



*Do Local Strategies to Integrate New  
Communities into Ireland  
Sufficiently Address the Needs of Those  
within the Asylum System: A Case Study*

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Bachelor of Arts Politics and Sociology

Do Local Strategies to Integrate New Communities into  
Ireland Sufficiently Meet the Needs of Those within the  
Asylum System: A Case Study

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18 February 2016

## **Correction Sheet**

## **Abstract**

Issues relating to asylum-seekers are relatively recent in the Irish context. This is largely due to the historically low numbers of people seeking refuge in Ireland for a variety of geographical and administrative reasons. This project focuses on one such administrative issue, the continued struggle at national level to design and implement a fair and transparent policy to process and accommodate asylum-seekers, a process which will provide them with the necessary tools to help with integration into their new communities. Specifically this project looks at the integration strategies of two local authorities to investigate whether the initiatives outlined within these strategies sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system. The initiatives had been implemented in accordance with a national statement outlining the need for integration strategies for migrants into Ireland. The project firstly sets the context by exploring theories relating to asylum, migration, integration and public policy and then explaining the current asylum systems in a number of EU member states as well setting the Irish context. The project then turns its focus to two case studies in Clare and Limerick in order to ascertain if the integration strategies in these counties sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system. Having researched the topic extensively, it is evident that, without a policy change at national level in relation to the asylum system it will be impossible for local organizations to comply with international best practice.

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## **Acknowledgements**

Firstly, I would like to thank my supervisor Dr Chris McNerney for his patience, guidance and encouragement and for sharing his immense knowledge of the research topic with me. I would also like to thank all members of the Department of Politics and Public Administration and the Department of Sociology who assisted me with this project.

I would like to thank my four interview participants for their flexibility, cooperation and honesty, without their willingness to help I would not have been able to complete this project.

I would like to thank my family for their continued support and encouragement throughout my time at the University of Limerick and always. Finally, I would especially like to thank my beautiful, enthusiastic and infinitely patient daughter Emily.

## **Declaration**

I hereby declare that this project is entirely my own work, in my own words, and that all sources used in researching it are fully acknowledged and all quotations properly identified. It has not been submitted, in whole or in part, by me or another person, for the purpose of obtaining any other credit / grade. This research study has received Ethics approval from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Ref: 2015-09-04-AHSS.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## **List of Abbreviations**

AIDA	Asylum Information Database
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge/Office for Migration and Refugees
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CISC	Clare Immigrant Support Centre
DPC	Direct Provision Centre
EMN	European Migration Network
FLAC	Free Legal Advice Centre
JRS	Jesuit Refugee Services
NUJ	National Union of Journalists
OPMI	Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration
ORAC	Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner
RIA	Reception and Integration Agency
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

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## **Introduction**

*“I believe in recognizing every human being as a human being--neither white, black, brown, or red; and when you are dealing with humanity as a family there's no question of integration (...). It's just (...)one human being living around and with another human being (Malcom X 1965).”*

If a person is at risk through persecution or war in their home country, they may ask another country for political asylum. Granting that person asylum means that they have permission to remain in the country where they have made their application. While waiting on a decision to determine the status of their application this person is referred to as an asylum seeker. If a positive decision is made on a person's asylum application they are given refugee status. Anybody seeking protection in this way is entitled to stay in the country where the application was made until a decision has been made on their asylum claim (AsylumAid.Uk 2015). According to the Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs of the European Union, asylum is recognised as a fundamental human right in the 1951 Geneva Convention on the Protection of Refugees and the granting of asylum is an international obligation (European Commission 2016).

Currently in Europe there is a significant and deepening humanitarian crisis with hundreds of thousands of people fleeing wars and persecution in their home countries, many leaving behind the atrocities which are occurring on a daily basis in the Middle-East and Africa. This project however focuses on the thousands of people already in Ireland awaiting decisions regarding their asylum applications. In June 2013 residents at Drishane Castle direct provision centre (DPC) in Millstreet, Co.Cork held peaceful protests against the conditions within the centre, particularly the lack of a play area for children and the quality of the food provided. Some sources reported that the residents were being served food which had passed its expiry date (English 2013). The following year a video was circulated on social media showing the punitive and restrictive conditions that residents lived in at Mount Trenchard in Foynes, Co. Limerick. This footage highlighted just how inhumane the living conditions are with one resident commenting that the centre was a 'jungle and a jail' (O'Shea 2014). In May 2015 the Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA) found serious concerns in relation to child protection and welfare services for children in direct provision. Their findings included physical or mental illness of parents impacting on capacity to provide quality care for children, mental health issues for children and parents, lack of clothes and toys, and parent or parents isolating themselves and their children from networks and support services (Irish Refugee Council 2016). These issues, among many others which will be covered in this project, are the reason why it is necessary that those living within the asylum system are provided with adequate resources to help

them integrate into the communities in which they now live and to allow them access to services provided at local level.

This project examines local strategies which have been set up to integrate new migrant communities into Ireland to establish whether or not these strategies address the needs which are specific to people within the asylum system, needs which are complex and varied. In 2008 'Migration Nation' was launched by the Irish Government. It was a statement on Integration and Diversity Management. At the launch of the policy statement then Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan TD said that a key facet of the strategy would be a mainstream approach which should be taken in delivering services to migrants to avoid the advent of parallel communities. He outlined that the new policy of integration would focus on the role of local communities, authorities, political parties and other local groups in building integrated communities (Department of Justice and Equality 2008). It is my objective in this research project to undertake a case study to determine whether or not these integration strategies are inclusive of those living within the asylum system and if the action plans set out are broad enough to consider the needs specific to asylum seekers. This project uses the strategies implemented in Limerick and Clare as case studies.

This project uses both primary and secondary research methods. For my primary research I will carry out four semi-structured interviews with individuals involved with the integration strategies in Clare and Limerick. As well as being familiar with the strategies these participants all work in areas where they have regular contact with asylum seekers. This means that they can easily identify the needs specific to those within the asylum system and also assess whether or not these needs are met under the terms of the integration plans. I will also use secondary research methods by consulting the literature available on my research topic. These include books, journal articles, internet publications and databases, newspaper reports and the published Clare and Limerick integration strategies.

The project firstly examines the literature relevant to the research topic. It explores theories relating to migration, asylum, public policy and public attitudes. The following chapter then describes the Common European Asylum System and looks at the asylum procedures in Britain, Germany and Sweden. By looking at other European systems we can identify similarities or differences with the Irish system. Following this it will look at the present situation in Ireland as well as giving a background on the history of the asylum system in the state. The final chapter will be an analysis of the information gathered from four semi-structured interviews as well as an overview of the strategies. These interviews will be carried out with actors involved in the design and

implementation of integration strategies in Clare and Limerick as well as those who advocate on the behalf of asylum seekers. By analysing these interviews this project hopes to determine whether or not these strategies at local level are adequate. Finally, the project will conclude by answering the research question 'Do local strategies to integrate new communities into Ireland sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system?'

## **Chapter 1**

### **A Review of the Literature on Migration, Asylum, Integration and Public Policy Theory**

This chapter examines the relevant literature available on migration, integration, public policy theory and the needs of asylum seekers. The review begins with an analysis of theoretical approaches to migration and integration. The next section examines articles which highlight the needs of those within the asylum system. The following section looks at the literature available on racism and public attitudes in Ireland towards immigrants and explores how these attitudes may be influenced by the media. Finally, the last section addresses theories relating to public policy and seeks to examine the different approaches these theories take. The intention is to identify which approach to policy making is best suited to issues relating to immigrants and asylum-seekers, particularly at local level.

#### **1.1 Migration and Integration Theories**

Everett S. Lee (1966) maintains that the starting point for any work on migration theory is Ravenstein's 'Laws of Migration' written in 1889. Although the laws within the text are outdated there has not been, according to Lee, a more convincing theory put forward in the last century. Lee states that from these laws we can deduce that there are four factors which are taken into consideration relating to migration. These are factors associated with the origin of the migrant, factors associated with destination, intervening obstacles and personal factors. He believes that the decision to migrate is never completely rational and sometimes decisions to migrate are made on behalf of someone else either by outside forces or by other people. He concludes by saying that migration is a complex phenomenon and one that cannot be easily categorized (Lee 1966). White (1999) stressed the need for further research into the theoretical frameworks surrounding asylum and refugee studies. He did, however, state that some theoretical approaches related to human geography and labour migration could be applied to better understand the issue. He argues that theories relating to international migration focus too much on the economic, rationalist model in their explanation of migration flows. Migration as a social construction is not addressed in these theories according to White. Social Network Theory discussed by Monica Boyd (1989) is one of the theories which White considers useful. Boyd outlines that the theory is one that has been analysed since the sixties and relates to the networks of families and friends that assist each other by providing information and facilitating migration. She notes that the push-pull theory of migration based on social and economic factors which had previously been widely accepted was now in demise and she instead emphasises the importance of families and friends as a social group assisting one another in migration (Boyd 1989).

Theories relating to integration in the European context can also be applied to current immigration and asylum policy. Piaras Mac Einri (2007) outlines two main integration models which can be used in this context. These are assimilation, where immigrants are encouraged to adopt the cultural and societal norms of the country they reside in and multiculturalism, where diverse cultures and ethnicities are welcomed. He calls the assimilationist approach the French model and labels the multiculturalist approach the British model. He also argues that a third model could be included, this he refers to as *Gastarbeiter* or the German model. In this model the migrant is seen as temporary and only of value to economic development for the destination state (Mac Einri 2007). According to Mac Einri, even though it was debated in Ireland which approach was best to adopt, Multiculturalism or the 'British' model became the *de facto* model (Mac Einri 2007).

### **1.2 Assessing the needs of Asylum-Seekers**

Much of the literature available on the subject focuses on the mental health implications of long-term confinement in detention centres such as direct provision centres in the Irish case. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has published a report on a global strategy for governments to end the detention of asylum-seekers and refugees. According to this report some governments may use methods of detention, such as direct provision in the Irish case, to deter immigrants from entering their states. However, according to the report, research shows that this has little if any impact on the numbers of asylum-seekers which enter these states (UNHCR 2015). The report also highlights the negative long-term effects this detention can have on these individuals. These include consequences for their health and well-being. Many of these individuals will already have suffered traumatic experiences prior to their arrival and the conditions which they are forced to live in only serve to exacerbate their fear, frustration and anxiety. The report also highlights the sometimes substandard and precarious conditions of these centres particularly for minors and people with additional needs (UNHCR 2015). The aim of the UNHCR strategy is to encourage governments to end the detention of children, to ensure that alternatives to detention are made available through policy change and to ensure, when detention is absolutely necessary, that the conditions meet internationally agreed standards (UNHCR 2015).

