problems. The authors state that

"the presence or absence of adult caregivers for children during trauma and flight is strongly associated with their capacities to adjust" (Ibid 203).

Clarke adds that "one of the many entitlements often denied young asylum seekers and refugees is the chance to be 'normal'" (Ibid 177). Hopkins and Hill argue that all too often in research on asylum seeking children, the focus is too much on the position of children in families rather than as subjects in their own right (Hopkins

and Hill 2008 258). They highlight that the 'Separated Children in Europe Programme' uses the term separated instead of unaccompanied as it is thought to better define the problems that they face, "that they are without the care and protection of their parents or legal guardian" (Ibid). However, they also add that the term separated implies a passivity on the part of the asylum seeker that is often inaccurate (Ibid 259). This can be linked to the work of Harrell-Bond and Voutira who argue strongly for the integration of the 'agency' of asylum seekers and refugees themselves. They complain that refugees have gone from being the prime movers in research to being 'invisible' (Ibid 281), partly due to organisations acting as access gatekeepers. Research, for the authors, should not treat refugees as mere subjects or informants, but as prime movers in research.

At the time of the HMIE work there were 2,026 asylum seeking families with 1,411 children of school age in Glasgow. Although, according to NASS rules, adults gain only 70% of income support, children, unless they are on Section 4 support, are entitled to 100% support. However, the fact that the children of asylum seekers are not entitled to child benefit negates this benefit somewhat (HMIE 2007 2), and leaves many asylum seeking children in a parlous financial situation.

HMIE work found that the fear of removals led to a "worry about the future", which "affected the emotional and mental health of children and parents" (Ibid), particularly for those who had been here a number of years and were thus fairly well integrated. HMIE identified the key strengths of services for children in Glasgow thus, local services had a positive impact on well being and inclusion, schools promoted inclusion and integration, particularly with regard to language issues, voluntary sector provision was good and specialist services such as GASSP and translating and interpreting were

positive (Ibid 4).

Save The Children and Glasgow City Council have also conducted work on the views of young asylum seekers in Glasgow in 2002. At that time there were 1231 young asylum seekers in Glasgow, of whom 738 took part in this study. Overall, the young people involved felt that the education system, doing sports and being with their friends and family were the most positive elements of their time in Glasgow, while violence, racism, safety, bullying and alcohol and drug use were identified as being the most negative (Save the Children 2002 3).

There is a general feeling that schools worked well to keep children safe. Nevertheless asylum seeking children who felt safe in primary schools often felt less safe in either secondary schools or in the communities in which they live (HMIE 2007 5). Almost all respondents in the HMIE work reported abuse from the host community with some even reporting attacks, although not all were reported to the police.

Parker takes the issue of social work as his central theme. The increase in asylum applications during the late 1990s created the need for social workers to be both educated and prepared to work with asylum seekers and refugees. There is a precarious path to traverse in doing so though. Parker points out that there has been a decision among social workers own organisations not to cooperate with oppressive procedures (Parker 2000 61), while simultaneously there is recognition of the need for better support for asylum seekers and refugees. Cemlyn and Briskman add that immigration detention operates to flout children's rights, raising questions for social workers regarding the avoidance of "collusion with repressive policies and actively promoting human rights" (Cemlyn and Briskman 2003 163).

A major issue for social workers has been "a

progressive dismantling of social rights for all asylum seekers” (Ibid 165). With specific regard to children the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) have criticised the detention of children which Cemlyn and Briskman argue, question their right to “protection, to services which meet their needs, and to participate both in decisions affecting them and in wider social and cultural activities”(Ibid 167)

In further UK work Bemak argues that there are six key themes related to social work with asylum seekers and refugees. These are cultural belief systems, the utilisation of mainstream health services, acculturation processes, psychosocial adjustment and adaptation, implications of resettlement policies and multilevel approaches, all of which are important for assessment of needs and support provision (in Parker 2000 70). Cemlyn and Briskman also examine social work from the perspective of the exclusion of asylum seekers generally, but asylum seeking children particularly (Cemlyn and Briskman 2003 163). The authors argue that NASS has institutionalised poverty among asylum seekers and forced all into dependency. This situation has added impacts due to the fact that it inhibits the ability of stressed parents to meet the emotional needs of their children (Ibid 168).

Cemlyn and Briskman add that only a minority of UK Local Authorities provide good care for unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Only in areas where authorities had included asylum as part of their strategic plan was there evidence of committed and informed social work services (Ibid). A form of best practice existed where processes involved training, the development of networks or specialist refugee workers (Ibid)

Cemlyn and Briskman also highlight a number of present and future challenges for social work. They raise the issue of the role of statutory social work and its relationship

to the voluntary sector, arguing that this relationship has current difficulties and requires better integration. They also question the degree to which social work principles can be applied in a hostile system such as the asylum regime. One potential part solution is to be clear about the politics of asylum, aided by linking up with other bodies such as asylum lawyers and refugee groups (Ibid 173/4) in order to address problems and principle in provision.

