The Politics of Care: Glasgow and the UK’s Dispersal Policy

Who Belongs Where: Controlling Movement and Settlement

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Abstract

Today we are witnessing a collective action problem between European states who are unable to manage immigration and asylum. In response, this thesis reflects on the role of urban spaces in reimagining narratives of acceptance. In the majority, EU states are reacting to the demands for sanctuary with hard borders, a pejorative discourse and ultimately the avoidance of responsibility. This is not only leading to an unproductive, but an immoral system with the value of human life lost. In light of this stalemate I turn to the urban level and discuss the role of local actors in challenging state decision-making, alongside the perceived trade-off between interests and ideas. I specifically focus on the case of Glasgow which stands out as a extreme example of asylum acceptance, taking far more than its fair share as a voluntary dispersal city under the UK’s asylum dispersal policy. By engaging with descriptive statistics, document analysis and semi-structured interviews I explore the interconnected factors which produce Glasgow’s high level of acceptance. In doing so I outline how the current theoretical framework is insufficient in explaining the complexities of acceptance beyond a zero-sum dialogue. I conclude by outlining how Glasgow’s position as a dispersal site has been maintained by an array of conceptual and normative factors which overtime have entrenched a ‘culture of care’ in the city.
Content

1. Introduction
   1.1 Relevance of this thesis
   1.2 Structure of this thesis

2. Literature Review
   2.1 EU and State policy on Asylum
   2.2 The Urban Scale - ‘Seeing like a City’
   2.3 Cities of Sanctuary
   2.4 Chapter conclusion

3. Key Terms
   3.1 Asylum Seeker
   3.2 Acceptance
   3.3 Care

4. Methods
   4.1 Case Selection
   4.2 Research Questions
   4.3 Lines of Enquiry
   4.4 Descriptive Statistics
   4.5 Document Analysis
   4.6 Semi-structured interviews
   4.7 Mode of Analysis
   4.8 Positionality
   4.9 Ethics

5. Analysis
   5.1 Descriptive Statistics
   5.2 Qualitative Analysis
      5.2.1 Housing
      5.2.2 Immigration
      5.2.3 Identity
      5.2.4 Funding
   5.3 Glasgow and a ‘Culture of Care’
   5.4 Chapter conclusion

6. Conclusion
   6.1 Limitations and Further Research

7. References
8. Appendix
List of Tables and Figures

Table 1 – Thematic Content Analysis
Table 2 - Asylum Seekers receiving section 95 support by year and locality
Figure 1 - Key terms Venn diagram
Figure 2 – Asylum seekers receiving Section 95 support by local authority, as of end December 2017
Figure 3 – Ethnic profile of Glasgow in 1991, 2001, 2011

Acronyms

City of Sanctuary – CoS
Scottish Parliamentary Debate – SD
Westminster Parliamentary Debate – WD
Councilor – Cllr
1. **Introduction**

At the EU level we are witnessing a collective action problem. States are unwilling to ‘formulate joint, coherent responses’ to manage the mass inward movement of people to the EU (Berry et al. 2016, p. 4). This stems from the perceived trade off between state interests and ideas about asylum seekers, resulting in the implementation of an array of restrictive measures to reduce mobility (Gibney & Hansen, 2003) and ‘evade responsibility’ (Schuster, 2003, p.1398). The supposed ‘trade-off’ frames EU states as having a fixed capacity to accept, with acceptance perceived as zero-sum and static. In order to overcome this deadlock this thesis will turn a critical eye to the urban scale and in doing so question the extent to which acceptance and capacity can be reimagined at the local level to then refigure the overall capacity to accept. Despite the entrenched marginalisation of asylum interests by the state, urban spaces have become interestingly authoritative in the maintenance of support and care. Whilst this is usually framed as a response of ‘good-will’ from local populations I’ll debate that the dynamics are much more complex than this narrative allows, and imbued with the convergence of interests and ideas at the local level. To engage with the role of urban spaces the UK is an interesting site of analysis due to the devolution of power to local authorities in 2000 through the UK’s dispersal scheme. Despite the predominantly negative framings of the scheme as simply the displacement of state responsibility, I’ll highlight how it offers new opportunities to reimagine sanctuary and care at the urban scale.

Within the broader context of the UK I’ll specifically focus on the city of Glasgow due to its unique approach to asylum reception which makes it an extreme case worth further analysis. Not only has the city remained a key voluntary dispersal site since 2000. It has repeatedly taken over the allocated quota of one asylum seeker to every 200 settled residents, and consecutively remained the single highest locality in recipient of asylum seekers in the UK. As I mentioned, the dispersal takes place on a voluntary basis, and as of 2015 99 localities out of a total of 408 took part (House of Commons library, 2016). This outlines the limited op-in from local authorities, which feeds into the broader state-level narrative that frames asylum seekers as a fiscal and cultural burden. In this context Glasgow further stands as a unique case and to explain why, I will question the perceived trade-off by considering at the fused relationship between interests and ideas at the urban scale. In doing so this thesis challenges two key assumptions, first that acceptance is zero-sum, and second that urban spaces accept asylum seekers simply because of a moral duty to care. The case of Glasgow stresses the role of asylum seekers in coinciding with the needs of the urban space and consequently expanding the national capacity to cope. If this is tapped into in other urban spaces it could reimagine how asylum and sanctuary are discussed and provided.
1.1 Relevance of this thesis

This study emerges as a response to the unproductive system that is currently governing migration management and response in Europe. The ongoing events of 2015 highlight the loss of life which results from an incoherent response system and subsequently the necessity in rethinking how asylum policy is designed and implemented. This project engages with an appreciation of scale, looking at alternative solution when negotiations between nation-states have become stagnant. By engaging with the urban scale I’ll rethink the capacity of these spaces to meet the demands for spaces of sanctuary, alongside the role they play in challenging dominate discourse and decision-making.

1.2 Structure of thesis

This thesis will first engage with the relevant literature, pinpointing two key limitations, the zero-sum approach to acceptance, alongside the one-dimensional discourse framing urban spaces. This will subsequently frame the route of this research to fill these research gaps. Next I’ll outline my methodological choices, and explain how each adds a new layer of complexity to the study of Glasgow, resulting in triangulation. This will lead me to my analysis, where I’ll outline the convergence between interests and ideas in Glasgow, followed by a reflection on the ‘culture of care’ which has developed overtime. Finally I’ll outline my final conclusions and recommendations for further research.
2. Literature Review

Beginning at the EU level, descending to UK policy, then reflecting on the role of urban spaces and NGO’s, I will note the multi-layered and interconnected approach undertaken by a range of different stakeholders to asylum care and response. Doing so I will first explore the multiplicity of acceptance not as the literature suggests a zero-sum game between states, but challenged, expanded and contracted by a combination of normative and instrumental dynamics at the urban scale. Second, through a critical engagement with the CoS literature I’ll outline how urban scale responses to asylum care are themselves not static or defined simply by the ‘goodwill’ of citizens, but bound up with broader political and social considerations.

2.1 EU and State level policy on Asylum

European cooperation on asylum policy began in 1990 with the Dublin Convention in order to harmonise asylum policy (Hatton, 2016). Before then, asylum care was purely discussed at the national level with no coordinated response. The Dublin Convention has been revised twice, but the key principles have remained the same. These include;

1. An asylum-seeker has only one opportunity. Rejection is recognised by all member states. Approval, on the other hand, attributes an asylum-seekers the right to reside on the territory of the state of approval only (Guild, 2006, p.636).

2. The Dublin-criteria determine which member-state is responsible for assessing the asylum application and taking care of the asylum seeker during the procedure. The preferences of the asylum-seeker are irrelevant in this respect (Guild, Costello, Garlic & Moreno-Lax, 2015, p.1).

3. If an asylum-seeker is allocated to another country than his/her current country of residence, he/she can be deported (Guild, Costello, Garlic & Moreno-Lax, 2015, pp.1-2).