Slobodin and De Jong (2015) assert that refugees and asylum-seekers are forced migrants. They note that the act of migration occurs in three stages, each of which can result in trauma for the individual involved. Prior to migration these can include war, violence, torture and persecution. During migration they can become victims of human trafficking or be subjected to sexual or labour exploitation through force or coercion. However, post-migration when they have arrived in their 'safe' country the mental health implications of these events can be exacerbated through lack of

social supports, poverty and discrimination as well as changes in concepts of identity. Within detention centres individuals can also be exposed to threatening and frightening situations such as sexual harassment, inadequate food, lack of health care etc. Slobodin and De Jong argue that all these factors can often lead to psychiatric disorders among the residents of the centres. These can include depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and grief related disorders amongst others. They argue that the GP's that mainly treat these patients are often not equipped with the specific expertise related to these disorders and that in general the mental health services available to asylum-seekers in detention centres are insufficient and inadequate (Slobodin and De Jong 2015).

Another topic which is prevalent in the literature about the needs of asylum-seekers is education. Julie Sugarman (2015) writes that across Europe and to a lesser extent the U.S, schools are under extreme pressure at present as the need for access to education for migrant children has never been greater. This, she says, is due to increases in migration flows stemming from the current refugee crisis. She argues that for the most part schools are not equipped with the resources to address the linguistic, academic and socio-emotional needs of these children. She concludes that there is need for huge development and policy implementation to meet these children's needs at local level. She argues that these issues should be a priority when migration policy is being drafted so that local authorities have sufficient resources to meet the needs of these children (Sugarman 2015). A report by the Irish Refugee Council from 2012 also highlights issues relating to the needs of children in the asylum system. The report notes that while children have access to primary and secondary education there is sometimes difficulty securing these school places. Children in DPC's, the report found, do not have access to the resources which children need to meet their developmental milestones (Irish Refugee Council 2012). Uchechukwu Ogbu (2012) argues that growing up in direct provision can have a detrimental effect on family functioning and child development. Access to resources outside of the centres would benefit children and aid their cognitive and social development (Uchechukwu Ogbu 2012).

Research from the Netherlands identifies a number of constraints which impede asylum-seekers integration into the wider community. Firstly, they note that in the Netherlands, as in Ireland many of the centres of detention are located in rural areas, this hinders the residents participation in community activities. Furthermore, asylum-seekers are restricted to specific meal-times and other regulated activities which dictate how long they stay away from the centre. Alternatively activities which are organized within the centres are arranged in large groups which can lead to issues with privacy and autonomy. The research argues that long-stays in this type of environment, where social interaction is limited and personal development is inhibited, is damaging for the residents. They

argue that this has further implications as it will hinder the asylum-seekers in regaining the resources needed to utilise in the labour market if their applications for asylum are successful. They highlight the barriers to material, social and cultural resources that the residents of these centres should have access to (Bakker et al 2013).

### **1.3 Public Attitudes, the Media and Racism**

Research carried out by Michael J. Breen (2004), investigated Irish public attitudes to immigrants, minorities, refugees and asylum seekers. The findings of the research taken from empirical data such as the Eurobarometer and the European Values Study suggested that public attitudes in Ireland are quite negative, particularly in relation to asylum-seekers. Breen notes the irony of the racism inflicted on immigrants into Ireland given the history of the experience of Irish emigrants in other states. The study also found that the majority of respondents felt that the right to safe asylum was not a fundamental human right and that asylum seekers should be returned to their country of origin once it becomes 'safe'. However, comparatively the research found that Ireland fared more positively than other countries in relation to racist sentiment (Breen 2004).

Fanning (2002) believes that racism towards asylum-seekers and refugees is largely state driven, although not obviously so. He maintains that the state-owned media is responsible for provoking racist sentiment by depicting a threat to the Irish people in the form of a 'swarm' of asylum seekers. This has resulted in turning asylum-seekers into a target group as the public begin to believe the misconceptions and misinterpretations of the media. Fanning argues that media and political debates on racism in Ireland sensationalize the arrival of asylum seekers and manipulate the public by creating a negative discourse. Like Breen, he points out that this is coming from a state which has a history of being subjected to anti-Irish racism. He describes Ireland as a mono-cultural religious-ethnic construction of nation and reflects that perhaps it is the need to maintain this structure which leads to racist and xenophobic attitudes of the public, the media and the leading administration (Fanning 2002).

Nuala Haughey (2001) writes that as a journalist one of the fundamental rules in the code of conduct of the National Union of Journalists is to maintain high professional and ethical standards. She says that the concept is clear, journalists should not be racist. She notes however that some Irish media outlets have chosen to ignore best practice guidelines in their reporting of asylum/refugee issues. Like Fanning she points out that the use of words such as 'swarm', 'influx', 'breaking point' and 'swamped' are careless and less than accurate. They only serve to dehumanize asylum-seekers and refugees which is perhaps the intention. She also notes that many reports lack input by the people affected by the stories as journalists tend not to have contacts within these minority groups. She

concludes by drawing reference to a statement made by NUJ's Irish organizer Seamus Dooley who stated that a journalist should report facts accurately and ethically and not pander to populist market forces that encourage them to demonize and sensationalize race-related stories (Haughey 2002).

Research conducted in the UK and Australia analysed 40 newspaper articles to ascertain if the media had constructed a negative image of asylum-seekers to push an agenda through the use of discursive psychology. Parker (2015) argues that as the numbers of immigrants entering the UK and Australia continues to rise so too do the negative articles alleging negative events relating to them. Parker explains that discursive psychology can be used to make something appear factual when in fact this is not the case. The narrative focuses on understanding what is achieved by reporting these fabrications of the truth. The research also uses the tools of discourse analysis to highlight the words most commonly used to describe the arrival of asylum-seekers. These included the much used water metaphors of 'floods', 'tides' and 'swamped' which are also found in many other countries media portrayals of the same issue. Parker concludes that events can be manipulated or constructed negatively depending on how the article is framed (Parker 2014).

#### **1.4 Public Policy Theories**

Public policy is often considered a way in which the government responds to a situation which is put to them for consideration or possible action. It is often orientated towards a goal or a possible solution to the problem at hand (Birkland 2011). In relation to the asylum context we can see from the previous section that the agenda was set by the government and framed through the media in a negative light. It was then up to public officials to draft appropriate policies based on this. In order to understand the constraints under which public policy operates it is necessary to look at the various theories relating to the area. According to Hughes (2012), public policy and policy making is viewed by many as a political process rather than the technical-rational process which preceded it. He argues that in order to correctly understand policy-making in this sense it is necessary for the administrator to comprehend the behaviours and interactions of the actors involved. These include individuals, organizations and any other group which may be affected by this policy. In relation to new public management, Hughes notes that for the managers of public policy to be efficient they need to take into consideration; the reason for their organizations activities, a grasp of strategically important issues, they must take into account all opportunities which can be exploited in their favour. The reason for this, Hughes says, is that if they do not operate in this way their positions are on the line so they need to be ruthless in order to be successful (Hughes 2012). This form of



administration relies on command and control and so it is reflective of the control-centred perspective of responsiveness which Bryer discusses (Bryer 2006).

Thomas Bryer (2006) argues that the dismissal of bureaucratic responsiveness as a central concept related to public administration is ill-considered and premature. He notes that the traditional method of technical-rational public administration which has dominated public policy practices for decades has been at a crossroads in recent times. This is due to the moral evolution of society in which citizens are keen to collaborate with the administrators that make and implement decisions on their behalf. Where once administrators were concerned only with obligations of performance and behaviour they are now confronted with ethical obligations to the actors that constitute that society. Bureaucratic responsiveness, according to Bryer, can be organized into six variants. These are: dictated, constrained, purposive, entrepreneurial, collaborative and negotiated. These variants can be further categorized according to the ethical perspectives they fall under. Dictated and constrained responsiveness are categorized according to control-centred ethics. This refers to ethics based on control through the bureaucratic principles of regulation, codes of conduct and the necessity of transparency. This control is usually held by either elected representatives or high ranking civil servants. The actions of administrators are bound by either direct orders or coercive pressures. Both dictated and constrained responsiveness are shaped by bureaucratic rules and norms motivated by efficiency and adherence to established guidelines.

Purposive and entrepreneurial responsiveness fall under the category of discretionary ethics. This refers to the recognition of administrators that responsiveness does not operate in a 'one size fits all' manner. They have the discretion to choose the right action based on the ethical implications of that action. They are led by the public will or the will of individuals and are not as bound by the constraints of red-tape as those within the control-centred perspective (Bryer 2006). Finally, he notes that collaborative and negotiated responsiveness can be categorized as deliberative ethics. This refers to the extent to which administrators mould and adapt their decision making practices based on the needs of the public. This form of responsiveness would however necessitate a degree of autonomy for the administrators involved. This form of responsiveness involves significant public engagement. These ethical categories can be described as the three possible paths that public administration can follow: technical-rational, entrepreneurial and citizen participatory and Bryer argues that if we look at the evolution of public administration based on this we should see practices of collaborative governance replacing the forms of technical-rational governance. He notes however that this is not the case and that the new forms of responsiveness are being developed within the outdated forms of governance (Bryer 2006).

Cooke and Muir (2012) introduce the concept of the relational state which has emerged as a response to environmental and circumstantial changes in the United Kingdom as a result of the financial crisis. The UK government has focused on the political economy and how to tighten budgets and decrease expenditure in order to recover but they have not identified achieving administrative goals and amending practices of the public sector as a means of recovery. According to Cooke and Muir, the relational state would help to reframe the dominantly economic policy goals and provide a guide to better practice for policy and action based on the best model of government suited to the needs of all stakeholders within the state. They argue that previous methods of public policy and administration have neglected the importance of human relationships when it comes to the drafting of policies which will affect these actors. They note that good relationships between individuals and administrators are essential to providing more efficient services and improving the lives of those that depend on these services. They also emphasise that these relationships need to be given greater priority as a goal of the policy outcome instead of the general priorities of adherence to regulations from above (Cooke and Muir 2012). In the Irish context public policy processes follow the control-centred perspective of bureaucracy. However, in the case of immigration and asylum policy a discretionary or deliberative approach would be more beneficial as it is necessary to take the needs of the actors into consideration before drafting the policies which they are bound by. If administrators at a local level had discretion to adapt local policies to the particular contexts in which they operate, more satisfactory outcomes could be provided to those within the asylum system.