HMIE found that although overall in Glasgow “knowing and communicating needs of children was good” (HMIE 2007 12), there were some gaps in social work provision (Ibid 12/3). For example social work were often unclear whether they could refer asylum seeker children to the Children’s Reporter and the Children’s Reporter was often unclear regarding the relationship between UK and Scottish legislation (Ibid 13)

Beirens et al use the work of the Children’s Fund that found that young refugees and asylum seekers were at particular risk of social exclusion (Beirens et al 2007 219). They argue that exclusion has partly resulted from dispersal to disadvantaged areas, with some harassment and limited access to amenities. This, the authors argue, had led to ‘isolation, vulnerability, fear for their safety, stress and depression’ (Ibid 224). They also find that gaps in out of school provision and youth work furthers these problems for young asylum seekers and refugees.

5.6. Health Services

Health is another key indicator of integration, while it also represents a disjuncture within the devolved settlement. While health outcomes are difficult to research in anything other than very long project work, the issue of perceptions, access and rights have received attention. This section will highlight some of the Scottish research into access and feelings about health provision for refugees and asylum seekers in

Scotland. In addition research on mental health and mental health service gaps in provision will also be looked at.

O'Donnell et al conducted a qualitative study of the knowledge, access and views of asylum seekers towards the NHS, with one of their case study areas being Glasgow (O'Donnell et al 2007 2). They highlight that Glasgow houses the largest number of asylum seekers of any individual Local Authority in Britain. Additionally they point out that 40% of Glasgow based asylum seekers were from Pakistan, Turkey, Somalia or Iran and that they were generally housed in areas of high deprivation. They found that most asylum seekers had registered with a GP and were positive about their experiences, although some mentioned a lack of continuity in care (Ibid 1). Over and above this the main GP issue was a lack of understanding of their role of, especially with regard the desire to see specialists (Ibid).

Interestingly McFarland and Walsh found similarly back in 1994, that the major problem in accessing health care concerned a lack of understanding of the overall health care system, that is, most were happy with their GPs but there remained a sketchy awareness of how the NHS worked and the position of GPs within it. In addition less help was available for refugees in the physical and psychological issues resulting from their flight (McFarland and Walsh 1994 97), rather than presently occurring or arising health issues.

There were six key themes in the work of O'Donnell et al. First was access. They found that most asylum seekers received written information from the health board telling them how and where to register with a GP and that most had done so and felt welcomed and cared for as a result (Ibid 5). There were some problems however. Some asylum seekers had not received any information and some had not been registered at a surgery close to their

current home, meaning travel and the problems inherent in it emerged in terms of health care services. There was also some frustration at the length of time taken to get medical appointments, especially problematic when children were involved. In addition the misunderstanding of the role of GPs meant that some asylum seekers went directly to hospitals as they didn't see GPs as specialists (Ibid). This was particularly an issue in practices where the use of GP locums was more common (Ibid 6). Very few respondents knew of the existence of out of hours care and so, if ill at a time when the GP surgery was shut, they would present at A&E. HMIE work found that on the whole health needs were found to be well met. All children had registered with a GP and had had a health assessment within 48 hours of arriving in Glasgow (HMIE 2007 5).

O'Donnell et al, however, highlight problems in waiting times for hospitals and a lack of dental check ups. They point out that some asylum seekers "reported difficulty finding a dentist who would treat asylum seekers" (O'Donnell et al 2007 6), and that many who did gain access to dentists had tended to use them clinically rather than for check ups.

Although interpretation services were generally considered good, well organised and well provided in primary care, results were less positive when patients had in-patient stays and there were key access points where provision was lacking, such as in waking up after an operation and in pharmacies (Ibid 6). There were some issues with interpretation quality, with some people being sent interpreters who spoke a different language. Finally there was often a feeling that either the whole story wasn't being interpreted or alternatively that there was an expectation that interpreters would advocate rather than do verbatim interpretation work (Ibid). That is, some interpreters were criticised for selective interpretation while others were criticised for

only interpreting exactly what was said, rather than commenting on the wider issues involved.

Experiences of health visitors, nursing staff, receptionists and opticians were generally good, (Ibid 6) but there were some perceptions of being discriminated against. There was especially good feedback regarding the area of Glasgow that employed an asylum specific health visitor, although health visitors generally were valued as confidants, partly due to fact they come to the home of the patient (Ibid 7).

A number of barriers to health care were, however, identified by O'Donnell et al. Language was not surprisingly one of the key barriers, as was access to medication (Ibid). This issue was particularly acute regarding the payment of prescriptions, and their costs. There was an expectation that the HC2 form, which provides an exemption from medical expenses, would provide all medication free of charge.

Roshan also conducted work into the health needs of refugees in Glasgow, pointing out the paucity of research despite recognition of multiple health needs amongst service providers (Roshan 2005 14). One of the ongoing issues, seen in other research too, remains access to GP services. Barriers to access was key, although registration remained high. These barriers concerned communication issues, registration in some cases, attitudes of staff, waiting lists and difficulty in getting to surgeries (Ibid 41/2). In this research waiting times for appointments was the most often mentioned difficulty (Ibid 43). The asylum process itself was also identified as a key cause of health related problems, particularly mental health (Ibid 49), added to by fear and experiences of racism (Ibid 52).