Whilst the purpose of shared EU asylum policy is to disperse asylum seekers across member states it has been consecutively argued that the Dublin Regime has encouraged ‘member states to avoid responsibility under the allocation criteria’ (Trauner, 2016, p. 315). For example, by not registering asylum-seekers states are preventing evidence of an asylum-seeker’s presence, thus ‘voiding them of responsibility’ (Trauner, 2016, p. 319). In this sense, whilst EU policy attempts to create an equal playing field, national asylum procedures in Europe have undergone a race to the bottom where countries are restricting asylum-seekers access to work, social services and freedom of movement.
in an attempt to diminish their nations ‘pull-factors’ (Hatton, 2016, pp.11-12). This practice has gone ‘unchecked’ as the EU lacks the ‘mechanisms or willingness to sanction member-states for violating asylum policy’ (Battjes et al., 2016, p.8) leaving open the opportunity and incentive to free-ride (Facchini, Lorz and Willmann 2006). Although the responsibility to protect and assist vulnerable people is widespread, probably universal (Rabben, 2011) and many states feel obliged to grant asylum because of their democratic nature. In reality states are no longer interested in the principles of asylum (Steiner, 2001) which reflects the implementation of ‘consecutive reforms to toughen the process of determining the legitimacy of asylum claims’ (Hatton, 2016, p.107). The events of 2015, and the so-called ‘refugee crisis’ brought unprecedented attention to the ways in which states respond to the demands for sanctuary by those seeking refuge. In the majority, state responses are at best framed inadequate, and at worst violent and counterproductive. It has highlighted the obvious ‘dysfunctionality’ of the European migration system (Guild, 2006) in dealing with the ‘crisis’, with an emphasis placed on the externalisation of the EU’s borders to preemptively intercept migrants en route to Europe (Moreno-Lax & Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019). This follows a line of thinking that the ‘problem’ of migration can be solved by a ‘technological security fix’ (Moreno-Lax & Lemberg-Pedersen, 2019, p.9) hence a state led focus on erecting barriers, and increasing surveillance. These policies showcase the general lack of acceptance towards refugees across the EU, putting into questions the relevance of refugee law today (Boswell, 2002, p.2).

To comprehend why acceptance is so low at the state level it is valuable to engage with the relationship between interests and ideas, and the prominent discourse which frames asylum seekers not only as a burden, but a threat to the stability of the nation-state. This is explicit through an engagement with welfare provision and care. The welfare state, or the retraction of it can be undertaken in relation to the ‘anxiety about migration’, and its perceived threat to the state. As state’s sovereignty over a given territory is based on the ‘provision of welfare in exchange for the loyalty of citizens’ (Bommes & Geddes, 2002, p.1). In this instance then the ‘main goal is to guarantee stable conditions, work and welfare goods for their own citizens who are granted such rights by the state’s constitution’ (Dassler, 2016:44). This reveals the political dimension of care, where the framing of the state is legitimised through constructing the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. This is upheld by the provision of welfare as it illustrates those who deserve support and those who are strangers, ‘so to whom little is owed’ (Bloch and Schuster, 2005, p.13). Asylum seekers fall into the latter category as a curtail of their rights does not undermine the legitimacy of the state due to the framing of asylum seekers as outside national boundaries. Subsequently for the state asylum care is framed as a ‘trade off’ with no benefit perceived in the act of care.
In the UK context the dispersal process, which places asylum seekers in voluntary urban localities across the UK on a no-choice basis has been framed as a regulatory mechanism and ‘purposeful form of government control’ (Darling, 2009, 48). To engage with the ‘trade-off’ at the scale of the UK it is useful to engage with Walter’s (2004) notion of domopolitics. The term domopolitics can be used to dissect the system of governance through which relations between the state, security, territory and issues of mobility are being continually reframed in response to perceived external threats (Darling, 2009). The term was first produced as a response to the White Paper ‘Secure Borders, Safe Haven’ (Home Office, 2002). This paper was part of the broader Labor government’s promise to ‘modernise’ the nation’s immigration and asylum policy (Walters, 2004) with a direct connection drawn between strict immigration policies and strengthened discourses of national identity and belonging (Anderson et al, 2011). This shapes the use of migration policy, broader than its normative value but as a tool to strengthen civic commitment to the state, and clearly define who is inside and outside its structure. This fits the with what Sluga defines as the ‘classical concept of politics today,’ that persists as a ‘dreary reality’ with the state being more about erection of borders, and sovereign rule over a territory (Sluga, 2011, p.255). This illustrates the ‘dreary reality’ at the state level, bound up with the perceived burden of asylum seekers and subsequently the trade-off it perceives in the provision of care and sanctuary.

Despite the utility in tracing the current literature, I found it is limited by a focus on states politics of denial and denunciation. Within this framework acceptance is framed as zero-sum, where a state is either willing to accept asylum seekers or not. This means little attention is given to the intricate variations in acceptance, and the reasons for these beyond notions of ‘good-will.’ This leaves little room to engage with the urban scale and the challenge it presents to the discourse and practical capabilities of the state. Nevertheless Bansak et al’s (2016) is a useful starting point to change this simplistic framing, utilising the notion of preferences to understand altering levels of acceptance towards asylum seekers in Western Europe. The study found that preferences are shaped by the evaluation of an asylum seekers potential economic contribution, humanitarian concerns and the deservingness of their claims (Bansak et al, 2016). This was sustained by a clear preference for refugees over migrants, alongside a strong anti-Muslim bias, with asylum seekers of Christian faith preferred (ibid). The research underlines the relevance of sociological factors which conflict previous studies that outline the role of economics in shaping migration preferences (Citrin, 1997). Bansak’s research begins to explore the complexity of acceptance, not as zero-sum or based on certain capabilities but influenced by normative discourses and social opinions. This sets a critical starting point that helps to rethink how acceptance is commonly oversimplified in the
academic debate and the overarching consequences this has on negotiations and policy recommendations.

In sum, whilst the current literature rightly frames the EU’s discussions on asylum care as stagnant, in its overly state centric view its disregards the multiplicity of acceptance and the alternative scales of study. Boson argues that rather than there being a critical turn in asylum reception, we now see the product of ‘high refugee numbers, unemployment in receiving countries, and the impact of globalisation on identity and state legitimacy’ (Boswell, 2002, p.539). This outlines the multiple socio-economic factors which influence acceptance as the perceptions of asylum seekers today are shaped by a ‘complex configuration of national interests, international norms, and morality’ (Steiner, 2001). Subsequently the binary accepting/unaccepting framework is redundant firstly because of a states legal obligation to help, under the Geneva Convention and secondly because this overlooks the role of the urban scale. This illustrates the relevance in engaging with the urban scale as they have the potential to expand, contract and reframe levels of acceptance at the national scale. In turn they are sites which have the potential to (re)produce spaces of sanctuary, and challenge state level policy and I’ll now follow with a discussion of how the urban is framed in the literature.

2.2 The Urban Scale - ‘Seeing like a City’

Discussion of asylum policy at the UK scale takes a zero-sum approach to acceptance, where state interests are framed as out of sync with the prevailing ideas framing asylum seekers. As a result they respond to a legal obligation, rather than perceiving any benefit to providing care. In reaction I’ll now reflect on the urban scale which contests the disparity between interests and ideas whilst critiquing the limitations of the CoS literature.

Magnusson (2011) claims that ‘seeing like a state’ only offers a singular, rational order from above, whilst ‘seeing like a city’ provides an alternative perspective which recognises the ‘city as a site of resistance against the nation-state’ (Darling, 2017). Taking into account the role of cities in asylum dispersal it questions the placement of rights, which Darling (2009) frames as a connection between presence, visibility and recognition. The diffusion of power to local authorities gives these spaces the ability to legitimise the rights of asylum seekers as it ‘disrupts the governmental assumptions that rights have to be tied to citizenship and the state’ (Darling, 2009). This highlights the role of multi-level governance, with ‘tangled hierarchies and complex interdependencies’ (Jessop, 2004, p21) embedded in the asylum process. Despite this shift in power the extent to which urban spaces can really challenge state level processes is ambiguous. On the one hand Gill (2010) suggests that urban democracy at the local scale has the power to destabilise the image of the nation-state as
homogenous, and a consistent entity. Kushner (2003, p.1073) supports this by arguing that ‘state power has been dispersed, centred and fragmented.’ Yet Jessop (2004, p.12) maintains that we must resist the ‘idealist fallacy’ that the expansion of these new forms of power renders the state redundant, and despite the dispersal of power it is the state that remains dominant. Nevertheless, if we engage with how state policy is implemented at the local scale, it adds substance to Young’s (2011, p.542) claim that the state ‘literally takes place in the everyday spaces of the city.’ It is then also at the local city level, through both formal and informal practices that the shifting relationship between the ‘legal and the illegal, legitimate and illegitimate, authorised and unauthorised are established’ (Roy, 2011, p.233).