### **1.5 Conclusion**

This chapter has analysed literature available on migration, integration, public policy theory and the needs of asylum seekers relevant to this project. The continuing development of issues relating to refugees on a global level and the ever-changing needs of those individuals living within the asylum system needs to be addressed in order to facilitate the introduction of policies which will hopefully provide services which address these needs. Having examined the literature available on the areas of immigration, asylum and integration it is evident that the area necessitates further research particularly in the Irish context. While there is easily accessible literature available on the bureaucratic systems of the UK and other states and how they manage issues related to asylum seekers and integration, there is a significant gap in research the Irish case. It is necessary then to conduct further relevant research in this area to identify if and how the needs of asylum-seekers are being addressed, particularly at local level as this is where the new communities need the services.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Common European Asylum System**

This chapter will firstly discuss the history of the Common European Asylum Policy (CEAS) which has been under development by the EU Member States for over sixteen years. It will then describe the CEAS in its current form. Following this it will examine the current asylum systems in Britain, Germany and Sweden. Britain is a country often associated with a harsh stance and closed border approach to asylum applications, Germany has historically taken a substantial number of asylum seekers and in the past year this number has increased further as a result of the ongoing humanitarian crisis and finally Sweden is a country strongly associated with high acceptance rates and progressive asylum policies. Analysis of these three different systems provides a broader perspective with which to subsequently analyse the approach taken in Ireland.

#### **2.1 The History of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS)**

In the mid-eighties five EU Member States (Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg) outlined their desire to abolish the internal borders among them to facilitate the completion of the single market. They believed that the abolition of the borders required the introduction of compensatory measures. This included the strengthening of external border controls and cooperation among Member States in the field of asylum and immigration. In 1985 these five countries signed the Schengen Agreement that established a common set of rules in relation to visas, the right to asylum and checks at external borders (ECRE 2016). The entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam allowed Member States to adopt legally binding instruments in asylum and immigration policies and gave the Commission a strong role in initiating legislation. In 1999 the EU Council summit at Tampere, Finland dedicated itself to the creation of an Area of Freedom Security and Justice. This led to the establishment of the Tampere Program (1999-2004) where negotiations began on the creation of a Common European Asylum System. EU Member States wanted a common asylum system to deal with a number of specific problems stemming from the large differences in asylum systems and practices among states. 'Asylum shopping' where asylum claims were being made in many different states following rejection in another state was one such practice. Another aspect is that asylum seekers were perceived to gravitate towards countries with higher recognition rates and social benefits. To deal with these challenges, EU Member States decided to harmonise their asylum systems and reduce the differences between countries on the basis of binding legislation (ECRE 2016).

The European Commission dictates that the procedures implemented by the EU must be fair and effective amongst all Member States and must not be abused. The CEAS is based on the application of the Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees 1951 and also on the New York Protocol of 1967. The system comprises legislation and procedures which aim to facilitate the development and functioning of the various EU structures which support the CEAS. The legislative framework of the CEAS lies in the following Regulations and Directives adopted between 1999 and 2005: The Qualification Directive; The Asylum Procedures Directive; The Reception Conditions Directive and The Dublin II Regulation. These directives and regulations have been updated recently as a result of the current humanitarian crisis in Europe. Further to the adoption of legislative measures to harmonise the common minimum standards in relation to asylum, the EU also created the European Refugee Fund and the Temporary Protection Directive which allowed for an EU-wide response to the growing numbers of displaced persons unable to return to their country of origin (European Commission 2015). The EU also introduced the Family Reunification Directive in 2003 which laid down the conditions for the exercise of the right to family re-unification by third-country nationals who reside legally in an EU Member State (EMN 2016). It is important to note that these instruments apply to the entire EU with the exception of the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom and Denmark whose participation is optional by way of opt-in provisions (Irish Refugee Council 2016).

## **2.2 Common European Asylum System at Present**

After the completion of the first phase of the Common European Asylum System it was necessary for the EU to reflect on its progress to determine the direction in which it should proceed. In 2008 the European Commission presented the **Policy Plan on Asylum** based on a large public consultation following a 2007 Green Paper. The policy plan identified three pillars which according to the Commission underpin the continuing development of the CEAS. These are: to bring more harmonisation to standards of protection by further aligning asylum legislation among Member States, for more effective and well-supported cooperation and increased solidarity and a sense of responsibility among states and also between EU states and third countries (European Commission 2015).

Under the terms of the policy plan a set of new EU rules were agreed upon. These were: *The Revised Asylum Procedures Directive* which aims at fairer, quicker and better quality asylum decisions; asylum seekers with special needs will receive the necessary support to explain their claim and in particular there will be greater protection of unaccompanied minors and victims of torture. *The Revised Reception Conditions Directive* which ensures that there are humane material reception

conditions (such as housing) for asylum seekers across the EU and that their fundamental rights are fully respected, it also ensures that detention is only applied as a last resort. *The Revised Qualification Directive* clarifies the grounds for granting international protection and therefore will make asylum decisions more robust, it will also improve the access to rights and integration measures for those in need of international protection. *The Revised Dublin Regulation* enhances the protection of asylum seekers during the process of establishing the state responsible for examining the application and clarifies the rules governing the relations between states, it creates a system to detect early problems in national asylum or reception systems and address their root causes before they develop into fully fledged crises. *The Revised Eurodac Regulation* allows law enforcement access to the EU database of the fingerprints of asylum seekers under strictly limited circumstances in order to prevent, detect or investigate the most serious crimes, such as murder and terrorism (European Commission 2013).

According to Hatton (2015), while there has been an increase in the harmonization and cooperation in a number of policy areas these developments still fall significantly short of a fully integrated system (Hatton 2015). He believes that deeper integration in relation to CEAS is both necessary and politically feasible and should be welcomed by all 28 Member States. His argument is that giving sanctuary to refugees is a public good and that recent trends show that deeper cooperation in the last decade indicates a change in public attitudes towards asylum seekers and refugees. He also asserts that it is politically possible to achieve a common system because research shows that in most EU countries, a majority of the population would favour international governance in relation to asylum policies (Hatton 2015). The UNHCR believes that the EU is highly influential with respect to asylum and resettlement issues both inside and outside the Union and that its laws and practices affect the development of refugee protection in many countries. However, like Hatton, the UNHCR believes that despite efforts to harmonize asylum laws in the EU, there are significant differences between EU members in their approaches to protection, refugee recognition, and reception conditions (UNHCR 2016).

### **2.3 Asylum Systems in other EU States**

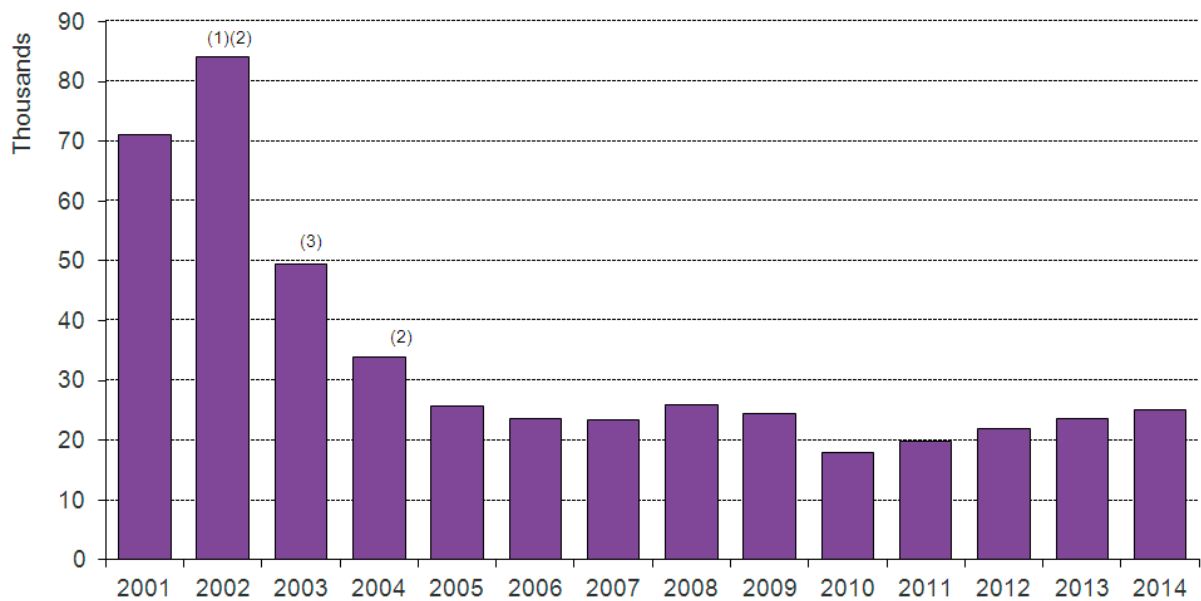
This section will give a description of the asylum procedures of Britain, Germany and Sweden including some statistics on recent application numbers and acceptance rates. It details the various steps involved in the asylum procedure in each state. This helps to illustrate not only the harmonisation and cooperation among Member States in some policy areas relating to political asylum systems but it also highlights the differences based on national policies and legislation.

### **2.3.1 Britain**

In the United Kingdom, asylum seekers are not entitled to work unless they have been waiting for a decision on their case for more than a year through no fault of their own. After one year they can apply to the UK Border Agency for permission to work. Asylum seekers who need financial support and/or accommodation while they are waiting for a decision on their claim can apply to the UK Border Agency to provide this. Accommodation is provided on a no-choice basis. If the person does not need accommodation they can avail of financial assistance only. Asylum seekers do not continue to receive this support after their application has been refused and their appeal rights exhausted. In the case where an asylum claim has been refused, they are allowed to apply for a basic support package known as “hard case” or “Section 4” support if their circumstances meet the eligibility criteria. The support consists of accommodation and board in the form of an ‘Azure card’ which can only be used in specific supermarkets. In order to receive this support the applicant must agree to return to their country of origin. In the case of an asylum seeker with a serious health problem or disability, it is sometimes possible to ask the department of social services at the local council to provide accommodation and financial support instead (AsylumAid 2013).