One of the most interesting findings regarding this research is the issue of drug and alcohol use. There is a suspicion that

use is currently under-reported, both for reasons of religious and cultural norms, and also perceptions of what constitutes a drug, particularly with regard to the use of khat among the Somali community (Ibid 57). There was also, however, some reporting of dependency on prescribed medication and concern of the potential vulnerability of refugees to such dependency (Ibid).

The Glasgow Centre for Population Health(GCPH) conducted a study to examine the barriers facing asylum seekers and refugees in accessing health services. They argue from the beginning that there is both a post and pre flight vulnerability among such groups. On the post flight side vulnerability is added to by detention, the length of the asylum process, language barriers, discrimination, lack of social support, unemployment, and lack of knowledge of systems (GCPH 2008 2). Stewart adds that previous social context is an important part of understanding present vulnerabilities (Stewart 2005b 504). Identified barriers included the availability and quality of interpretation services. These experiences are compounded by health issues taking less priority for such populations in the face of multiple problems related to their asylum claim and the asylum process (GCPH 2008 3). Indeed. Stewart adds that fear of deportation exacerbates feelings of temporariness, thus distinguishing the position of asylum seekers from other types of migrant (Stewart 2005b 506).

Particularly problematic considering the population involved were gaps in mental health service provision, identified by O'Donnell et al. Many asylum seekers and refugees are unaware that they can get help with depression or anxiety. Other work suggests gaps in relation to HIV and rape cases that also tied in with the lack of information provision relating to screening and health promotion. (O'Donnell et al 2007 8).

Ager et al examined the influence of social networks on the mental health of resettled refugees in Edinburgh. They found that while 92% of their 26 cases reported experiencing social contact, just 19% had that contact outside of refugee communities (Ibid 75). Some 42% of those surveyed had some form of depression and interestingly the levels of anxiety and depression increased with length of stay in the country (Ibid 71).

For Ager et al the focus in relation to mental health has tended to be on pre-flight experience, with post flight attention a relatively new element of care provision (Ager et al 2002 72). Miller found four variables leading to mental health problems that relate to post flight experiences (Ibid). These were social isolation, the loss of social and occupational roles, the loss of mastery of operating in an alien environment, and the loss of material resources (Ibid). Ager et al used Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS) to study post flight mental health. They found that gender, age, language, ethnicity and whether they lived alone were not statistically significant predictors of anxiety or depression (Ibid 76), implying that the common factor was simply the fact of being a refugee or asylum seeker. The most common response in terms of aspirations for future support was increased social contact, supporting Miller's view of depression and social isolation having a causal link (Ibid 77).

Proctor points to the importance of health care, particularly mental health in that

“as many as 60% of refugees have experienced war, torture or imprisonment and might be suffering from poor social relations, flashbacks, neurosis anxiety and phobias”(Proctor 2005 286).

The catalyst for his work was the suicide of an Afghan asylum seeker in Glasgow in May 2004. Although his work is mostly

Australian focussed he highlights that this suicide of an asylum seeker was the third in Scotland in just 18 months (Ibid 287), although work by the Institute of Race Relations points out that this is likely a significant under-count (Athwal and Bourne 2000). Nevertheless Proctor argues that there is a need for longitudinal work as there is evidence of the inherently stressful and disturbing nature of seeking asylum (Ibid 290) with concomitant impacts on mental health.

In the 2nd part of his work Proctor moves from the problem to the proposed solution. He points out that establishing trust must come prior to any mental health interventions (Proctor 2006 43). Once that is done there are six key points for effective service delivery; consultation with asylum seekers on their needs and what they perceive as being a ‘good outcome’; clarification regarding the purpose, goals and ‘good outcomes’ in mental health; establishment of a service delivery programme to reach that ‘good outcome’; enhancement of internal and external services to child asylum seekers in immigration centres; establishing clinical pathways with a recovery orientation; and finally a countrywide strategy in order to prevent delays in mental health treatment (Ibid).

Although Ager et al are aware of limitations in terms of their sample there are some broad conclusions that they reached concerning mental health that could be tested in further work. They found that there were higher depression levels among refugees than in the population as a whole. This work also backs up other research showing high levels of symptoms such as not sleeping and appetite loss (Ager et al 2002 78). The problems in terms of isolation are also not helped by the dispersal programme which can remove co-ethnic or co-linguistic ties (Ibid).

Sherwood conducted research into the mental health of asylum seekers in Glasgow and found that

“the main perceived causes of mental health problems were consistently reported as being worries, problems and the pressure of everyday life related to being an asylum seeker or refugee and the negative impact of the asylum process”(Sherwood 2008 6).

Related to such problems were high levels of uncertainty, lack of activities leading to too much time to think, isolation, loneliness and trouble sleeping. It is worth adding that the decision making process is also a difficult one for those who obtain status after they have obtained that status.

Recognised refugees have to adjust to their new status, and then are required to traverse social systems on the basis of that newly acquired status. While these are direct mental health related issues emanating from the asylum process they are made worse by the stigma and status of asylum seekers and levels of racism and discrimination experienced from neighbours and service providers (Ibid). Experiences of institutional racism and a lack of trust in interpreters meant that asylum seekers in Glasgow reported a preference for seeking help from co-nationals rather than seeking professional help.