In the UK context, the dispersal scheme has altered the dynamics of the asylum process. Despite strong critiques it has led to the diffusion of responsibility and power. Here, Butler’s (2004, p. 56) notion of the ‘petty sovereign’ becomes relevant, as no longer is the care of asylum seekers undertaken by a singular sovereign authority but increasingly controlled by numerous actors. The possibility is then available for local authorities to take responsibility and reshape how care is undertaken. In this instance, despite much asylum and refugee research having the tendency to reify the nation-state and its ‘consistency, coherence and authority’ (Darling, 2014, p.1), a focus on the urban opens up new opportunities to reimagine care at the local level, which is perhaps a more productive site if we reflect on the proven relationship between moral proximity and responsibility (see Zorlu, 2017). Therefore in acknowledging the limitations of state level sovereign structures, an engagement with Glasgow offers the opportunity to explore the multi-level dynamics in asylum care. By asking why some urban spaces are more willing to accept and where their capacity to do so stems from, it resituates the potentiality of the urban to alter overall national approaches to asylum.

2.3 Cities of Sanctuary

Despite Jessop’s (2004) hesitation regarding the power of urban spaces, it is unproductive to simply see local authorities as the passive victims of neoliberal forces, but important to engage in how they have the ability to ‘establish alternative pathways’ (Newman, 2014, p.3296). This opens up the possibility for the urban to emerge as a significant site in the production of new forms of citizenship, cultural negotiation and political interaction (Baubock, 2003). In the USA context Varsanyi (2008), notes how a range of cities have rejected local immigration enforcement and focused instead on shielding their residents from deportation. In the UK, the ideology of sanctuary cities offers an alternative discourse that counters top-down power structures. I’ll next outline the role of sanctuary cities in the UK, their role in challenging dominant state level discourse but also apply a critique to the notion of ‘good will’ underpinning their political decision making.
Sanctuary as a term was first applied to asylum in the 1980’s when sanctuary practices underwent a revival in the global North in response to ‘increasingly draconian immigration policies’ (Gibson, 2013, p.23). Overtime, it has evolved and today the City of Sanctuary (CoS) movement (re)defines the role urban space plays in conceptualising ‘diverse relationships between community, care and responsibility’ (Lawson, 2007, pg10). This acknowledges ethical dimension of responsibility, which is perhaps more apparent at the urban scale as Dassler (2016, p.65) contents ‘states are not people and cannot experience pain or suffering’. The accumulative need for spaces of sanctuary is making it increasingly difficult to define them all under a singular term. Thus, like Bauder (2016) who states ‘there is no single set of policies or practices that define what a sanctuary city is’ (Bauder, 2016, p.182) this project recognises the complexity embedded in the notion of sanctuary as their politics are not passive but evolving to meet the changing socio-political landscape.

The CoS movement elevates the role cities play in asylum caregiving, with urban sanctuary and practices challenging national policies which regulate migration and belonging (Walia, 2014). Squire and Darling argue that the politics of sanctuary cities are such that we can use them to think in ways that ‘exceeds the statist limits of the hospitable’ as they attempt to challenge the dominate discourses which frame asylum seekers at the national scale. In this regard, whilst CoS offer spaces of safety for those seeking sanctuary, they are primarily shaped through their disruptive dimension and desire to determine a new politics of ‘enacting rightful presence’ (Squire and Darling, 2013, p.61). Squire and Darling (2013, p. 200) draws on Lefebvre’s notion of the ‘right to the city’ to elaborate on what they see as ‘the potential of everyday enactments of sanctuary’ to challenge the dominate power relations which attempt to place asylum seekers as outside the social arena. This coincides with what Foucault (1980) determines as ‘micro-resistance,’ where the development of hidden transcripts work to mock authority, and chip away at a seemingly impermeable structure to produce alternative realities. In this instance, engaging with urban scale politics of sanctuary commands a finely ingrained approach, which goes beyond surface level actions to acknowledge what isn’t always explicit, which helps unravels the connections between interests and ideas.

Despite the progressive efforts of the CoS movement, criticism has emerged in regards to the degree in which it challenges national level policy in the UK or simply works within a state controlled framework. From one perspective it is claimed that ‘urban sanctuary practices do not eliminate illegalisation’ (Bauder, 2016, p.177), instead they merely enable illegalised migrants to better cope with their circumstances’ (ibid). Bauder goes as far to say that the term ‘sanctuary city’ may evoke a false sense of security among illegalised urban populations (ibid). By enacting systems of sanctuary, it minimises the movement of those seeking refugee in particular localities and counter-intuitively re-produces spatial constraints under the premise of sanctuary. Therefore whilst
the CoS movement claims to ‘promote active citizenship’ (Bagelman, 2013, p.50) they simultaneously create a ‘temporality of waiting’ (ibid) where asylum seekers are confined to a specific spatial locality, anticipating the outcome of their application. This summarises a key limitation of the dispersal process as despite the increased devolution of power to urban spaces, they are still working within the states structure and cannot alter national policy.

At the UK scale the Independent Asylum Commission in 2008 recommend that asylum care should be reconnected nationally with an image of sanctuary and refuge, as a ‘virtue which has moral, humanitarian and public value’ (Independent Asylum Commission 2008, p.23). In relation to this, the CoS started ‘re-imagining the city as a space of refuge’ (Darling, 2009) and it has grown in recent years, with now thirteen towns and cities part of the movement (Darling, 2016, p.7). It first started in Sheffield, and consequently the city is deemed the flagship city of asylum care. The movement sought to alter the vision of the city, reconstituting its identity as a ‘welcoming place’ (Darling, 2009) and engage with how Sheffield views the world and its responsibilities within it (ibid). In this sense, the movement extended beyond the territorial confines of the city, as it aimed to engage with the networks, narratives and spaces that construct Sheffield's position within the politics of asylum (Darling, 2010, p.132). This was done under the premise that it was not enough to simply welcome those who arrive, but vital to actively attempt to rework and contest the political situations through which the current asylum system worked (ibid). Therefore the CoS is framed as a grass-root movement, upscaling an unconditioned politics of welcome which attempts to produce an ‘outwardlookingness’ (Massey, 2006, p.93) beyond the physical structure of the urban. However, the singular focus on ‘welcome’ is static, and limiting the scope of study by disengaging with other factors which contribute to the urban becoming accepting. This project will apply a critical lens to this literature and apply a more dynamic framework.

Crucial to the case of Sheffield was the role of NGO’s who ‘held Sheffield City Council to account for its practices and responsibilities’ (Darling, 2009, p.135). Sheffield’s approach to becoming a dispersal site critiques the assumption that sanctuary cities are simply based on the good-nature of urban authorities and local populations as the ‘buy-in’ from Sheffield Council was not strong. It was publically acknowledged that becoming a CoS ‘is not about encouraging more asylum-seekers to come to Sheffield’ (Sheffield City Council 2007), nor is it about attempting to ‘place the needs of others over those of Sheffield’ (Sheffield Council, 2007). This challenges the dominate rhetoric of the CoS movement which focuses on the good-will and selflessness of local populations. According to Squire and Darling (2013, p.195) being a CoS simply ‘suited Sheffield’s image as a cosmopolitan and inclusive city’. Subsequently, despite Sheffield’s welcoming rhetoric it placed
conditionality’s on its level of acceptance, which Darling refers to as a form of ‘boutique multiculturalism’ (Darling, 2009). This provides a critique to the literature that suggests the willingness to care is based upon purely self-less nature of urban populations. Nevertheless I do not intend to undermine Sheffield’s role as a dispersal site, instead it highlights the importance of exploring beyond the rhetoric. This means not simply seeing care to be based on self-less decisions, but understanding the connections between urban politics and interests and the implication these have on acceptance.

The CoS movement is just one example of the role NGO’s play in providing provisions to asylum seekers in an institutional void. As Teegen et al (2004,p.463) acknowledges ‘NGOs are founded to fill the voids that occur due to inefficiency of state and private sector organisations in meeting civic and consumer demands.’ This more broadly reflects the states role in enacting policies which aim to make ‘claims for asylum more difficult’ (Zetter & Pearl, 2000:239). This is most explicit with the constraints on the working rights of asylum seekers, undertaken to reduce the so-called ‘economic pull’ (Mayblin and James, 2018, p.7). This has been matched with a limitation on financial support, which is now fixed at £36.95 per a person per a week (ibid), well below the UK’s living wage. In response, NGO’s has been filling the void which overtime has led to a ‘chronic dependence on charity’ (Bagelman, 2013, p.54). Mayblin and James (2018) study looks at the role of the third sector plays in England and the provision of services such as housing, legal advice, food, and small subsistence payments. They found that the role of small to medium NGO’s was crucial in providing reactionary support to asylum seekers. This fits a broader recognition of the understated importance of NGO’s, who possess ‘a high level of local knowledge, an embeddedness in multi- level informal networks’ (Webb et al, 2010, p.22). Acknowledging the role of NGO’s is imperative to grasp the practical applications of care at the urban level, in doing so I’ll apply a critical lens to the capabilities of the urban in providing care. Therefore rather than seeing increased acceptance at the urban level as one-dimensional, and a positive choice, I’ll question the sustainability of care provision.