According to immigration statistics from April to June 2015 released by the British Government there were 25,771 asylum applications from main applicants in the year ending June 2015. This was an increase of 10% compared with the previous year (23,515). The number of applications remains low relative to the peak number of applications in 2002 (84,132). In the year ending June 2015, the largest number of applications for asylum came from nationals of Eritrea (3,568), followed by Pakistan (2,302) and Syria (2,204). Most applications for asylum are made by those already in the country (90% of applications) rather than at their time of arriving in the UK at a port. According to the Home Office, applicants tend to be young and male. In the year ending June 2015, the number of initial decisions on asylum applications more than doubled to 28,538. Of these decisions, 41% (11,600) were grants either of asylum or an alternative form of protection, compared with 37% (5,120) in the previous year, and this is the highest number of grants since the year ending December 2003 (11,074). According to the Home Office, applications made before 1 April 2014 received initial decisions by 31 March 2015. A number which they believe is reflected in the 107% rise in the number of initial decisions (Gov.Uk 2016). The following chart shows the applications for asylum received by the UK between 2001 and 2014:

Figure 1 Applications for Asylum in UK 2001 to 2014



(Gov.Uk 2016)

### **2.3.2 Germany**

In Germany, asylum applications are filed at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge-BAMF). Asylum seekers are accommodated in reception centres for up to six months during the first stage of the asylum procedure. If an applicant is from a 'safe country of origin' they are obliged to stay in these centres for the entire process. Following the initial reception period, asylum seekers are usually sent to local accommodation centres where they have to stay for the remaining time of the asylum process. There are however some regional differences with some municipalities granting access to the regular housing market where applicable. According to the Asylum Information Database (2016a), reception centres are currently not capable of accommodating all asylum seekers due to the massive increase in numbers of newly arriving asylum seekers in 2014 and 2015. BAMF has not been able to keep up with the growing number of applications and so asylum seekers are often registered on a preliminary basis only and are sent to either accommodation centres or emergency shelters (Asylum Information Database 2016a).

According to the Asylum Database (2016) an asylum application in Germany can take many months to register. Once the procedure has started the BAMF makes a decision on whether an asylum seeker is entitled to either constitutional asylum (restricted to people persecuted by state actors for political reasons); refugee status (according to the 1951 Refugee Convention and to the Qualification Directive); and/or other forms of protection, called prohibition of deportation. In a considerable number of cases (26.5% in the first half of 2015, 35.2% in 2014 and 36.7% in 2013) a formal decision was taken, which means that the case was closed without an examination of the substance of the asylum claim. In many instances such formal decisions are issued because another state was found to be responsible for the asylum application under the criteria of the Dublin Regulation. Following the recent increase in application numbers there has been a change in practice at the German border. Previously if migrants reported at the border while trying to enter Germany without the necessary documents, entry to the territory would be denied by the border police on the grounds that the migrant has travelled through a “safe third country”. If an immediate removal to the neighboring country could be obtained, those migrants were not given the opportunity to apply for asylum. Recent changes however mean that asylum applications have to be referred to the responsible authorities if asylum seekers are apprehended after having crossed the border. The following chart illustrates the number of asylum applications registered in Germany between January and October of 2015 and the granting of protection at first instance:

**Figure 2 Asylum Applications Germany Jan-Oct 2015**

**Table 1: Applications and granting of protection status at first instance: 2015 (January-October)**

	Applicants in 2015	Pending applications in 2015	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Humanitarian protection	Rejection <sup>1</sup>	Refugee rate	Subs. Prot. rate	Hum. Prot. rate	Rejection rate
<b>Total</b>	362,153	328,207	81,547	1,366	1,590	77,782	50.2%	0.8%	1%	47.9%

Breakdown by countries of origin of the total numbers

Syria	103,708	Not available	57,036	55	164	11	99.5%	0.09%	0.28%	0.02%
Albania	49,692	Not available	7	23	19	25,599	0.03%	0.09%	0.07%	99.8%
Kosovo	35,583	Not available	7	22	84	24,454	0.03%	0.09%	0.34%	99.5%
Serbia	24,486	Not available	3	0	19	11,723	0.02%	0%	0.16%	99.8%
Iraq	21,303	Not available	10,676	185	60	50	97.3%	1.68%	0.54%	0.46%
Afghanistan	20,830	Not available	1,361	254	599	574	48.8%	9.10%	21.5%	20.6%
FYROM	12,704	Not available	21	1	20	4,751	0.44%	0.02%	0.41%	99.1%
Eritrea	8,806	Not available	4,008	326	38	28	91.1%	7.40%	0.86%	0.63%
Pakistan	6,337	Not available	140	11	21	549	19.4%	1.52%	2.91%	76.1%
Stateless	6,173	Not available	2,493	2	5	299	89.1%	0.07%	0.17%	10.6%

Source: BAMF, *Asylum Statistics January-October 2015*, <http://bit.ly/1HI2y9x>. Note that the total number of applications according to Eurostat is 343,610 for that period.

<sup>1</sup> Rejection should include both in-merit and admissibility negative decisions (including Dublin decisions).

(Asylum Information Database 2016b)



### **2.3.3 Sweden**

In Sweden asylum applications can only be made at designated offices of the Migration Agency to which airport and port applicants are referred to. Asylum cases can either be dealt with under the accelerated procedure or the regular procedure. Asylum applicants under both regular and accelerated procedures have similar rights to accommodation, financial allowances and health care. All applicants are issued with an administrative identity card (LMA card) which enables them to access benefits. Decisions in accelerated procedures must be taken within 3 months from the lodging of an application (Asylum Information Database 2016c). While an application is being either examined or appealed, the asylum seeker is covered by the Reception of Asylum Seekers and Others Act 1994, which is applied by the Migration Agency. Once a decision has been reached in relation to a specific asylum application, one of two scenarios will occur; in cases where the application is successful, the Migration Agency Reception Unit is responsible for the facilitation of the asylum seeker's resettlement in a municipality through cooperation with the Employment Agency. Where the application has been denied, the asylum seeker will be returned to their country of origin (Asylum Information Database 2016c).

According to the Swedish Migration Agency in 2015 Sweden received 163,000 asylum applications. This was the largest number of asylum seekers it had ever received in one year. The Agency stated that this was almost double the amount that sought asylum in Sweden in 1992 at the height of the Balkan crisis. Between 4,000 and 5,000 people entered Sweden each month at the start of 2015 while this number grew to 39, 196 in October. The Migration Agency identified many challenges as a result of the growing numbers of asylum applications. It outlined that while it focussed its resources on registering newly arrived asylum seekers and finding accommodation for them it had not been possible to examine asylum cases at their preferred speed (Swedish Migration Agency 2016). The following chart illustrates the number of asylum applications registered in Sweden in 2015:

Figure 3 Asylum Applications Registered in Sweden 2015

År-månad	Antal	varav män (inkl pojkar)	varav kvinnor (inkl flickor)	varav barn (inkl ensamkommande barn)	varav ensamkommande barn *1
Year-month	Number	of which male	of which female	of which children (unaccompanied minors included)	of which unaccompanied minors *1
2015-01	4,896	3,319	1,577	1,483	543
2015-02	4,040	2,673	1,367	1,328	460
2015-03	4,117	2,732	1,385	1,294	447
2015-04	3,917	2,667	1,250	1,162	445
2015-05	5,376	3,757	1,619	1,950	1,133
2015-06	6,619	4,621	1,998	2,552	1,426
2015-07	8,065	5,712	2,353	3,210	1,880
2015-08	11,746	8,484	3,262	5,134	2,959
2015-09	24,307	17,445	6,862	9,740	4,712
2015-10	39,196	28,677	10,519	17,495	9,339
2015-11	36,726	25,383	11,343	18,155	8,808
2015-12	13,872	9,258	4,614	6,881	3,217
<b>Total</b>	<b>162,877</b>	<b>114,728</b>	<b>48,149</b>	<b>70,384</b>	<b>35,369</b>

(Swedish Migration Agency 2016)

## **2.4 Conclusion**

This chapter has looked at the history of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) which has been under development for over a decade. It has also looked at how the CEAS currently operates. It then looked at the asylum systems of three member states, Britain, Germany and Sweden. It is necessary to examine how other Member States operate in order to set the Irish context in relation to asylum policy and procedures. While Germany and Sweden are bound by the terms of the CEAS it is important to note that both Ireland and the UK are not, although they choose to comply with most of the directives. The next chapter will focus on the asylum system in Ireland describing both history of asylum and the current system.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Asylum System in Ireland**

Having examined the asylum systems of other EU member states in the previous chapter, this chapter focuses on the Irish system. It begins with an overview of asylum and immigration on Ireland from the 1990s to 2015 including relevant data and statistics from this time. It then gives a description of the asylum system in Ireland including its background. Following this it looks at the responses to the increase in immigrants including asylum applicants at the local level and discusses the setting up of local inter agency integration strategies to meet the needs of the new members of these communities. Section 3.4 focuses on recent developments in policies and legislation. The final section offers a critique of the asylum system currently in place in Ireland.

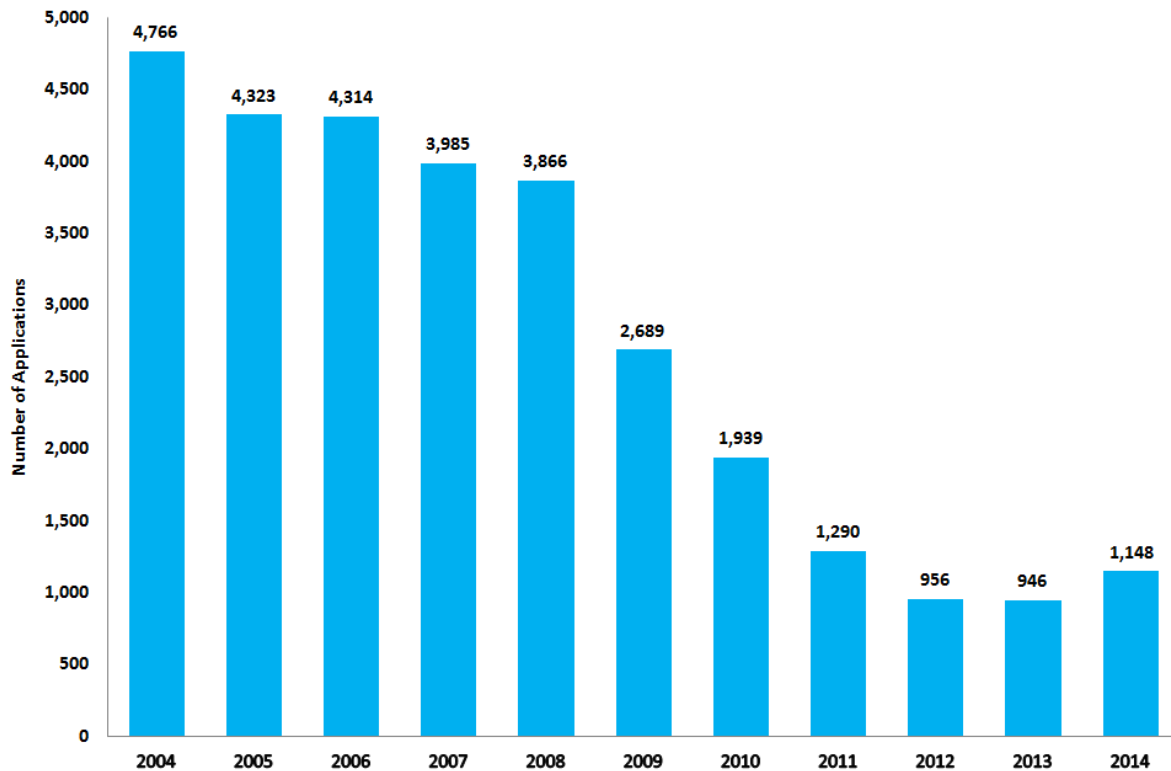
#### **3.1 Asylum and Immigration Data**

From the 1990s and up until 1995 Ireland was a country associated with net emigration. This changed in 1996 when for the first time Ireland recorded a net immigration higher than a net emigration. According to Begley, this was due to unprecedented developments in the Irish economy. Irish society was slowly becoming a multi-ethnic society. In 1991 there were 31 applications for asylum in Ireland. By 2000 this number had grown to 9,080 due to the changing economic climate. Begley says that this was the first time in our history that the Irish attitude to difference and identity was challenged. Since 1991, over 120 different nationalities have been represented in the asylum process. Begley believes that the arrival of these immigrants has enriched Ireland socially, culturally and economically (Begley 2001).