Athwal and Bourne use IRR research that documents 200 deaths of asylum seekers or undocumented migrants in just 16 years either trying to reach the UK or through attacks, work accidents or self harm (Athwal and Bourne 2007 106). They add that in all cases it is likely that numbers are under-reported. Nevertheless, between 1990 and 2006 there were 97 deaths on route in lorries, planes or other modes of transport. People being forced to work illegally, and hence in situations of poorer pay and conditions, accounted for 32 work related deaths, 23 at Morecambe Bay. The dispersal

programme has placed people away from localities where they have kith and kin, contributing to the fact that 18 had died in attacks in dispersal areas, assumed to be at the hands of racists. 58 chose “death over deportation” (Ibid 108), meaning that suicides have been running at roughly one each month. Interestingly Athwal and Bourne point out that the Government’s prison suicide prevention strategy does not extend to detention centres. Private firms who run such centres are fined for each ‘successful’ suicide, but there have still been some 15 in the past 5 years (Ibid 110).

Attitudes towards Asylum Seekers and Refugees and How We Understand Them

06

6.1. What we think we know

In attempting to highlight the state of literature regarding the attitudes of the Scottish population towards refugees and asylum seekers it must be highlighted from the outset that there is scant information regarding Scottish specific attitudes. The British Social Survey, IPSOS and Eurobarometer do not drill down to the Scottish level, providing only aggregate level UK-wide data. In addition much attitudinal questioning assumes knowledge on the part of the respondent that is often lacking and respondents often fail to distinguish between different migrant populations. That said there is growing evidence of rising issue salience of asylum and immigration over the past eight to ten years.

McLaren and Johnson use British Social Attitudes findings and controlled for age, gender, region, left-right politics, and libertarian-authoritarian outlooks, and found that there were no individual resource issues of statistical significance to attitudes. Those who see immigrants as a threat to group resources rather than their individual labour market position were significant, allowing mythology rather than direct experiences to play an increased role. They found that the issue of symbolic threat was of importance, that “British citizens appear mostly to worry about the effects of immigrants on the ingroup as a whole” (McLaren and Johnson 2007 725). Essentially the authors reach three sets of conclusions, that there is little concern for the personal well-being of the respondents, and that therefore labour market issues are not prime motivators of attitudes, that concern that does exist relates to society as a whole, and that a symbolic threat to ‘British values’ as a result of immigration, particularly other religions, is

important (Ibid 727). In later work McLaren re-emphasised that “symbolic threats to values and culture are likely to be even more important in explaining hostility to immigration” (McLaren 2008). Nevertheless, despite such concerns McLaren and Johnson also find evidence of a ‘new tolerant minority’ in Britain (McLaren and Johnson 2007).

Spencer highlights this increase in issue importance in comparison to other EU states. She points out that in the Eurobarometer of 2006, while immigration was seen as the fourth biggest issue across the EU as a whole, it was rated first in the UK (Spencer 2007 348). It bears repeating that the lack of distinguishing between types of immigration may in part explain this disjuncture. In essence while most European nations imposed restrictions on the movement of A8 nationals the UK was one of the few that did not. Numbers hugely exceeded expectations which may have contributed to this greater hostility, as the Government’s lack of control became evident.

One of the most thorough qualitative studies undertaken in recent years was that done by the Independent Asylum Commission (Independent Asylum Commission 2008). They confirmed existing evidence that there was a ‘grave misunderstanding’ in the public mind about the term ‘asylum’. The Commission implicitly criticises both the Government and the media for conducting debates on asylum in a way that does not ‘win hearts and minds’ (Ibid Foreword). Part of the reason is the conflation of terms alluded to above. There is a grave need to separate asylum issues from those of economic migration in order that people

begin to associate asylum seekers more than they currently do with the act of fleeing persecution. The Commission also confirms other research in arguing that the media bare a large degree of responsibility for this, due to the fact that a large majority of the population cite the media as their primary source of information, more on which below.

In one widespread study by Simon and Sikich, the UK had by far the largest population wishing immigration to be reduced 'a lot', rising from 43% in 1995 to 54% in 2003 (Simon and Sikich 2007). This increase occurred despite a growing population believing that immigration was good for the economy, again supporting the cultural exclusiveness of the sociotropic arguments, that concerns relate to general societal concerns rather than perceptions of individual threat. Sides and Citrin also find that the role of beliefs regarding cultural unity and homogeneity to be important across European nations (Sides and Citrin 2007 501).

Joffe carried out recent work on British attitudes towards asylum seekers and other types of migrants. He highlights that

“the old adages of the abusive use of public and social services – despite the statistical evidence – have increasingly become part of popular and formal political discourse and have, in consequence, on occasion been integrated into law. Asylum-seekers have faced constantly worsening discrimination and there has been a growing battle between government and the judiciary about how they should be handled. Even the concept of multiculturalism is now being challenged as new forms of social absorption are considered”(Joffe 2008 1).

This is all seen as dignifying xenophobic tendencies among the populace (Ibid 3). Although recognising the cynicism of his

view Joffe posits that UKBA's "primary functions are to exclude potential immigrants, not to facilitate their arrival" (Ibid 2), which has added to a worsening of attitudes.