2.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the current stalemate in EU decision-making on asylum management and care simultaneously explored the potentiality of the urban scale in (re)shaping asylum capacity and response. In doing so two key critiques have emerged, first I have recognised the underdeveloped engagement with the concept of acceptance with over-generalised remarks made about the willingness and capacities of the state towards asylum seekers. This fails to account for the evolution of socio-economic discourses which constantly reframe opinions of asylum seekers,
alongside the role of urban spaces in altering overall state abilities to accept. Second, interacting with the CoS literature has not only outlined the key progress and limitations of this movement but countered the overgeneralised assumption that they develop purely in response to the ‘well meaning’ of local populations. Instead, as the case of Sheffield highlights, they can be bound up with self-invested political motives which fracture the seemingly one-dimensional notion of care. These discussions have set up my engagement with my key research question ‘Why does Glasgow’s level of acceptance for asylum seekers exceed that of the UK at large?’ I’ll explore how acceptance is not zero-sum, nor uni-scalar but as the relationship between ideas and interests diverges at the urban level it challenges the fixed capacity of the state. Reflecting on this research aim the next section will discuss the development of my key terms and how they will be applied to this study.

3. Key Terms

3.1 Asylum Seeker

The legal definition of what constitutes an asylum seeker has remained stable since the United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees in 1951 was first introduced. Under the Geneva Convention, asylum seekers must show that they have a ‘well-founded fear of persecution due to their race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, and are unable or unwilling to seek protection from the authorities in their own country’ (UN General Assembly, 1951). This is grounded in Article 14 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, which recognises the right of persons to seek asylum from persecution, ‘everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution’ (UN, 1948). This thesis will use the Geneva Convention’s definition of asylum, as it is the one used in the UK and across Europe.

3.2 Acceptance

Despite engaging with Bansak’s work on the notion of acceptance he provides no discussion or interpretation of the term. I found this lack of engagement to be reflected in the wider literature which presents the dichotomy of ‘accepting’ and ‘unaccepting’. This fails to account for the intrinsic complexity in acceptance, specifically the terms multiplicity and how it can alter across scales and overtime. This required me to add a new complexity to the existing conceptual vocabulary. To do this I engage with the relationship between acceptance and tolerance. I found that despite the latter being significantly different the terms are often being used interchangeably when engaging with asylum reception. Tolerance can be understood as placing ‘symbolic value to other people characteristics’ (Corneo & Jeanne 2006, p.112) and implies a conditioned level of acceptance as
it has significant ‘cultural, social and political affects that exceed surface operations’ (Brown, 2006, p.10). Despite the importance of tolerance in democratic theory, studies show that citizens are often willing to take away the most basic rights from disliked groups (Stouffer, 1955, p.332). Therefore whilst being tolerant is can be perceived as a positive quality, it is never innocent of power (Brown, 2006, p.14) and can be tokenistic in character. This provides an inverse to acceptance, which I understand as the willingness to welcome another that we perceive as different to ourselves. In this way it is useful to visualise each on a scale, noting the ability to be at the extremes or at some point in-between. Applying this framework to asylum seeker reception I’ll note the intrinsic variations between acceptance which at an extreme can involve a level of self sacrifice. Compared to tolerance, which I understand as a conditioned response with those cared for perceived primarily as a burden. In order to comprehend where stakeholders lie on this continuum I found the concept of care imperative as it delves beyond superficial rhetoric to reveal the true intentions behind the provision of sanctuary and asylum.

3.3 Care

To further explore my continuum between acceptance and tolerance I acknowledge the relationship between asylum seekers, the state, local councils and third sector groups as one interrelated by the care politics. This is legitimised by my understanding of the ethics of care which displays the role of ‘attending to and meeting the needs of the particular other for whom we take responsibility’ (Held, 2006, p.10). In the case of asylum seekers, under the Geneva Convention the state has a legal obligation to take responsibility of those who seek asylum, as I’ll go on to explore this responsibility is becoming increasingly dispersed across local councils, NGO’s and private sector groups which is altering the placement of care. As noted by Dassler (2016, p. 5) care is ‘notoriously difficult to define’ due to its multiple dimensions and uses. As I’ll be engaging with care through a political lens I recognise how this levels ‘caring, nurturing, and the maintenance of interpersonal relationships to the status of foundational moral importance’ (Friedman, 1993, p.147). In my framing of care it is vital to note both its positive and negative characteristics, as whilst it has the dominant connotations of ‘help’, ‘mutual respect’ and ‘love’, it can also mean a ‘person (or institution) is burdened with care’ (Reich & Jecker, 1995, p. 319). Yet not simply is one burdened by care and another benefitting, as Dassler (2016, p. 65) states ‘who would want to be in need of care instead of being independent and free?’ This emphasises the first dimension of my consideration of care, that it is imbued with power relations and does not necessarily stem from a unconditioned desire to ‘do good.’
The second dimension to my understanding of care relates to the internal framing of worth, with the decision to give care based on the consideration that the receiver is worth caring for. In this context then the ‘marginalisation of care is also a political decision’ (Smith, 1998, p.7). Crucial here is the word ‘marginalisation’ as the responsibility of the state to care for those under its legal jurisdiction means it can never be fully withdraw care. As Erikson (1982, p.68) argues the state can only ‘be selective’ and thus undertake a ‘certain amount of rejectivity’ (ibid) in it prioritisation of care giving. This turns back to the importance of the perceived ‘worth’ of an individual or group, as in the context of neoliberal governance, and public sector cuts, the ability for state institutions to care is shrinking. Therefore I understand that the provision of care does not necessarily reflect acceptance, instead care can be provided in a framework to tolerance for reasons which exceed its surface operations. This links to my final assumption regarding care, as Held (2006, p. 12) proposes ‘those who conscientiously care for others are not seeking primarily to further their own individual interests.’ This is important, as unlike Dassler (2016, p.19) who contends that by caring, ‘one enters into a mutual relation, with the caring action beneficial to both. I make a distinction between the multiple acts of care, at one scale care-giving as an obligatory act of the state, therefore stemming form a position of tolerance, and at the other extreme care ‘self-sacrifice’ which I frame as the highest expression of acceptance. To further outline the interconnection of these key terms I have created a visual explanation (figure 1) that acknowledge the relationship between care, tolerance and acceptance. In sum the reframing of these key terms is by no means a complete reworking, but a clear acknowledgement that the current theoretical framework is not only insufficient, but a barrier to the full exploration of the urban in discussions on asylum and sanctuary.
Figure 1: Interconnection of key terms
4. Methods
The following chapter will outline my case selection, research questions, and reasons for method selection. To explore the case of Glasgow in its intricacies I applied a mixed method approach. The main rationale being that using a combination of both quantitative and qualitative methods provides a more complete picture of a phenomenon that cannot be drawn with the data generated by one method alone (Bryman et al. 2012). Each of my methods individually adds a unique insight, and an additional layer of complexity to my research. During my analysis I explore my quantitative data then qualitative findings, followed by a final side-by-side comparison for merged data analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007).

4.1 Case Selection
To test the initial limitations and assumptions of the literature I needed an extreme case for analysis. Garring describes an extreme case as one where an ‘extreme value lies far away from the mean of a given distribution’ (Garring, 2008, p.9). Therefore it is the rareness of the value which makes the case valuable. Most importantly using an extreme case offers an ‘entrée into a subject’ (ibid) which has previously been under-theorised. It therefore remains a purely explanatory method, a way of probing possible causes of Y and the effects of X (ibid). With this in mind I found the UK an interesting site to study specifically because of the dispersal process that alters the power dynamics between the state and urban level. Following the exponential demands for sanctuary the Immigration and Asylum Act of 1999 introduced the asylum dispersal scheme that continues to underpin the asylum system in the UK today. The primary purpose of the scheme is to alter the spatial locality of asylum seekers across the UK, offering accommodation to asylum seekers who can prove they are destitute on a no-choice basis under Section 95 support – ‘asylum seekers can apply for support while waiting for their claim (or appeal) to be considered’ (House of Commons library, 2016). It was designed to reduce the pressure away from London and the South-East, who initially received the highest number of applicants (see table 2), ‘the legislative intention was that by distribution across the country no one area would be overburdened by the obligation of supporting asylum seekers’ (Parliamentary House of Commons Report, 2016). Interestingly the scheme is voluntary therefore local authorities have to opt-in and are under no obligation to receive or care for asylum seekers.