Recent data from the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner shows that the number of asylum applications began to drop gradually from 2003 when 7,048 people applied and 2013 when only 946 applications were registered. However by November 2015 this number had increased significantly to 3,059 applications (ORAC 2016). The most recent annual report available from the same website is the report from 2014. According to this report 1,448 applications for refugee status were received by ORAC in 2014. The average monthly number of applications in the course of the year was 121. The leading five countries for 2014 were Pakistan (20.2%), Nigeria (9.8%), Albania (6.8%), Bangladesh (6.8%) and Zimbabwe (5.9%). According to ORAC, a small number of applications were received from a large number of individual countries, as was the pattern in previous years. In 2014 there were 44 countries from which were received 10 or less applications and 9 countries from which were received 50 or more applications (ORAC 2016). The following chart taken from the

European Migration Network in Ireland for the same year illustrates the decline in applications from 2004 to 2014 (EMN 2015).

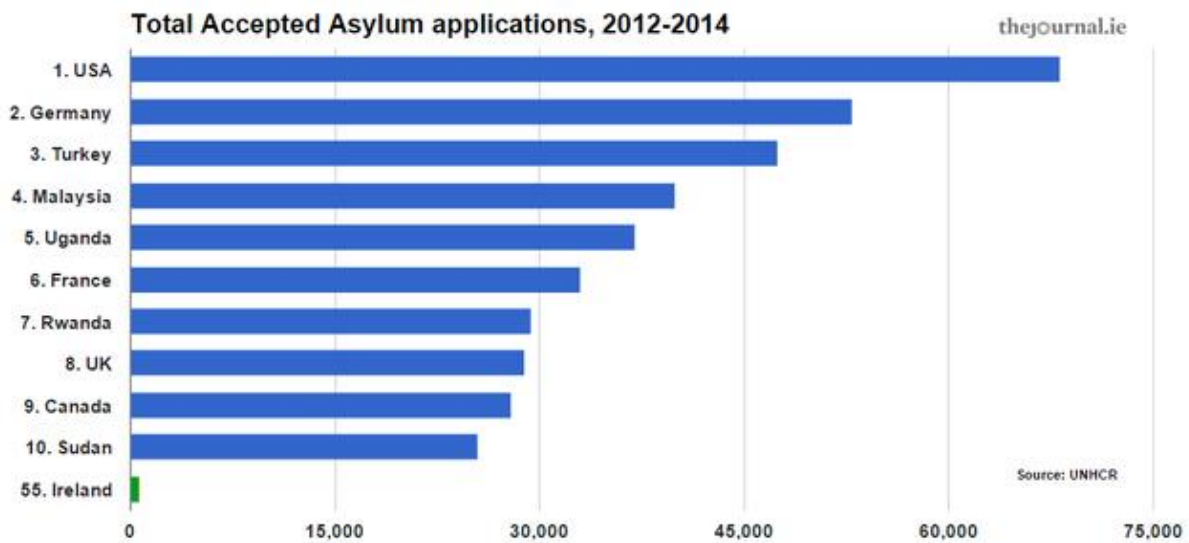
Figure 4 Asylum Applications 2004-2014



(European Migration Network 2015)

Data from recent UNHCR analysis suggests that Ireland is poorly ranked among other European Nations in relation to its administrative treatment of asylum-seekers in recent years. According to this research, since 2012 Ireland has recognised far fewer applications for asylum than many similar-sized or smaller countries. Despite having an almost identical population to Norway, Ireland's favourable asylum decisions were twenty times lower than the Nordic state (MacGuill 2015). The research also shows that for a highly developed EU member state, Ireland rejects far more applications than it accepts and in most cases defers decisions to grant refugee status. Ireland ranks lower than Bulgaria and Armenia in this aspect of asylum procedure. Of the 183 nations ranked in relation to the total number of accepted asylum applications, Ireland is placed at number 55, below similarly populated states such as Norway and Finland. Between 2012 and 2014 Ireland recognized only 677 asylum claims. Poorer countries such as Zambia and Armenia rank higher than Ireland. This is illustrated in the following chart (MacGuill 2015).

Figure 5 Accepted Applications 2012-2014



(Thejournal.ie 2015)

### **3.2 The Asylum System**

The system of direct provision, which ‘celebrated’ its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015, was initially introduced as a temporary measure put in place to accommodate the increasing number of people seeking asylum in Ireland at the end of the 1990s. According to a FLAC report (2009) the scheme was piloted in Dublin under the Directorate for Asylum Support Services. The government acquired accommodation from the various Health Board areas in which they housed those seeking asylum and other forms of protection. It was intended that this system would provide individuals with adequate accommodation on a full board basis which would include provisions related to all their basic needs. Having deemed the pilot a success, the government rolled out the scheme in April 2000 subsequent to its adoption as an official government policy (FLAC 2009). Claire Breen (2008) argues that far from being a success the introduction of direct provision was in fact a violation of the fundamental human rights of those within the asylum system. Furthermore she states that if the Irish government was to interpret the laws surrounding the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers correctly they would have to abolish the system completely.

The Directorate for Asylum Support Services was subsequently replaced by the Reception and Integration Agency (RIA) on 2 April, 2001. The United Nations and other international human rights organizations have criticized the system implemented by the state run agency RIA (O’Brien 2014). Catherine McGuinness who is a former Supreme Court Judge has gone as far as to say that in years to come a future government will have to publically apologize for the damage inflicted on those who have had to endure the direct provision system. According to the RIA website the agency carries out

regular inspections on the centres with the intention of making improvements where necessary to living conditions (RIA 2015). In reality however research carried out by an Irish Times investigative team found that more than a decade later conditions remain at a sub-standard level (O'Brien 2014).

At present there are approximately 4,500 asylum seekers living in 35 Direct Provision Centres across Ireland, including 1,500 children. The length of time spent in these centres can range from between less than a year to more than seven years. An allowance of €19.10 is provided on a weekly basis, a rate which has not been increased since 2000. According to Doras Luimni (2016), the standards of accommodation and living conditions can vary widely from centre to centre and are managed by private contractors on a for-profit basis, on behalf of the state. Ireland is one of only two of the 28 European Union Member States to have opted out of the EU 'Reception Directive' which sets out minimum standards of reception conditions for asylum applicants, including access to the labour market and vocational training for applicants six months after making their application. Doras Luimni believes that the current system of Direct Provision creates barriers to integration and results in the social exclusion of asylum seekers. The fact that they are not allowed to work means that they are dependent on the state which further hinders integration (Doras Luimni 2016).

Loyal (2011), considers direct provision from the point of view of the asylum-seeker. He states that there are two perspectives which should be taken into account when looking at the system of DP. The first of these is the one which is spun by the government and the other, more important viewpoint is that of the asylum-seeker who lives within the system and has first-hand experience of the conditions. He highlights this when he talks about how a resident of Knockalisheen DPC described the system as a prison which was only fit to be inhabited by animals and not by humans. The resident felt that the centre should be destroyed. A government official on the other hand described it as a fair, humane and 'cost-effective' means of providing accommodation and other necessities to asylum-seekers. Loyal maintains that the cramped living conditions and lack of privacy and autonomy can have implications on the mental health of the residents (Loyal 2011).

### **3.3 Integration Plans**

A further government response to the growing number of asylum applications was the establishment of the Office of the Minister for Integration (now the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration) in June 2007. The integration function of the Reception and Integration Agency was assigned to this new ministerial office in July of the same year (RIA 2015c). According to their website the Office has a cross-departmental mandate to develop, lead and co-ordinate migrant integration policy across other departments, agencies and services. The mandate includes the

promotion of the integration of legal immigrants into Irish society (Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration 2015). In 2008 a national policy statement entitled 'Migration Nation' was launched by the then Minister for Integration Conor Lenihan T.D. The statement referred to integration strategy and diversity management. It emphasised a need for a focus at local level to the integration of those entering new communities (Quinn and McHugh 2013). Further to this policy statement, the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration allocated funding to local authorities to promote integration at local level. The authorities were encouraged to implement integration initiatives with the assistance of local groups. A number of local authorities have also developed integration strategies and action plans. The OPMI stressed that these integration plans should allow for adequate flexibility that suited the circumstances unique to each community. They encouraged a partnership approach between local authorities and key service providers, social partner bodies, community groups representing and working with ethnic minorities and other local development agencies. The OPMI stressed that all of these stakeholders should be involved in the development and implementation of the integration plans (Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration 2015).

### **3.4 Recent Developments in Policies and Legislation**

On March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2015 Minister of State at the Department of Justice Aodhán Ó Riordáin launched *Towards a New Beginning: Refugee Integration in Ireland* at Mansion House in Dublin. The report, which is based on 71 interviews carried out with refugees, recommends 'best practice' in the areas of active citizenship, employment, media participation, English language training and access to information. However when it comes to those not yet granted refugee status the report recommends shorter stays in direct provision centres but does not call for the system to be abolished or for the end to deportation (Lentin 2015). Lentin maintains that while the Minister insists that 'no asylum seeker wants to be in the DP system' and that the Working Group on Direct Provision aims to improve the system, the truth is that both UNHCR Ireland and the government were in full agreement that DP centres would not be closed. This, according to Lentin, was akin to the criminal transfer of public money to a small bunch of profit making private businesses (Lentin 2015).