In terms of the types of migration, Joffe argues that attitudes towards asylum seekers are more negative than towards other migrants (Ibid 9/10). This is primarily due to the perception that they pose a threat to social services. However, it should be pointed out that access to many services have been withdrawn and it is Government policy, at the behest of those hostile to asylum seekers, that ensures reliance on other services through the removal of the employment concession. This is then exacerbated by subsequent security issues in the form of September 11th and other securitisation issues (Ibid 11).

IPPR research points to there being greater 'tolerance' in Scotland than in England and Wales (Lewis 2006). Ignoring for a moment the problems of seeing minority groups as being merely tolerated, this research was conducted using focus groups, which inevitably brings into question the issue of social norms. There is increasing academic work being conducted on the unwillingness of respondents to deviate from socially acceptable norms in answering questions. Rob John, for example, has argued that even in answering questionnaires, people with socially unacceptable views will tend to opt for the mid point on a likert scale rather than openly admitting to overtly prejudice responses (paper presented at University of Strathclyde Oct 2006).

Nevertheless, despite arguing that there is a greater tolerance in Scotland, Lewis's research also found that there remained a great deal of hostility to asylum seekers, particularly in Glasgow, where the vast majority of Scottish asylum seekers live. Contrary to past research that shows a

generational difference, with younger respondents being less hostile, this work found that young people in Glasgow were much more willing to espouse hostile views. Lewis's work also confirmed the findings of McLaren and Johnson, that hostility was also evident among those with a university education (Lewis 2006 14). The research does, however, re-emphasise the conflation of not only all forms of immigration but even existing ethnic minority communities.

“Asylum seeker’ has become a ‘catch-all’ term for any non-white person. The issue of asylum is indivisible in public debate from race and immigration more generally” (Lewis 2006 5).

Crawley adds that asylum may act as a ‘touchstone issue’, whereby general unease regarding broad issues such as globalisation or discontent with politicians, are given expression through the issues of asylum and immigration (Crawley 2008).

The initial dispersal programme, and the problems with it, remained important in terms of impacting on views in Glasgow, emphasising Kramer’s cognitive arguments made below. Lewis highlights that Glaswegians were less optimistic regarding the future of the city than those in the other venues of the research, Edinburgh and Dundee, which may have impacted on responses (Lewis 2006 12). It is also important to raise the issue of ‘meaningful contact’. Lewis found that the most positive responses to asylum seekers was found among those who personally knew asylum seekers, while the most negative were among individuals who lived close to dispersal areas but who did not know personally any asylum seekers (Ibid 13). Issues of personal contact as well as myth and rumour clearly play a role in contributing towards attitude formation, or at least confirming existing attitudes. It should also be highlighted that Lewis’s research and the comparable work done in England and

Wales that showed this greater ‘tolerance’ in Scotland occurred either side of a general election campaign that placed immigration matters as one of, if not the most differentiating matters between the parties, and so the focus of comparison is not a direct one. That said the salience of immigration, as asylum was not used as a separate category, does show some divergence, with 67% in Scotland feeling that immigration policy was not ‘tough enough’, compared to 78% across the UK as a whole” (Lewis 2006 9).

This research re-emphasises some established points regarding attitudes but also suggests others with a more specific Scottish dimension. While lack of information and myth continues to over-egg both the numbers of asylum seekers and the benefits that they receive or are entitled to, and although the Scottish media are to some extent more positive with regard to asylum seeking stories, there appeared to be some lack of awareness among the populace of these stories. In addition, despite a more positive political discourse in Scotland with regard to all migrants, seen in both the Fresh Talent Initiative and the One Scotland campaign, this positivity was often drowned out by the UK-wide discourse that remained inherently hostile (Pillai 2007 34).

Much research also shows contradictory opinions among respondents, perhaps partly due to the conflation of terms. Thus while 67% felt immigration policy was not tough enough (Lewis 2006 9), a Mori/Oxfam poll showed that in November 2004 some 51% of Scottish adults did not think that media reporting of asylum was fair. The Mori/Oxfam work also highlights that some 93% of Scots obtain their understanding from the media and that the Scottish media tend to be more sympathetic, especially with regard to Scottish specific stories (Ipsos/Mori Sept 16th 2004). Thus the media has a key role in helping to frame the debate. One Oxfam study would question the

positivity regarding the media evident in other research. In their Positive Images work they found that although the media in Scotland have tended to have a more positive focus, positive stories about asylum in Scotland were lacking (Oxfam 2006 76). The prominence given, quotes used and slant of stories tended to be more favourable, but other than Dungavel, few were Scotland specific. They added that although 83% of Scots in one poll argued that asylum seekers should have the right to work, just 28% felt they made a positive contribution to society (Ibid 20). Although these figures may be axiomatic, that lack of work prevents a positive contribution, that causality is not shown.