In order to see the implications of the dispersal process I explored the core figures of dispersal, so which localities had opted in, and how many asylum seekers they had received overtime. This engagement first presented Glasgow as an anomaly. In 2018 Glasgow Council accepted 4056
asylum seekers into the city, this is just below the entire intake for London which stood at 5264 but when looked at in ratio to total population Glasgow takes a great deal more. Furthermore I found that after Glasgow the next biggest dispersal site was Liverpool which accepted 1596 asylum seekers, under half of Glasgow’s intake. This framed Glasgow as an extreme case of voluntary acceptance. To support this further I engaged with the temporality of this acceptance level and found since 2012 it has increased its acceptance of asylum seekers every year, one of only two sites in the UK to do so. This has all occurred on a voluntary basis and therefore initially pinpointed Glasgow as an extreme site of acceptance which appears counter-intuitive to national discourse on asylum seekers. This frames the city as an interesting site to study, to explain what are the reasons for Glasgow’s unique stance.

4.2 Research questions

1. How does Glasgow’s level of acceptance for asylum seekers exceed that of the UK at large?

2. Why does Glasgow’s level of acceptance for asylum seekers exceed that of the UK at large?

3. What role does the urban scale play in asylum care and response?

4.3 Possible explanations

In light of my broad research questions and the key limitations I found in the literature I decide to define the remit of this study by exploring four possible lines of enquiry to discover what influences Glasgow’s position on acceptance. These move beyond an exclusive relationship between care and acceptance. Instead I’ll engage with the affiliation between interests and ideas and how these have influenced Glasgow’s position as a dispersal site. Each stems from my initially analysis with the case of Glasgow and the possible explanations for its high level of acceptance.

- Availability of cheap housing
  Glasgow has had number of underdeveloped/derelict spaces with cheap housing available. I intend to find out whether the desire for Glasgow council to fill these empty residential spaces influenced their decision to become a dispersal site.

- Need of immigration to fill skill gap and for population growth.
  Glasgow, and Scotland as a whole has historically had a declining population. It is therefore plausible that the intake of asylum seekers is part of a broader strategy to ensure sustainable population growth in the country.
• **Identity**
I’ll consider whether taking an alternative narrative coincides with the role of Glasgow, and Scotland’s desire more generally to (re)produce a identity unique to the city/country, subsequently differentiating itself from the rest of the UK.

• **Funding**
I’ll consider external funding as an incentive to accept asylum seekers in Glasgow

4.4 **Descriptive statistics**
My initial enquiry has framed Glasgow as an extreme case, yet an engagement with descriptive statistics offers the opportunity to test beyond the rhetoric of acceptance to see the core intake in each dispersal site. Preliminary questions emerged regarding the longevity of Glasgow’s intake of asylum seekers, the degree to which it accepts more asylum seekers than other local authorities and its position to care in relation to its socio-economic status. I decided to utilise descriptive statistics as they offer a powerful and economical way of measuring, analysing and presenting a political phenomena (Burnham et al, 2008 p.138). This offered me the opportunity to use data as a means to present data to ‘support or refute my initial assumptions’ (Burnham et al, 2008, pg.165) regarding the unique nature of Glasgow.

In order to answer these preliminary questions I engaged with data from the ‘Home Office Migration Statistics’, specifically the latest release from June 2018 (published 23/8/19). This data set is produced by the Office for National Statistics and available for public access on the Home Office’s website. Within this excel spreadsheet I focused specifically on asylum seekers receiving Section 95 support (accommodation on a no-choice basis) in each dispersal site. I chose to focus on Section 95 support as it is central to the dispersal process, allocating destitute asylum seekers housing to the voluntary dispersal sites. The data set extends back to 2000 so I was able to create a temporal time-line of the number of asylum seekers received by dispersal site and region. This provided data to answer the longevity of Glasgow’s intake of asylum seekers, and the extent to which this differs to other dispersal sites. Due to the wealth of data I specifically pinpointed the ten sites that either took in a high number or in the case of Edinburgh was an interesting anomaly to include. This again added a comparison to the site of Glasgow. Using this information I created my own condensed data-set visible in my analysis (Table 2).
I gathered statistics on the population of these dispersal sites to work out the ratio of asylum seeker to settled residents. This followed an awareness that the high intake of certain dispersal sites was less significant when looked at in relation to the number of settled residents. I gathered these statistics on population size from the Home Offices Data Base. To answer my second preliminary question I engaged with the socio-economic statistics to draw a comparison between its high level of acceptance and the plausible explanation of the availability of resources. These statistics were readily available through the Scottish Government’s website. I selected a number of different indicators to present a fair overview and account for trends across the city.

This method is imperative to the framing of the unique nature of Glasgow. Unlike inferential statistics, descriptive statistics is not developed on the basis of probability theory but on simply describing the patterns in the data set (Brown & Saunders, 2008). This approach is more relevant as I am not interested in undertaking in-depth empirical tests but utilised descriptive statistics to explore the merit of varying explanatory frameworks. Nevertheless I did find that descriptive statistics are ‘only one part of a complex political reality’ (Burnhan et al, 2008 pg. 166) and are subsequently unable to outline the reasons for why Glasgow is so unique. This limitation led me to apply a mixed method approach. I chose this approach over a macro-quantitative study as to fully grasp the unique case of Glasgow I needed to engage with qualitative opinions to better understand the role of social opinions and norms, a gap statistical evidence could not explain.

4.5 Document analysis
Following my descriptive statistics I was non-the wiser for the reasons Glasgow has a high level of acceptance. I still wanted to find out why Glasgow voluntary accepts asylum seekers and therefore outlined document analysis as a useful method to study this.

To gain both breadth and depth in understanding I focused on three difference scales. First the UK scale where I looked at parliamentary debates in the House of Commons which had taken place between 2000 and March 2019, searching in Hansard including the words ‘Asylum’ and ‘Glasgow.’ Narrowing down my search area was necessary due to the wealth of resources available which would have been impossible to analyse in my time-frame. By including these two phrases I made sure I was engaging with the most relevant data sources. Second at the Scottish level I also used parliamentary debates using the key word ‘asylum’ to narrow my search to the relevant data. As outlined in my appendix each debate was either structured around a certain topic e.g. working rights or simply a general discussion of asylum policy. Third at the scale of Glasgow there were no debates on the topic of asylum so I used a number of relevant reports, specifically the recently
released ‘Asylum Task-Force Report’ (February, 2019). Within each document I specifically focused on the opinions of Glaswegian politicians due to the focus of this study being on Glasgow’s reasons for becoming and remaining a dispersal site. This further made sense due to it being these politicians who tended to dominate debates on asylum in the Scottish parliament and Westminster. By engaging with the three different scales I encountered not only the difference of opinion at each scale, but I was able to engage with the power networks which flow between all three. This method is often used in combination with other qualitative research methods as a means of triangulation—‘the combination of methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon’ (Denzin, 1970, p. 291). In the case of my research I used my findings alongside semi-structured interviews, to support or refute certain trends. Overall I found document analysis a good method because of the public access to resources which made it an accessible and ‘cost efficient form of research’ (Bowen, 2009, 31).

During the course of my document analysis I was very aware of the potential of ‘biased selectivity’ (Bowen, 2009, p. 32) in my choice of documents. In order to diffuse this problem I implemented a set selection criteria, narrowing it down using a relevant time frame and key words. Although this did not eradicate the issue fully it reduced the implications of selection bias. A second limitation, which is often encountered with documents analysis is ‘irretrievability’ (Bowen, 2009, p.32). However by testing this early on I selected my data set partially based on its accessibility, as parliamentary transcripts are full accessible online. I remained aware of the authenticity of documents, where authenticity refers ‘to whether the evidence is genuine and of reliable and from a dependable origin’ (Bailey, 1994, p.225). Due to my focus on official government and council documents this issue was mitigated to the extent which I can trust the websites of the Home Office, Scottish Government and Glasgow City Council. Finally an overarching critique of this method is the performative representations of policy-makers opinions and positions which are detached from the actual case of Glasgow. This set up the necessity to engage with my final method, to grasp the position of political actors on the ground who decide to retain Glasgow as dispersal site.