On the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 the Working Group report on *Improvements to the Protection Process, including Direct Provision and Supports to Asylum Seekers* was published. The Working Group report, also referred to as the McMahon report was assigned the following terms of reference among others; to improve existing arrangements in the processing of protection applications and to show greater respect for the dignity of persons in the system and to improve their quality of life by enhancing the support and services currently available (Department of Justice 2016). The report

referred to the 3,600 people residing in Direct Provision Centres in Ireland, 1,500 of these for more than five years. The main recommendation was to fast-track the asylum process for those in the system for five years or more, stating that those waiting on a decision on refugee status, subsidiary protection or leave to remain in the State for that long should be granted it within six months. The report also recommends that those applicants against whom there is a deportation order should have that order revoked if they have been in the system for at least five years. Under the newly proposed single procedure, final decisions on an applicant's status should be issued within 12 months of the registration of application. The report recommends that once the new single procedure is operating new applicants, who have not received a decision within nine months should be permitted to apply to work. This would only be applicable to new applicants. Further recommendations are the increasing of the weekly allowance from €19.10 per adult and €9.60 per child to €38.74 and €29.80 and improvements to living conditions such as access to cooking facilities and private living space for families (RTE.ie 2015).

While the recommendations for reform and fast tracking proposals were welcomed by human rights and advocacy groups, concerns were raised for those that were neither new applicants nor in the system for five years or more. CEO of the Irish Refugee Council Sue Conlon, stated that the Working group had basically endorsed the practice of allowing people to remain in the system for up to five years, a system which had been condemned both nationally and internationally. She had previously been a member of the Working Group but stepped down from the group in March 2015 amid concerns about the International Protection Bill (RTE 2015). Liam Thornton argues that the working group does not take Ireland's international obligations into account, particularly the UN Convention on the rights of the Child. He believes that the McMahon report reinforces the idea that those in search of asylum are less than human and it only serves to further institutionalise those in need of protection (Thornton 2015).

The subsequent International Protection Bill which was signed into law on the 30 December 2015 by President Michael D. Higgins failed to implement these recommendations however. The President had convened a Council of State to discuss whether or not to refer the Bill to the Supreme Court but after deliberation opted not to do so (Kelly 2015). According to Fianna Fáil TD Niall Collins, the Bill was 'shambolic' in that it failed to incorporate any of the recommendations set out by the McMahon report. While Minister for Justice Francis Fitzgerald said that the main purpose of the Bill was to reform the system to facilitate a speedier procedure, Sinn Féin justice spokesperson Pádraig Mac Lochlainn pointed out that the Bill failed to address one of the main terms of reference of the report which was to ensure asylum seekers were treated with respect and humanity within a framework of



more efficient immigration procedures and safeguards. Both deputies expressed concern about the best interest of the child in relation to the legislation with TD Claire Daly asserting that all the Bill did was facilitate the further institutionalization of asylum seekers and speed up the deportation process (O'Halloran 2015).

### **3.5 A Critique of the Irish System**

Moreo and Lentin (2010) are critical of Ireland's chequered history of welcoming refugees and asylum seekers into Ireland. They note that at a time when many European States were opening their borders to Jewish people escaping the Nazi's, Ireland notoriously only took 60 refugees. Between 1956 and the 1980's, Ireland accepted several hundred refugees, albeit reluctantly according to Moreo and Lentin (2010). These included programme refugees from Hungary, Chile, Vietnam and Iran. A programme refugee, according to the website of the Reception and Integration Agency is a person who is granted the right to enter and remain in the State by the Government either for temporary protection or resettlement, it applies to a group of people rather than to individual cases. The group are invited by the Irish Government in response to a humanitarian crisis and at the request of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (RIA 2015a). Moreo and Lentin maintain that these groups of programme refugees were not housed appropriately and that there were not enough services provided to meet their needs. In 1992 Ireland accepted more programme refugees from Bosnia. Again Moreo and Lentin assert that a lack of integration strategies by the state resulted in a sense of isolation and exclusion by these refugees (Moreo and Lentin 2010).

Cullen (2000) discussed Ireland's failure to deal with the increase of asylum seekers and immigrants into Ireland from the 1990s in a humane and responsible manner. In particular he focused on the failure of our political leaders in relation to the official response to the increase in immigration. He criticized the handling of such a sensitive issue by the Department of Justice at the time and went as far as to accuse politicians and bureaucrats of 'abusing' this vulnerable group by covering up the administrative incompetence within the government. He did say however, that after years of 'shambolic' bureaucratic procedures, the allocation of resources to the area saw an improvement in the administrative process. However he emphasized that new legislation and controls would not be enough to respond to the issue of asylum. There was also the need to encourage a more inclusive Ireland in terms of access to employment and education for asylum-seekers (Cullen 2000).

According to Fanning (2001) the Refugee Act 1996 which was passed in the Dáil with the support of all parties was a progressive piece of legislation based on the principles of international best

practice. However, he says, it failed to address issues specific to asylum seekers such as a right to legal aid or the right to apply to work. Due to the rapid increase in the amount of people making asylum applications in the mid-nineties some of the provisions of the Act were not implemented as the full implication of the granting of rights to asylum seekers had not been considered when the numbers entering Ireland had been minimal. According to Fanning, this Act and subsequent legislation sought to discourage asylum-seekers from coming to Ireland (Fanning 2001).

Ruhs and Quinn (2009) discuss further government responses in the form of policy changes. As a result of the economic boom from the mid-nineties on Ireland saw an increase in the number of migrants seeking asylum. To stem the flow in the increase of asylum applications new policies were drawn up which included a list of safe countries of origin. It was thought that this would eliminate or at least reduce significantly the number of applications from migrants coming from these countries as they were not deemed to necessitate refugee protection unless they were in the position to prove otherwise. Another policy change which came about in 2004 was one in which Irish-born children were no longer given citizenship automatically if their parents are not Irish nationals (Ruhs and Quinn 2009). This policy was implemented after a Citizenship Referendum which according to Bryan Fanning was a process of exclusionary nation-building on the part of the Irish government (Fanning 2009).

Fanning (2009), highlights the racialization of Irish politics as a result of the increase of people applying for asylum in Ireland. He says that although the government avoided the obvious use of racial discourse in political dialogue, their actions could still be considered racialized in terms of the policies they implemented to regulate migration. He describes the racialisation of politics as a result of the rapid social change and the government's inability to adapt accordingly. He also compares the role of Minister Michael McDowell in orchestrating the previously mentioned Citizenship Referendum to the politicisation of immigration by Enoch Powell in the UK. Fanning also highlights the lack of single-issue politics on asylum and immigration and attributes this to the anti-asylum populism within the Irish political mainstream. Fanning concludes that it was the exclusionary nature of the ideology of 'Irishness' which led to the politically driven distinction between 'nationals' and 'non-nationals'. A distinction which he believes however will become less polarized in the future (Fanning 2009).

### **3.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has given a description of the asylum system currently in place in Ireland, from the government responses to an increase in asylum applications to the situation as it currently stands. It

also provides an overview of the numbers of asylum applicants between the late 1990s and 2015. It offers a critique of the system based on the opinions of those familiar with the area. The next chapter looks at the integration strategies introduced in Clare and Limerick to ascertain if the initiatives are accessible to asylum seekers and to identify if the needs specific to those within the asylum system have been sufficiently addressed.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Case Studies**

This chapter examines the integration strategies set up in Clare and Limerick under the terms of 'Migration Nation', the government statement on *Integration and Diversity Management* which was launched in 2008. The chapter is divided into three sections; the first section focuses on the initiatives in Limerick and Clare by examining the relevant policy documents published on the integration strategies in each location. The next section describes the data gathered from interviews conducted with stakeholders involved in the integration initiatives, these include those that helped to set up and implement the strategies and those that work as advocates for the promotion of migrant's rights. The interviewees are drawn from a combination of statutory and civil society organizations, however, as the areas covered by the research are small and local, the organizational affiliations of the participants have not been mentioned to preserve their anonymity. The final section of this chapter gives detailed analysis of all data gathered in this project to determine if either of these strategies meets the needs of those within the asylum system adequately.

#### **4.1 The Integration Strategies in Limerick and Clare**

##### **4.1.1 Limerick Integration Plan 2013-2016**

The Limerick integration Working Group describes integration as a long-term multidimensional and dynamic process which begins the moment a person arrives in their new community. The aim of the working group is to ensure respect for diversity and equal opportunities for the participation of all Limerick residents regardless of their cultural or religious background, age, gender or nationality. According to the working group, integration takes place through the interaction of people and implies mutual understanding as well as shared rights and responsibilities (IWG 2013). This integration plan is preceded by the Limerick Integration Plan 2010-2012, which according to McHugh and Quinn (IWG 2013) had a strong record of achievement and provided a good foundation for the promotion of integration and inclusion of migrants in Limerick. The current plan was put together by the Limerick Integration Working Group (IWG). This working group includes nineteen statutory, voluntary and community groups and is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Integration Plan. According to McHugh and Quinn, the working group is committed to progressing integration measures, celebrating diversity and enhancing social cohesion in Limerick City and County. While implementing the plan they aim to maintain the values of respect for fundamental rights, equality and participation which they believe are prerequisites for integration (IWG 2013).

According to the IWG, the plan was developed using the EU Common Basic Principles (CBP) as a framework. The CBP aim to offer Member States a guideline of basic principles against which they can develop their own integration policies. It also adheres to the conclusions, principles and agendas of the European Ministerial Conference on Integration: Zaragoza Declaration (2010). The declaration sought to promote integration as a driver for development and social cohesion while emphasising the role of local authorities and cities in dealing with intercultural challenges. The following groups are included in the integration plan according to the working group; Asylum Seekers, Migrant Workers (EU), Migrant Workers (Non-EU), International Students, Refugees, Persons with Stamp 4, Leave to Remain. After undertaking research, consultation and a needs analysis six key themes were identified by the working group. These were; *Language, Education and Lifelong Learning, Information, Advice and Direct Support Services, Access to Public Services, Intercultural Awareness, Supporting Communities and Active Citizenship and Employment*. Each of these themes is then broken down into specific subgroups based on the needs identified in the research and consultation process. Further to this each theme within the plan is linked with one of the EU Principles on Integration. The IWG was also tasked with overseeing the implementation of the integration plan and developing operational action plans on a yearly basis to monitor the progress of the strategy. Each action plan within the strategy is allocated a timeframe which the lead organization must adhere to. Strategic partners are also identified and where possible strategic goals are shared among these partners. The projected outcomes of these plans are also outlined which can then be monitored by the IWG in subsequent progress reports.