The small sample of Lewis's work is acknowledged and so it is problematic to extrapolate the results in order to reach broader conclusions. Nevertheless concerns tended to revolve around employment opportunities and access to public services, indicating a lack of knowledge of the rights of asylum seekers to benefits and work. Work by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation also highlights that broader infrastructural issues contributes to problems when already disadvantaged groups feel they are being ignored or marginalised (Hickman et al 2008 94). While these issues are obviously much broader than attitudes to asylum, there is some indication that the more concrete notion of Scottishness, when compared to Britishness, may link to these more positive attitudes. The new focus at the British level on integration emphasises the IPPR findings that poor integration of BME groups contributes to hostility (Lewis 2006 20). It should, however, be pointed out that political and public discourse has focussed attention on the issue of integration, and may have in effect problematised the once unproblematic.

Scottish Executive work on attitudes to discrimination show that among young

people there was a greater acknowledgement that discrimination exists and that the perception was that ethnic minorities were most likely among all minority or minoritised groups, to be subject to prejudice (Reid Howie Associates 2006). This work, which has some links to work on attitudes towards immigration, highlights three sources of prejudice; a sociological one highlighting age, education, class, gender, religion, political party, rural/urban divide and class; an economic one whereby those who perceive themselves as not doing well economically are more likely to be prejudice; and a psychological one where prejudice is more likely from people who think that ethnic minorities have nothing in common with them.

Work carried out by Bromley and Curtice for the Scottish Executive on attitudes to discrimination may also have a longitudinal dimension with plans to conduct further research in the years ahead. Their work found that the notion of cultural threat had played some part in shaping attitudes towards Muslims and 'probably' also asylum seekers. In a series of questions regarding which minority groups respondents would be least happy with a close relative forming a long term relationship with, asylum seekers were on par with gypsy travellers and lower only than somebody who had had a sex change operation (Bromley and Curtice 2003 33). Although results varied by age, education and gender the results are worrying high for all demographic groups.

Later evaluation of the One Scotland campaign highlights that racism, as opposed to anti-immigration or asylum attitudes, appeared to be at its lowest point since tracking began (Scottish Executive 2006 1), although the issue of social norms suggests caution in interpreting such results. There is also something of a disjuncture between this finding and citizenship surveys that indicate a more general feeling that prejudice is

getting worse rather than better.

Crawley also points out that while it is often assumed that there is a more pliant atmosphere in Scotland, an Oxfam commissioned poll in March 2005 found that 46% of people felt that the number of asylum seekers in Scotland was a problem, with just 26% disagreeing with the statement (Crawley 2005 7). The lack of a firm evidence base to both attitudes and Government policy is also highlighted by Crawley. Questions are often leading and assume knowledge on the part of the respondent, knowledge that all evidence shows is somewhat lacking (Ibid 9).

The work of Hickman et al also had a social cohesion dimension. Although again focussed primarily on labour migration due to the balance of numbers, there were a couple of findings of utility beyond just labour migrants. They found that there was generally not an expectation among populations that people living near them would have the same values, although they do caution that this is less true in areas of more uniform populations (Hickman et al 2008 185). Nevertheless there was still an expectation in their Glasgow case study that 'they' had to fit in to 'our' lives.

Other work concurred that on the whole there was a more positive attitude in Scotland towards new migration, but cautions that the story is 'not universally positive' (Pillai 2007 34). Of interest to the Scottish Refugee Council, Pillai argues, in concurrence with the work done by Hickman and colleagues that much negativity in Glasgow remains focussed on asylum seekers, and that if research had therefore focussed on Glasgow, there would have been a more negative overall response. The problems highlighted in the initial dispersal and the remaining negative attitudes that this has left is re-emphasised by Hickman et al who point to the congruence of

unbalanced media portrayals and the effect on the attitudes of those in deprived areas (Hickman et al 2008 130).

Williams and De Lima challenge the view of a generally relaxed atmosphere towards asylum seekers in Scotland. They point out that one study found that some 24% of people thought that it was okay to verbally attack asylum seekers who receive housing and benefits in Scotland (Williams and De Lima 2006 511). The 'myth' of the welcoming state also glosses over the high levels of unemployment in certain existing ethnic minorities (Ibid 513). In addition they make some criticism of the evaluation of the 'One Scotland' campaign.

"Although measuring changes in public attitudes is a problematic task, especially within such a short timescale, the lack of specific practical activities at local level to directly underpin the 'One Scotland' campaign may well mean that the message is not as effective as it might be" (Ibid 511).

One difference emerging from work by the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum suggests that Scotland is seen as 'best practice' due, at least in part, to grass roots organisations (Scottish Refugee Integration Forum 2005 12). Bearing in mind the concerns raised by Kramer concerning attitudes, that a softly-softly approach is likely to be effective in the long term (British Psychological Society Seminar on Social Identity Seminar 24th Sept 2008). Community development could be seen as one of the more advantageous ways of positively impacting on attitudes to asylum

6.2. The Shaping of Attitudes by the Government and the Media

The role of the media in influencing attitudes has been widely explored. Khan adds to the existing debate in arguing that a 'moral panic' has been created by the media which has negatively impacted on community

relations. He argues that the media has been “dominated by pejorative and sensationalist language” such as ‘illegals’, ‘bogus asylum seekers’, ‘asylum cheat’, ‘asylum rapist’ and ‘spongers’ but also by a focus on the use of social services. Although there are methodological and sampling issues with the study it highlights other work on the role of the media. Khan finds that school talks and other forms of dialogue were seen as effective in countering negative misconceptions (Khan 2008 14/5)

As far as the atmosphere that can be created by media coverage, McFarland and Walsh point out that there was little animosity towards the Bosnian refugees in Glasgow in 1994.