4.6 Semi-structured interviews

Following the completion of my two other methods I undertook semi-structured, in-depth interviews to fill my knowledge gaps. These gaps emerged at the urban scale, as despite recognising the visible ‘culture of care’ in Glaswegian politics, I still drew blanks as to why Glasgow remained a dispersal site overtime. To fill this knowledge gap I recognised semi-structured interviews as the most suitable method to gather the qualitative insights that I required. As I was focusing on the political decision-making in the city I decided city councilors would be the best individuals to
interview. To compliment these interviews I also engaged with a two NGO’s working with asylum seekers in the city to balance the perspective of those from elected officials. I chose to carry out semi-structured interviews over structures interviews as they enable respondent to disclose as much or as little information as they wish, making them an ethically sound approach (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). This method, unlike other interview techniques permits me to generate findings that ‘reflected the participants views as much as possible’ (Longhurst, 2010:20). It also enabled me to ‘pause, probe or prompt appropriately’ (Ritchie & Lewis, 141) to gain the data I required. My interview questions were designed to investigate areas of interest found in my prior methods. Adams (2015) notes the wording of questions is imperative to ensure the questions remain objective and invite answers, which may be socially taboo. In response I spent time reflecting and revising my questions to ensure they really engaged with the relevant topics, without leading to certain responses. On reflection, I did find this method to be ‘time-consuming’ and ‘labor intensive’ (Adams, 2015:493) but I found the time spent necessary to collect the qualitative data required for this study.

Overall I undertook seven semi-structured interviews. This included four with current councilors, and one with a Glasgow based MSP and former councilor, then two with Glasgow based NGO’s. Each lasted between 45 minutes to an hour. Three of these were face to face and due to logistic difficulties one over the phone. This was followed by a focus group with the Govan Integration Centre and a phone interview with St Rollox Church. My focus group with the Govan Integration Network was undertaken with five members of staff from the NGO. I was not aware this was going to be the case before I arrived but enjoyed the unique insights this produced as it allowed a number of specific topics to be explored in-depth (Bryman 2012, 501). All respondents were selected by availability sampling (Tansey, 2007, p. 769) initially focusing on the districts housing asylum seekers. Due to a low response rate this pool was expanded to councilors across Glasgow City. Contact was made with both the NGO’s and Councilor’s through email and later phone-call follow-ups. The non-response rate was high but I found my persistence paid off with responses often emerging from my follow up emails and phone calls. Each interview/focus group was undertaken at a different location, often the office or drop-in location councilors had in their district. For the Govan focus group I visited the organisations main offices based in Glasgow. I collected voice recordings were collected, with the consent of each participant. This allowed me to focus on engaging with the interviewee, to establish rapport and trust (Opie, 2004) rather than writing notes.

I encountered three key limitations during the undertaking of semi-structured interviews. First the potential threat to validity with my preconceived understanding of why Glasgow is a dispersal site
which influenced ‘what was and what was not worth discussing’ (Newton, 2010, 4). As these perceptions were based on my initial understanding of Glasgow, rather than stating them as fact I utilised these to probe potential lines of enquiry with my interviewees. Secondly, as Denscombe (2007:184) contends ‘people respond differently depending on how they perceive the interviewer.’ This is called the ‘interviewer effect’ and can influence the ‘amount of information people are willing to divulge and their honesty about what they reveal” (ibid). This is an unavoidable reality of undertaking interviews, and reflecting back on Opie (2004) it made it even more imperative that I built a rapport and level of trust with each respondent. Finally a limitation arises regarding my sample size and the nature of the sample, specifically the limited number of interviews collected and the focus on one unit of individuals. This means the data is focused on the opinions and assumptions of a certain group of people which is not all encompassing of the opinions towards asylum seekers. Yet due to my specific focus on policy design and implementation I found these individuals were the most relevant to engage with for this project.

4.7 Mode of Analysis

Once I had collected all my resources I applied thematic content analysis to uncover different themes. Using the same approach across my data maintained formation in my coding procedures, which improved validity and made it possible to find correlations. I utilised the thematic analysis laid out by Braun and Clarke (2006) which applies a framework for analysing by ‘identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within [the] data’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 79). I used this frame to assure, as far as possible a ‘naturalistic and object oriented depiction of the material’ (Mayring, 2015, p. 88). Despite already having preexisting units of analysis based on my hypothesis, my coding strategy did not exclusively select data based on the level of reoccurrence or prevalence across the data set but also whether they ‘capture something important in relation to the overall research question’ (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 80). The conducted thematic analysis adheres to the six-step guide put forward by Braun and Clarke (2006) (see table 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Description of Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Familiarizing with the data: Transcribing data […], reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Generating initial codes: Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Searching for themes: Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.</td>
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Reviewing themes: Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.

Defining and naming themes Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.

Producing the report: The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, the final analysis of selected extracts, relating back to the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

Table 1. *The six phases of thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p. 87)*

4.8 Positonality
Acknowledging the subjectivity in knowledge production I reflected on my position at each stage of data collection and analysis (Geertz, 1993). In doing so, rather than simply seeing research as an end product I engaged with it as an ongoing process (England, 1994: 82). While both researcher and respondent holds a stake in what research is produced (Geertz, 1993) the researcher has the privileged position of deciding what questions to ask, directing the flow of discourse, interpreting interview and observational material (McLafferty, 2003, p. 437). As a result I approached my research with reflexivity and an awareness of how my own opinions and norms will influence it (Attia & Edge, 2017). As Haraway (1991) explains all knowledge is marked by its origins, it is never a neutral product but must be understood in the context of its creation. Hence in this project I do not aim to make all encompassing claims, but instead to validate the importance of studying the urban, and present an alternative framework to rethink the provision of sanctuary and care.

4.9 Ethics
Integrating ethics into the entire research process is critical to ensure the project is guided by ethical principles, beyond informed consent (Williams, 2003). For this research ethical implication started at the first point of contact with potential research participants. With this in mind I made sure my emails included all relevant information to guarantee the informed consent of interviewees, ‘free of pressure or constraint and in a fully informed manner’ (Faden & Beauchamp, 1986). Before completing any interviews I once again informed the respondent of the research and gained formal written consent from each interviewee. This ensured they were ‘aware of the design and procedures’ (Ruel et al, 2015:78). Whilst all interviewees stated they were happy for the data to remain non-confidential I decided to keep the names of all respondents confidential, as I didn’t see any relevance in exposing this information. Instead for the councilors I included the role of the respondent, and their constituency, for NGO’s I included the name of the organisation. As my two other methods are
‘unobtrusive and non-reactive’ (Bowen, 2009:31) I found no ethical implications to account for. The data I used was freely available on the internet meaning ‘permission for further use and analysis is implied’ (Tripathy, 2013) and as the ownership of the original data was acknowledged (ibid).

5. Analysis
The case of Glasgow appears unique due to its high intake of asylum seekers, however to explore this beyond a superficial engagement I employed descriptive statistics to frame the extent to which the position of Glasgow is unique to UK dispersal sites. In doing I outline the cities commitment to the dispersal scheme, which has altered the overall ability of the state to accept asylum seekers. Alongside framing it as an unlikely case of acceptance due to its entrenched socio-economic problems. This helps frames the second part of my analysis to engage with why Glasgow is so accepting.

5.1 Descriptive Statistics

For the first part of this analysis I’ll take a UK wide frame. Table 2 outlines the urban localities in the UK housing the highest number of number of asylum seekers under section 95 support from 2003 to 2018. In reaction to the primary purpose of the dispersal policy, it is of no surprise to see the number of asylum seekers in London has declined overtime. In 2003, London overwhelming housed the largest number of AS (24,916) followed by Glasgow (5,563), Birmingham (3210) and Manchester (1400). From 2003 to 2012 there is a steady overall decline in numbers across all major cities, most dramatically in London which then housed 2557, a decline of 22,359 followed by the housing of 1770 in Glasgow (a 3793 decline), 731 in Birmingham (2,479 decline) and 596 in Manchester (804 decline). All other key dispersal sites also saw a decline or remained stable apart from Liverpool which has seen a increase overtime, and as of 2018 has climbed up to be the third biggest dispersal area. The fluctuation in numbers reflects the changing demand for spaces of asylum. The UK saw a peak in asylum applications in 2002, at 84,132, reaching a 20 year low in 2010 at 17,916, rising in 2015 but then falling again in 2018 to 29,380 applications. This is influenced not only by global events, e.g. the ‘migration crisis’ of 2015 but the policy and response to asylum seekers by individual nations, which as I have been progressively designed to reduce the inflow (Zetter & Pearl, 2000).