In May 2014, Doras Luimni made a submission to the Office for the Promotion of Migrant Integration highlighting the barriers to some of the services and actions proposed in the integration plan. One of the concerns that they outlined was the absence of a national policy relating to integration, stating the need for a suitable environment for best policy and practice in relation to migrant issues. They also outlined that asylum seekers were not included in national integration policies and this, they felt, immediately excluded certain groups of people from community integration which was in direct contrast to the mandate of the strategy. They recommended the implementation of a national plan which would incorporate local strategies and EU-wide intercultural perspectives. This strategy, they stated, should be co-ordinated by a state body, such as the OPMI, to ensure that all goals set out in the policy would be achieved (Doras Luimni 2014).

#### **4.1.2 Clare Strategic Actions 2009-2012**

The Strategy for the Coordination of Services to the Immigrant Communities in County Clare was set up following two needs analyses conducted by both the University of Limerick and the HSE. Key

contributors to the strategy were Clare County Council, HSE, Clare Youth Service, Gardai, Ennis CDP, Clarecare, Ennis Schools Completion, VEC and other local service providers who participated in strategic planning workshops, discussion groups and forums in the formation of the strategy. The main stakeholder involved was Clare Immigrant Support Centre which was involved in leading or partnering 31 of the 83 actions proposed in the strategy. The actions of the strategy were also informed and developed through focus groups with agencies and immigrant groups. The strategy was co-financed by the European Commission under the European Integration Fund and was supported by the OPMI (Clare Immigrant Support Centre 2016).

The strategy was divided into five themes: *Health, Education, Work and Training, Language/Communication and Community Participation/Social Supports*. The themes were developed having been informed by a needs analysis carried out by the University of Limerick entitled 'Getting to Know You-A Local Study of Migrants, Refugees and Asylum Seekers in County Clare' (2009). This study provided a comprehensive analysis of each thematic area with the participation of over 130 members of immigrant communities which represented over 40 nationalities (Clare County Council 2009). The strategy focused on the following target groups; young migrant workers from the 10 EU accession states (2004- Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia), older migrant workers from the same 10 EU accession states, members of the African community, members of the Roma Community, Refugees and Asylum Seekers. Like the Limerick strategy, each action was given a projected result as well as outlining a specific monitoring mechanism. A lead organization and possible partner were also identified for each plan within the strategy. According to the Interagency Steering Group who developed the strategy, its key principles were, a partnership approach between local agencies to improve the coordination of services to the immigrant community in County Clare, a commitment to supporting the inclusion of new communities and recognising their needs in the planning and development of services, a clear focus and direction towards improving opportunities for individuals and families, action based on identified need in partnership with members of the immigrant community (InterAgency Steering Group 2009).

#### **4.2 Interview Findings**

To analyse the interview responses it is necessary to categorize the answers thematically;

##### **Relevance of the Strategy**

The first interview participant believed that in Limerick most of the themes of the integration strategy could be applied to asylum seekers except for the theme in relation to employment. She did

however state that the degrees to which the other themes could be applied varied greatly. For example she explained that one of the action plans was to provide English language classes for migrants in Limerick, however sometimes the level of these classes was not appropriate to the needs of asylum seekers and so her organization had to provide language classes at a more basic level. On the other hand, she stated there were many asylum seekers who spoke English as their first language and so while these lessons were available to asylum seekers they were not always necessary. Another participant explained that at the time of the first integration strategy in Limerick from 2010-2012 there were high levels of immigration into Ireland. The impact of the recession was not yet reflected in the numbers of migrants in Limerick. The second strategy, he stated, was built on the success of the first strategy although the number of migrants coming to Limerick had fallen. In terms of integration both Limerick participants believed that the fact that Limerick was an Intercultural city was an important factor to consider for the integration strategy. An intercultural city should create an environment where it is considered a good place to live for everybody, for locals as well as new members of the community. One participant stated that all migrants have the same intercultural needs which are covered in the integration strategy. However, some were more relevant to those in the asylum system than others.

In relation to the Clare strategy one participant explained that the agencies involved in its design looked at the Scottish model of integration when developing the initiative, this model takes a person centred approach in relation to all migrants including asylum seekers and refugees. The participant firstly explained that the plan had not been updated since 2012 as the number of immigrants moving into Clare began to fall at this time and the various agencies involved in the process had been disbanded and some of the actors involved were moved to different agencies. The interview participant believed that of the five themes outlined in the strategy the only theme which could feasibly be applied to those within the asylum system was the theme of Community Participation. The second interviewee agreed with this and explained that while the strategy may not have included asylum seekers in all themes it did as much as it could under the constraints of national policy. The strategy, she remarked, did not seek to be a political statement but it did result in very positive unintentional outcomes in the area of asylum and direct provision at a local level. She explained that the interagency involvement in coordinating this strategy 'put things on the table' for agencies that would have been otherwise unaware of the barriers to integration for those within the asylum system. She maintained that 'brave things were done quietly' under the terms of the strategy.

*Barriers to Participation (Access, Transport and Economic Factors)*

One participant explained that integration was impeded sometimes by the location of the direct provision centre and that sometimes it could prove difficult to become involved in community activities when transport became an issue, she stated that while all community activities were welcomed the residents would have to consider the financial aspects associated with taking part in such events. They also had to take into consideration meal times when deciding whether or not to get involved with such activities so there was a level of restriction around their decision making process. Another participant explained that if a resident was to be away from the DPC for a significant period of time they would have to notify the Department of Justice and she felt that sometimes the degree of the challenge involved would outweigh the desire to take part in the activity. Like the first interviewee this participant also spoke about the location of many of the direct provision centres around the country and implied that housing asylum seekers outside of towns in hard to access rural areas was going to impede integration further. It wasn't always economically feasible for them to take part in events which were some distance from the centres.

### Time

All participants agreed that time was an issue that often exacerbated factors in direct provision. One interviewee explained that while community activities were welcomed by participants at the beginning of the process, after five or six years of the same activity with no end in sight residents often became disheartened and distanced themselves from community involvement. In relation to the specific needs of people living in the asylum system he said that the greatest challenge was the amount of time spent in the centres. Another participant said that time was a significant factor and that if the system was reformed to reduce the time spent in the centres to under 12 months this would help to improve the quality of life of the residents. Like the other interview participants the final interviewee explained that time was a huge factor in relation to integration and asylum seekers. She maintained that if the time spent in these centres was limited to about three months then many of the issues faced by asylum seekers would not manifest themselves to the degree that they currently do.

### The Transition from Asylum-Seeker to Refugee

One participant explained that sometimes the most difficult area for integration was the moment a resident had received status to remain in Ireland. She described how difficulties arose after a lengthy stay in DPCs as residents had been so isolated for so long they now found the transition into community living very challenging. They often did not have the social skills that they possessed on entering the centres, sometimes having endured depressive episodes and other mental health



implications while resident in the DPCs. Another participant mentioned that many of the residents did not have a network of friends and so on receiving their status and leaving the DPCs it was much harder for them to integrate themselves into the community. Another interviewee explained that leaving the centres was an area where integration was a huge issue. She outlined that this was where national policy dictated that integration should begin while all interviewees believed that integration should begin at the moment of arrival into the new community. The participant also listed issues such as money management and access to employment after such a considerable stay in direct provision as further barriers to integration.

#### *Addressing Mental Health Issues and the Needs of Children*

In relation to the needs of those within the asylum system one interview participant believed that areas relating to health including mental health and quality of living needed to be addressed. The participant remarked that the staff working in these centres do not have social care backgrounds and do not have the skills necessary to work with a vulnerable group of people. The interviewee also stated that if the asylum seekers were not detained in these centres the mental health issues which arise from being institutionalized would not be an issue and in cases where a person was suffering from a mental health issue relating to a separate issue they would have access to the appropriate medical professionals. One participant spoke about neglect and child poverty, not at the hands of the children's parents but at the hands of the state. Another participant explained that a positive outcome of the Clare integration strategy was that agencies which would not usually be familiar or involved with the asylum and reception conditions in Ireland became involved in independent research based on the conditions they were met with. This research is still relevant today and it has served as a basis to make recommendations to higher authorities surrounding particular aspects of living in direct provision such as child poverty and development and the mental health implications of living in isolated centres. These recommendations have been largely ignored according to two of the participants. One interviewee described how some residents who have spent lengthy periods within the asylum system as 'losing the will to live' and finding it difficult to 'keep their heads above water'. Dignity was another need mentioned by a participant and he emphasised how hard it is to maintain your dignity living in these particular conditions

#### *Employment and Education*

Employment and Education are the themes in the strategies which are least applicable to asylum-seekers. In terms of employment, asylum-seekers often had lost professional skills that they held at the beginning of their application procedure and without being reskilled throughout their stay they

found themselves at a distinct disadvantage on re-entering the workforce. However, one participant did state that their organization encouraged asylum seekers to volunteer where possible to try to maintain contact with the community and acquire new skill sets necessary for future employment. Another participant highlighted that this could become an issue in sectors where it is necessary to obtain a Garda clearance. One of the interviewees described how it could also be more difficult for an asylum seeker to secure employment as the amount of time spent in the centres would have led to them becoming de-skilled in the professions that many of them would have held before leaving their home countries.

### *Structural Weaknesses in the Asylum Process*

The first interview participant believed that integration strategies at a local level could never sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system while the system of direct provision remained in place. She had been hopeful when the working group was put together by Minister O Riordán that a reform of the system was on the cards but when her organization was not invited to sit on the working group as they were considered too vocal she realized that perhaps the reform would not be as radical as people may have hoped for. She did welcome the fact that Minister O Riordán was the first person in a long time to draw attention to the area and she does feel that as a result of this there have been more positive decisions in the past year. The participant believes that in terms of an appropriate national policy Ireland should look to the asylum system in Portugal and draw on some of the best practice approaches being implemented there. The second participant spoke about the European Refugee Fund and the European Integration Fund and pointed out that these initiatives were not applicable to asylum seekers. He said that according to official policy in Ireland integration begins as soon as a migrant is given status to allow them to remain in Ireland. However he said that it was the belief of their organization that integration should begin from the moment a person arrived in Ireland. He stated that there needed to be structural reform in relation to this. He said that 'integration does not sit well with direct provision' and stated that specific resources were needed in that area and that there should be greater accountability for those that oversee the centres. He stated that the government missed an opportunity with the protection bill to reform the system to make it a more fair and transparent process. He said that integration was a two-way process between migrant and host community but that it was more difficult for asylum seekers to be involved in this process as they were not afforded the same resources as other migrants. He stated that another challenge was that direct provision and asylum seekers were not considered a priority in national politics, he said that with every new crisis that arose, the plight of asylum seekers would be pushed further down the agenda. Finally when asked what could be done

to make integration strategies more accessible to those within the asylum system, he responded that there would need to be a change in policy at national level before changes could be implemented at a local level.