“The Bosnians stand out probably because they are European refugees, whose situation has been sympathetically portrayed in the media” (McFarland and Walsh 1994 97).

Another lesson could also have been learned from this experience, the benefit of early language support to enable integration (Ibid).

Coole examines the media generally but particularly their response to the murder of Firsat Dag in Glasgow in August 2001. While a widespread climate of unease resulted from media coverage of asylum seekers, Coole describes the Scottish media’s response as schizophrenic (Coole 2002 842), where some positive community events were highlighted but simultaneously misconceptions were widespread. Fleras points to four categories of portrayal of ethnic minorities more generally, that they are either invisible or irrelevant, stereotyped, seen as a social problem or portrayed as mere entertainment or decoration (Ibid 842). Coole is clear that the Scottish media traversed the third path, with a focus on how asylum seekers were causing concern due to their impact on indigenous communities. In a sense a social

problem became a local problem (Ibid). What is more the negative coverage then helped to shape public attitudes (Ibid 843).

One criticism concerning such an approach was that the ‘blame’ for the problems was then directed at the residents of Sighthill, portrayed as racists (Ibid 846). However, the point of criticism in some cases quickly moved back to one focussed on the asylum seekers whereby the Daily Record “resurrected the suspicious climate’ by investigating Dag himself and announcing that his asylum claim was ‘bogus’ (Ibid 846/7).

Lugo-Ocando has conducted work that attempts to contrast Scotland with ‘the rest’ of the UK in terms of media output. He points to the contradiction in Scotland’s need for immigrants and the negative attitudes held by much of its population, indeed even more so than other parts of the UK (Lugo-Ocando 2007 23), a finding at odds with Lewis’s work. Lugo-Ocando places the blame for this disjuncture squarely on the shoulders of the media who “present immigrants as incompatible with Western values” (Ibid 24). He adds that the ‘independence’ of the Scottish media from London appears to be questionable, that ‘local’ papers will tend to take their leads from ‘the nationals’ (Ibid 33). Frost adds that there is historical evidence of the link between verbal and physical attacks on immigrants at times of increasingly hostile climates caused by the media and/or immigration controls (Frost 2008 570). Although not focussed on the Scottish media and its effects Finney and Robinson found that local, as opposed to national press coverage, had an impact on asylum seekers themselves as well as wider community cohesion (Finney and Robinson 2008 397). They found that these effects were produced by more positive local press coverage in Cardiff than the more hostile Leeds newspapers. However, one word of

caution would concern the direct causality. It is possible that the Welsh coverage and impacts is actually a result of a similar process that Netto alludes to with regard to Scotland, that the Welsh as a nation are more positive due to them being more at ease with their sense of identity (Netto 2008). Hubbard adds that media coverage can also create a degree of Nimbyism (Hubbard 2005 59).

As a recent British Council/IPPR report points out, “public opinion and attitudes to migration in Glasgow, or any other city for that matter, are both reflected and shaped by the media” (BC/IPPR 2008 8). Oxfam work found that 98% of the public receive their information about asylum seekers from the media (Oxfam 2007 5) while 86% thought asylum seekers should be able to work and support themselves (Ibid 16). Research by Pillai also found that the media had made a substantial contribution as far as false perceptions are concerned. Nevertheless the role of Government is also raised in this research which argues that

“the positive response from Scotland’s central Government has changed the political context of official and public debate significantly” (Pillai 2007 35).

While all Governments are required to tread a path between those hostile to immigration and those who are relaxed, along with the issue of economic need, Joffe highlights the path taken by the Labour Government. “The Labour Government in Britain since 1997 has, sadly, often yielded to and exploited popular prejudice to its own electoral benefit” (Joffe 2008 11).

While some elements of the Government were aware of the need to confront such prejudice

“such action does not appear to be contemplated as public dislike of asylum-seekers melds with resentment over

migration and is justified by the reification of both as a major and existential security threat” (Ibid),

exacerbated by alienation of existing communities.

In an era in which the Government has promoted the notion of ‘joined up Government’, Flynn argues that the control agenda with regard to migrants generally but asylum seekers more particularly, conflicts with the wider goals of social policy. This leads to the conclusion that the British Government has exerted “a generally baleful influence”, over the field (Flynn 2006 2). Indeed Schuster and Solomos highlight that the language used has created a climate of hostility towards migrants more generally but asylum seekers in particular.

“We feel that New Labour’s rhetoric itself has shaped the political and academic discourse, and that it has a concrete impact on migrants and minorities in Britain” (Schuster and Solomos 2004 299)

Zetter argues that far from Government merely responding to the language used by others, they are one of the prime agencies in changing the ‘refugee label’ (Zetter 2007 172). He argues that

“the ‘convenient images’ of refugees, labelled within a co-opting and inclusive humanitarian discourse in the past, have been displaced by a fractioning of the label which is driven by the need to manage globalized processes and patterns of migration and forced migration in particular” (Ibid 174).