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Since 2003 Glasgow has remained the second largest dispersal site for asylum seekers, overtaking London briefly in 2014/2015 to become the largest dispersal site in the UK. Figure 2 below highlights the 15 localities in the UK receiving more than 3,000 asylum seekers as of December 2017 and out of these Glasgow received the most. The figure further visualises the limited extent of dispersal in actual terms, with the majority of the UK receiving a low number of or no asylum seekers. Reflecting on the size and population of Glasgow, its ability to maintain an intake in actual numbers close to the whole of London overtime is remarkable. In 2018, asylum seekers made up 0.059% of the population in London, whereas in Glasgow they represented 0.67%\(^1\). Subsequently by ratio Glasgow is taking a lot more. Whilst asylum seekers in London are dispersed across different local authorities, Glasgow City Council is the singular care provider for all asylum seekers in Glasgow. Taking London out of the equation, the 2018 figures show Glasgow is housing 4056 asylum seekers, which is over double the next largest dispersal site which is Liverpool, housing 1596, followed by Birmingham, 1451. These figures situate Glasgow as an extreme case due to the sheer number of asylum seekers voluntary housed in the city, which have surprisingly maintained relatively stable over a 20-year period. This is my first major finding which frames why it is important to understand what contributes to this level of acceptance.

\(^1\) Calculation undertaken by author using Home Office population statistics and figures from 2018 Section 95 support by locality
Leaving Glasgow aside, engaging with the figures of the other major dispersal localities is also useful in situating Glasgow in the broader context of sanctuary politics within the UK. Whilst Scotland appears to have a more welcoming approach to asylum seekers in general (McCollum et al, 2014), Glasgow is still situated as a unique case when compared to the city of Edinburgh, Scotland’s second biggest city. In 2018, Glasgow was housing 4054 more asylum seekers under section 45 support than Edinburgh, who were housing the total of 3. This is despite Edinburgh having a stronger economic output, with a higher employment rate (78% of working age individuals in employment in 2018) and a higher Gross Domestic Household surplus of £21,800, compared to Glasgow’s £15,300. In the broader context, no other local authority in Scotland houses asylum seekers under section 95 support (Scottish Government Statistics, 2018). This poses the question why is it Glasgow that is single handily carrying the responsibility for caring for the majority of the UK’s asylum seekers. Therefore despite acknowledging that Scotland in general having a more positive approach to migration policy than the UK in general, it does not go far enough to explain why is it specifically the city of Glasgow, which has a number of socio-economic issues.

Sheffield is another noteworthy comparison, the city was the UK’s first City of Sanctuary (CoS), houses a surprisingly low number of asylum seekers in the city. As of June 2018 the city housed

Figure 2 - Asylum seekers supported under Section 95 by local authority, as of end December 2017. Taken from Home Office National statistics on immigration 2018
785 asylum seekers, 3271 less than Glasgow and making it the 9th largest dispersal site in the UK for the second quarter of 2018. Interestingly after becoming a CoS in 2007, the number of asylum seekers in the city dropped to an all time low of 568 in 2008, and this figure has continued to decline for the next four years before increasing slightly in 2013. The case of Sheffield is noteworthy as it shows the relevance of engaging with statistical data alongside the rhetoric and opinions of those inhabiting or discussing these urban spaces. It shows that despite having the label of a CoS this is not supported by a substantial intake in numbers. This questions the relevance of having a positive rhetoric when those in need of sanctuary are not receiving practical care. Darling (2009) reflects on this as ‘boutique multiculturalism’ which I understand as an act of accepting those we perceive as different due to a moral expectation, but only insofar as it doesn’t negatively impact our own lives or wellbeing. This supports the standpoint of Sheffield council who stated being a CoS, is ‘not about encouraging more asylum-seekers to come to Sheffield’ (Sheffield City Council 2007). Nevertheless, despite Glasgow being unique what these figures also show is that Glasgow is not alone, and it is no means the only local authority in the UK to accept asylum seekers or to be providing spaces of sanctuary. Therefore despite my focus on Glasgow I do recognise the work other local authorities are doing in regards to dispersal, and this study does not attempt to overlook the progress of these spaces.

So far I have acknowledged Glasgow as distinctive to the rest of the UK in regards to the sheer number of asylum seekers it houses. This sketches Glasgow as out of sync with state level anti-immigration and asylum rhetoric. Yet, this puzzle is further amplified when engaging with the socio-economic conditions of the city. There is an innate expectation that the caring for others should stem from a surplus of economic resources. This is reflected on by Dassler who argues that ‘bigger and economically more robust states would have to carry a larger burden of care than smaller and economically fragile states’ for caring for refugees (2016, pg66). This developed from the assumption that asylum seekers are an economic drain. However Glasgow challenges this idea of a fixed capacity to accept because it has maintained the ability to care despite socio-economic limitations. For example, in 2016/2017, 67% of working age individuals were employed, 6% lower than the Scottish average, contributing to the city having the highest rate of adults claiming out of work benefits in Scotland (Scottish Government Statistics, 2017). Secondly, child poverty is entrenched in the city with 34% of children estimated to be living in poverty in 2017, yet this is coupled with micro-geographical inequality as it differs greatly depending on the neighborhood. 59% of children in one neighborhood are living in poverty, compared to only 5% in another (ibid). This is further amplified when acknowledging the location of asylum seekers in the city, who are in the vast majority housed in the poorest districts, Govan, Shettleston and Canal (Freedom of
Information Request, from Asylum Seeker Housing Project, 2017). Glasgow then appears as an unusual case of acceptance, which poses an array of questions regarding the dominant narrative of acceptance and what is required for urban spaces to accept.

By engaging in the how I have outlined the role Glasgow plays in taking responsibility for a third of the UK’s asylum seekers. This responds to my first research question, using statistical data to outline the importance of urban spaces in actively carrying out the practical application of asylum care within the UK. This is not just confined to Glasgow but is happening across urban spaces to differing degrees. Yet the statistics clearly outline the unique stance of Glasgow, which seems to challenge the relationship between ideas and interests discussed at the state level. Nevertheless this analysis brings me no closer to an explanation why Glasgow’s exhibits this high level of acceptance, thus the use of descriptive statistics is limited in this instance. This stresses the importance of my mixed method approach and for the remainder of this analysis I’ll employ a qualitative approach to reflect on my other research questions; why does Glasgow’s level of acceptance for asylum seekers exceed that of the UK at large? And what role does the urban scale play in asylum care and response?

5.2 Qualitative Analysis

Recognising the limitations of a solely quantitative approach I will now explore my qualitative findings to unravel the alternative, but interconnected incentives for Glasgow to act as a norm entrepreneur. Tracing the four relevant lines of enquiry I’ll note how acceptance can be expanded and contracted overtime in light of the evolving but interconnected relationship between differing interests and ideas. I use the extreme case of Glasgow to outline the intrinsic variations which challenge the notion of a trade-off at the state level. This discussion is followed by a reflection on the unique ‘culture of care’ exhibited in Glasgow which challenges the focus of the CoS literature on ‘good-will’ as the single factor relevant in producing accepting urban localities, instead highlighting the fusion of normative and practical

5.2.1 Housing

First I discovered the factor of available housing to have transformative relevance to Glasgow’s position as a dispersal site. Initially having significant implications which then diminished overtime, ultimately cutting the tie between interests and ideas. My interviews outlined the understanding that available housing in Glasgow did contribute to the city becoming a dispersal site in 2001– ‘the area had a number of high rise blocks, there was empty housing (Cllr, Hillhead). This is supported by another cllr ‘Sighthill and Red Roads have now been demolished, but they would
have been demolished many years before if it hadn’t been for the arrival of refugees’ (Cllr, Springburn) and again by the Govan Integration Network ‘There was available housing.’ This frames the relevance of housing stock in supporting the cities initial decision to become a dispersal site, primarily because asylum seekers had perceived ‘worth’ at the urban level which could not be accounted for at the level of state decision making.