The third participant stated that because of national policy regarding asylum seekers, realistically speaking they could not be included in the majority of the themes of the action plan as it was not legally possible in some areas especially initiatives relating to employment and housing. Within the strategy they set out actions to improve access to health services and education and made recommendations to RIA and the Department of Justice. However they were told that RIA was only required to provide bed and board to residents and were not obliged to provide anything further. When asked if local strategies to integrate new communities into Ireland sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system the participant said that they did not meet those needs. They stated that local level actors' hands were tied and that without a change in existing national policy in relation to direct provision or a new policy in relation to integration at a national level they were constrained to continue the exclusion of this group. The fourth participant remarked that at the launch of the integration strategy in 2009 a government official involved in the setting up of 'Migration Nation' was very uncooperative when asked what his view on the growing number of asylum seekers coming into Ireland was and how could the issue be better managed. The elected representative felt that at the time long-staying asylum seekers were 'blocking the system' and causing back-logs in the application process for others. The participant stated that the integration strategy was not a political campaign and remained respectful to government policy but that it tried to reach out to asylum seekers in areas where it was allowed to do so.

#### **4.3 Data Analysis**

Before analysing the data it is necessary to take into account that the numbers of asylum seekers in Clare and Limerick differ significantly and the locations of the centres is also a significant factor when considering integration. It is more difficult for the residents of DPCs in rural areas to access community activities than those housed in towns or cities, there is a transport cost associated with such activities which is not always taken into consideration by the actors organizing such events. However this is not unique to Ireland as Bakker et al described the same conditions in the Dutch case in Chapter 1. Whether the centres are state run or privately owned is another factor which can determine how direct provision centres operate and rigid restrictions around meal times can be a deciding factor when a resident is considering taking part in one of the initiatives outlined in the strategies. The interview participants from Limerick felt that the themes of their strategies were quite inclusive while the participants from Clare felt that their strategy was not as inclusive as they

would have liked. While they had tried to be as inclusive as they could there were legal barriers constraining their efforts. There are three DPCs in Limerick, two of which are based in the city. There is only one in Clare in Knockalisheen which often falls under the remit of Limerick due to its proximity to the city so it makes sense that the Limerick strategies set out to address the specific needs of asylum seekers more than the Clare strategy.

Having analysed the responses from the four semi-structured interviews there are a few themes common to all four interviews. All four interviewees explained that the strategies sought to include asylum seekers as much as they could but that was not always legally feasible. They did state however that some of the themes while not directly aimed at asylum seekers could be adapted in ways to make them more inclusive. Themes relating to employment and housing are not applicable to asylum seekers although all of the interview participants believed that this was an area which could be addressed. They believe that employment initiatives aimed at re-skilling asylum seekers in various sectors of employment should be introduced so that when they receive status to remain in Ireland they will not find it as difficult to re-enter the workforce as they currently do. Education was another area that was not directly applicable to the group and the outcome of the initiatives would vary greatly based on the needs of the individual asylum seeker. As mentioned in Chapter 1 by Sugarman, there is the need for a policy to be drafted in relation to educational options for asylum seekers. All participants also acknowledged that residents of direct provision do not have access to adequate health services in relation to mental health issues. In Chapter 1 both Slobodin and De Jong and the UNHCR mentioned that at a global level the lack of social supports afforded to asylum seekers and the time spent detained in these centres can exacerbate mental health issues and we can see that this is no different in the Irish context.

Time is also a significant issue for the residents of direct provision centres, another factor covered by the UNHCR in Chapter 1. The interview participants believe that these are issues which are exacerbated by the isolated conditions of direct provision and by the length of time that the residents have to endure these conditions. Many residents arrive in Ireland already having experienced traumatic events and they are not offered any support to help them to process and move on from these events. Some develop depression from the isolation of the centres or from being separated from their families for such a long time, this can be linked to Monica Boyd's Social Network Theory which was described in Chapter 1. These are all issues which will further hinder integration into the community when they receive status to remain. Issues relating to children was another theme which was mentioned in the interviews. Children are living in poverty and their basic needs are being neglected. The startling thing about this is that this neglect is not at the hands of

their parents but at the hands of the state, a state which they came to in search of sanctuary from such things. This is also addressed by Uchechukwu Ogbu in Chapter 1, these situations can have a detrimental impact on the cognitive and social development of the children involved.

There is also a link between the subtly state driven racism that Fanning describes in Chapter 1 and the results of this research project. When the elected representative working in the area of integration is less than empathetic when speaking about asylum-seekers then it implies a great deal about the government in which he works. The most important issue which was prevalent in all interviews and which is most relevant to this project is that without a change in the national policy relating to asylum seekers there is not a great deal that can be done at the local level. The local strategies are constrained by government policy; this is similar to the control-centred form of public policy which was covered by Bryer in Chapter 1, a form of governance based on control through the bureaucratic principles of regulation. Here the actors involved in the strategies are bound by either the direct orders or coercive pressures of elected representatives and the state agencies associated with them. However, in the case of immigration and asylum policy a discretionary or deliberative approach would be much more beneficial in helping to integrate both those in the asylum system with the members of the communities they reside in. A discretionary or deliberative approach would be the best possible approach to take. This type of approach would be necessary to take the specific needs of the actors into consideration before drafting the appropriate policies which would apply to them and would help to legislate for a fairer and more transparent asylum system. Without this approach local strategies to integrate new communities into Ireland will continue to fail to sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of this project was to investigate whether local level strategies to integrate new communities into Ireland sufficiently addressed the needs of those within the asylum system. I used the integration strategies in counties Clare and Limerick as my case studies in the project. The objective of the research was to outline the needs specific to asylum seekers living in the system of direct provision to determine whether or not these needs were addressed in the themes of the integration initiatives which were implemented in Clare and Limerick under the terms of a government statement published in 2008. This statement maintained that a key challenge facing Government and Irish society was the imperative to integrate people of different cultures, ethnicity, language and religion so that they become the new Irish citizens of the 21st century. It was a progressive statement geared at integration and diversity management. This project aimed to discover whether those people that the statement spoke of were included in the integration strategies at local level and whether the strategies were appropriate for all members of the community.

The first chapter in this project examined the theories relating to asylum, migration, public policy and public attitudes. This was necessary to identify how Ireland operates in relation to asylum policy by looking at asylum, migration and integration from a global perspective. Following this, Chapter 2 explained the Common European Asylum System and looked at a number of asylum systems in other European States. In doing so, it sought to identify any similarities or differences between the Irish system and the systems of other Member States. It is apparent that the Irish system is quite similar to the British system which is unsurprising given that Ireland and Britain have an opt-out clause of certain EU directives relating to asylum procedures. Chapter 3 focused on the Irish asylum system including its recent history and relevant statistics about application numbers and acceptance rates. It also offers a critique of the system by Irish academics familiar with the subject area. Chapter 4 describes the integration strategies in Clare and Limerick. It also provides information on the four semi-structured interviews carried out with individuals involved in the design of the strategies and those that work with asylum seekers and are aware of their specific needs.

My research question in this project was 'Do local strategies to integrate new communities into Ireland sufficiently address the needs of those within the asylum system?' The obvious answer to this question is no. The local strategies are constrained by the national policy of direct provision and while this system remains in place people's hands are tied at the local level. The actors involved cannot breach the legislation in relation to the asylum system and so they cannot include asylum seekers in all themes of the strategies, as much as they would like to do so. They are also unable to

draft strategies geared solely at people in direct provision as to do so would go against national policy. While these actors have made recommendations to Government offering alternative systems and areas where they could improve the system to make it a fairer more transparent process, they have been met with opposition and in some cases disdain. This area of public policy is typical of the control-centred form of bureaucracy that the actors are bound by in the Irish case. A more suitable approach would be one in which those waiting on asylum decisions had some degree of autonomy on their own lives but while the current system is in place this will not be an option. They will continue to be isolated and excluded from even the most basic aspects of community involvement and at the local level unfortunately the strategies to integrate them into their new communities will not sufficiently address their specific needs.

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## **APPENDICES**

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FACULTY OF ARTS, HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

INFORMATION LETTER

Dear Prospective Participant,

My name is Niamh Dillon. I am a final year student from the University of Limerick. I am currently undertaking a research project to investigate if local strategies in Clare and Limerick to integrate new communities into Ireland sufficiently address the needs of those in the asylum system. I intend to gather the information needed for my research by conducting a number of recorded interviews with representatives from organizations and individuals that both work with and support people within the asylum system.

The interview will take approximately half an hour to complete and will take place at a location of the participants choosing. As a participant in this project you have the right not to answer questions which you do not wish to answer and you may withdraw from the research at any time. If you choose to participate in this research you have the right to anonymity. All recordings will be deleted as soon as transcribed. Participant's names will be coded confidentially. As a participant you also have the right to contact the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Science Research Ethics Committee if you have any concerns about taking part in the research.

If you have any queries about this project I can be contacted at [13036459@studentmail.ul.ie](mailto:13036459@studentmail.ul.ie). My supervisor Dr Chris McNerney from the Department of Politics and Public Administration can be contacted at [Chris.G.McInerney@ul.ie](mailto:Chris.G.McInerney@ul.ie).

This research study has received Ethics approval from the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee Ref: 2015-09-04-AHSS. If you have any concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent authority, you may contact:

Chairperson Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

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CONSENT FORM

**Consent Section:**

I, the undersigned, declare that I am willing to take part in research for the project entitled “Do local strategies to integrate new communities into Ireland sufficiently address the needs of those in the asylum system?”

- I declare that I have been fully briefed on the nature of this study and my role in it and have been given the opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate.
- The nature of my participation has been explained to me and I have full knowledge of how the information collected will be used.
- I am also aware that my participation in this study may be recorded (video/audio) and I agree to this. However, should I feel uncomfortable at any time I can request that the recording equipment be switched off. I am entitled to copies of all recordings made and am fully informed as to what will happen to these recordings once the study is completed.
- I fully understand that there is no obligation on me to participate in this study.
- I fully understand that I am free to withdraw my participation at any time without having to explain or give a reason.
- I am also entitled to full confidentiality in terms of my participation and personal details.

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Signature of participant

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Date

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Signature of Investigator

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Date

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What are the strategies currently in place in Clare/Limerick to integrate new communities into the local area?
2. How appropriate do you feel that these strategies are in relation to those in the asylum system?
3. How accessible are these initiatives to those within the asylum system?
4. Do you feel that these strategies address the needs specific to those within the system?
5. In your professional opinion, how do you think these strategies could be improved to make them more inclusive to asylum seekers?