Much has been written on the securitisation of refugee and asylum policy, whereby the language used is key. While Reich complains of the use of aquatic metaphors such as ‘floods’ and ‘waves’ (Bliech 2002 1064), Zetter points out that

“labels do not exist in a vacuum. They are

the tangible representation of policies and programmes, in which labels are not only formed but are transformed by bureaucratic processes which institutionalise and differentiate categories of eligibility and entitlements”(Zetter 2007 180)

The role of political leadership in helping to frame the debate in a more positive way is also highlighted by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

“The key point we take from what we found in Scotland is that proactive political leadership on the subject of the necessity and benefits of immigration was able to effect some changes in policy direction that have contributed to a greater acceptance of immigrants and a lowering of certain tensions” (Hickman et al 189).

Essentially both relational and structural issues require work in order to produce a more balanced debate (Ibid 190).

This review of literature into asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland does not claim to be exhaustive. The inclusion of all work conducted on asylum seekers and refugees would be unduly long and would obscure the thematic issues and gaps raised in this review. The themes and gaps that emerge are as follows.

First and foremost it is recognised that there is almost a complete absence of comparative research. Such an absence concerns cross national comparisons more generally but is particularly striking with regard to the constituent parts of the United Kingdom. While all are contained within the parameters of the UK policy context, there are differences in terms of political jurisdictions, political culture, multi-level governance structures and even possibly public attitudes. These differences and similarities remain suggested and under-researched. Additionally there is a lack of internal Scottish comparative work. While it is generally accepted that asylum seekers and refugees fall into the category of 'disadvantaged group', they have not been systematically included in research on disadvantaged groups more generally. Doing so would allow the issue of poverty to be integrated into research on asylum seekers and refugees as well as integrating issues of legal status, attitudes and importantly barriers that accentuate social exclusion.

Collaborative research, whether in terms of interdisciplinary academic work or research that involves both academic and non-academic communities is also somewhat lacking. While a couple of examples can be referred to they do not undermine the general point of the need for the integration of the theory and the practice that such collaborative work can achieve.

Another generally accepted gap in research concerns a lack of longitudinal research, evident in all aspects of the research areas mentioned above. It is widely accepted that snap shot pieces of research, although useful, do not provide enough in the way of either context or trends to explain broader developments and also, crucially, the implications of these developments. For example, as far as integration is concerned a study of integration at one specific time and place is useful but completely context specific. The latest piece of legislation or a recently occurred social event individualises the findings. A study over a longer period of time attempts to control for these context specific results, although it is recognised that this cannot be controlled for in its totality.

In terms of more Scottish specific research gaps there are also a number of points to be made. Little concrete is known about the difference that refugee status makes to the position of asylum seekers, whether in relation to their integration or the attitudes that they face. This highlights another gap, or set of gaps, in that there is also little known about the integration process in Scotland. The indicators of integration developed by Ager and Strang have been little applied in this context. This also raised another couple of issues. Firstly, the degree to which there is a difference in relation to integration in Scotland, due to the different climate and to the Scottish Government's view of integration beginning from day one, when compared to England. Related to this, little is really known about the attitudes of the people of Scotland with regard to asylum seekers and refugees and even less in terms of comparative analysis.

While a little work on attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees has been

conducted, this has remained relatively 'unpicked'. Analysis of attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees has not been systematically isolated from wider issues of immigration, or the wider still race relations. In addition, if Crawley is correct and attitudes towards migration generally is a 'signal issue', that reflects wider concerns about globalisation and disenchantment with our politics, then still more disaggregation and unpicking is required. Again the lack of comparative or longitudinal work means that explanations for attitudes are lacking. This also means that any work on changing attitudes may be operating from an artificial starting point.

Legal research is also striking by its general absence. There is a body of research on the UK legislative framework, including some critique of policy developments, but there is little that takes account of the different legal context in Scotland. This absence stretches across the legal field, from case law and the determination process, including decision making, to the legal representation of asylum seekers.

Finally, and in no order of assumed importance, there has been little analysis of the importance of age, gender, disability and sexuality in research. It could be assumed that such factors lead to multiple disadvantage but this has never been tested. While work on equalities has tended to accept that these factors may mitigate against full equality, the added asylum and refugee issue both in terms of relationships with the host society and internally within their own communities is under-researched.

What all of this means is that there is a lot of good and interesting work but that much more remains to be done in order to fully understand the state and status of asylum seekers and refugees in Scotland. This calls out for collaborative, comparative and longitudinal research agenda in particular,

but also highlights the need for more focussed and stand alone research on areas where knowledge and data is scant. Only by providing a broad research base can the totality of issues pertaining to asylum seekers and refugees be fully understood and additionally, only the provision of well-founded evidence resulting from this research will allow both policy and attitudes to be effectively challenged.

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Scottish Refugee Council
5 Cadogan Square
170 Blythswood Court
Glasgow
G2 7PH

Tel: 0141 248 9799
Fax: 0141 243 2499

Website: www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk



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