The linkage between the interests of the council and ideas about asylum seekers are further evident by a reflection on the local level response to the housing of asylum seekers. I found that the initial decision to place asylum seekers in units of available housing to be a point of contestation, specifically because the spare housing was located in areas of deprivation. This was commented on, ‘they chose to house people where there was available housing, what they did was house them in these deprived multi-story blocks and then caused these areas the transformation and regeneration areas which was code for mass demolition.’ (Cllr, Springburn) Without explicitly stating it I found the cllr implied a level of self-interest in the decision to allocate asylum seekers to spare housing, which did not reflect the best interests of those in need of asylum. This was recognised in 2001 in the Scottish Parliament; ‘dispersing 500 families to Sighthill because there are 500 empty homes in that area is not a comprehensive or strategic way of dispersing families’ (SD, 2001). This pinpoints the interconnected interests of the council to redevelop empty housing, whilst responding to the need for spaces of sanctuary. This frames the potential use of asylum seekers that challenges the perceived trade-off entrenched at the state level. Therefore it highlights the potential of interests and ideas to collide at the urban scale, which if utilised in a productive manner could transform the overall capacity to accept.

Exploring the topic of housing further I found that the initial connection between interests and ideas shifted when housing became privatised in 2009, reducing the control of Glasgow council and subsequently diminishing the incentive for the council to provide care for asylum seekers. This frames a substantial disadvantage of privitisation that Glasgow Council contends ‘effectively priced local authorities out of the market, with only large private sector companies able to compete for the contracts in a meaningful way’ (TaskForce, 2019, p23). Eliminating council control over housing provision means today they are at the mercy of private actor decision making, who can control the spatial allocation and deservingness of asylum claims. This has broader implication on the city whereas ‘local authorities are prohibited from providing homelessness assistance to persons subject to immigration control unless they fall under various excepted categories’ (Taskforce Report, 2019, p20). This anguished was shared by one cllr – ‘Secro (private housing company) were prepared to dump them (Asylum Seekers) on the streets and leave them with us, when we
(council) are not allowed to spend public funds on housing’ (Cllr, Springburn). In light of the shift to privitisation it reduces the incentive for Glasgow to remain a dispersal site. However as the figures in section 5.1 show, Glasgow still intakes a large number of asylum seekers. This indicates that the role of housing alone cannot explain Glasgow’s high level of acceptance overtime and the need to reflect on other lines of enquiry.

Steeping out of Glasgow I found the gradual privitisation of asylum services has led to irritation across other dispersal sites who now describe the dispersal policy as ‘something done to local authorities’ (Open Letter seen in the Guardian, in Home Affairs Committee, 2018:9). This supports Darling’s (2017p.32) critique of the privitisation of the process which he argues has reduced the agency of dispersal sites ‘to shape the dispersal process.’ but more broadly indicates the threat privitisation poses to the tie between interests and ideas at the urban level. The depoliticisation of previously government-controlled services is not simply about ‘the displacement of issues and functions from the governmental to the nongovernmental sphere’ (Wood and Flinders, 2014, p.162) but how this transaction has ‘become common sense’ (ibid). Therefore the privitisation of housing indicates state level response to asylum is not based on ‘morality’ or ‘international norms,’ but more so on ‘national interests’ (Steiner, 2001). Nevertheless I found that the urban has not been a passive agent to these changes, but actively challenging state level policy with political actors in Glasgow advocating for the council to regain control of housing matters ‘the argument has been that we should have the contract because we are the only people qualified to do the wrap around services these people need’ (Cllr, Springburn). This is supported by the belief that a fundamental human right has been placed in the hands of for-profit companies, ‘too often we have found that the housing provided through the Home Office’s outsourced commercial contract to Serco, this provides not stability but, sadly, aggravation and harm to those who should be treated with dignity’ (WD, Glasgow, 10th February 2016). Therefore in light of diminishing responsibility Glasgow is proactive in reimaging the worth of asylum seekers at the urban level and subsequently is challenging state level decision-making.

In sum, a reflection on the factor of housing shows the initial collusion of interests and ideas at the urban level that supports Glasgow’s unique instance of acceptance and questions the belief of a trade-off. Nevertheless the privitisation of housing provision and subsequent lose of urban control indicates that this factor alone does not go far enough in explaining Glasgow’s prolonged instance of acceptance. However it does show the changing power dynamics between urban localities and the state with Glasgow challenging state decision-making. In response I’ll next explore the role of immigration which is widely commented on as unique in Scotland due to the Scottish National
Parties rhetoric that ‘immigration was a ‘laudable, necessary, and positive thing for Scotland’ (Hepburn and Rosie, 2012. P.241). In doing so I hope to further grasp how Glasgow has remained so accepting overtime.

5.2.2 Immigration

Adding another level of complexity to the exclusive belief that the ability to accept is zero-sum I found Glasgow’s need for population growth to hold significant merit in its reasoning for becoming a dispersal site. This fits more broadly with the acknowledgement that ‘demographic stability has been positioned as central to sustainable economic growth in Scotland’ (Scottish Government, 2010, p44). As such, it is believed that Scotland’s explicit population targets, and desire to match European levels of population growth (Pillai, 2007) have constructed a more welcoming political climate. I discovered frequent references to Glasgow, and Scotland’s population status in debates; ‘we still have space. Scotland is not full up. We know that our population is falling and that we are heading for a skills shortage’ (SD, 2001). This was supported by one interview; our population has been declining and only started to pick up in the last 10 years, partially due to immigration so actually we need people to come’ (Cllr, Springburn). I found that population decline was an area of strong concern for Scottish politicians; ‘by 2009, Scotland's population will fall below the symbolic 5 million level. By 2027, there could be a quarter of a million fewer people of working age in Scotland. Population decline is serious’ (Official Report from 25 February 2004 in SD, 2005). This supports the differing demographic needs of Scotland, compared to the rest of the UK as, ‘a lot of people do realise that Scotland is short of people and Scotland’s populations has either been stable or falling for sometime (MSP Glasgow Shettleston). This positions the city of Glasgow as distinct in its practical need for people and subsequently provides fertile ground for asylum seekers to be accepted into the city to cope with this ongoing issue.

In response to this need the value of asylum seekers is then transformed, not framing then as a burden or only part of the states legal duty to care, but instead possessing the potential to contribute both culturally and economically to Glasgow. This was outlined by one cllr; ‘They are not simply victims who need help actually they are people who can actually really help our society.’ (Cllr, Springburn). Supported by another, ‘generally a positive feeling of more people coming to the area, boost regeneration, and we have skill gaps’ (Cllr, Hillhead). It is therefore clear Glasgow’s acceptance is expanded through an acknowledgment of its own interests and the potential of asylum seekers to fit these. This challenges the theoretical framing of acceptance as zero-sum and unisscalar but rather offer an opportunity to reflect on how this differs across scales, and at the urban where Glasgow shows there can be intrinsic differences between interests and ideas. The case of
Glasgow illustrates the potential of tapping into these alternative instrumental dynamics which can challenge the seemingly fixed capacity for states to accept and in turn produce a more productive asylum system.

Similarly to housing requirements I found that Glasgow’s does not passively accept UK policy but is actively challenging its implementation. This is most explicit with working rights and regulations where I found Glaswegian politicians, without exception constantly advocate for the working rights of those waiting on their application. The UK currently has very restrictive policies on asylum seeker’s working rights, which is legitimised through the discourse of ‘underserving’ migrants, entering the UK because of the ‘economic pull’ (Mayblin and James, 2018:7). In turn they have sustained their demands for working rights overtime ‘about time that the Government extended that right to all asylum seekers? (WD, Glasgow, 16th February, 2019), which is supported by Glasgow council, ‘The task force recommends the Home Office supports a pilot, in Glasgow, allowing asylum seekers to work, 6-months after asylum claim has been submitted, (Taskforce, 2019 p.20).

This is explicit in the interviews; ‘there is so much human talent that we have lost by warehousing them through this process. Totally counterproductive’ (Cllr, Springburn). It pinpoints the further value of asylum seekers to Glaswegian society if concessions for working rights were approved and illustrates the ‘disruptive dimension’ of urban spaces which Squire and Darling (2013) contend works to challenge dominate power relations. However extending this, I argue this ‘disruptive dimension’ is also undertaken due to the differing relationship between interests and ideas at the urban level resulting in friction in the design and implementation of state level policy.

Reflecting on the role of immigration I found the differing needs of Scotland, and Glasgow more specifically alters their relationship with asylum seekers. It illustrates the differing needs of the urban scale which does not result in a trade-off, but can engage with the positive potentiality of asylum seekers. This not only challenges the current framing of acceptance as zero-sum, but also the limited explanation given for the reasons urban spaces have an alternative approach to acceptance, beyond simple notion of good-will. Similarly to housing it also outlines the power of the urban to contest state level decision-making. Nevertheless the explanatory power of immigration is reduced due to the current lack of working rights given to asylum seekers, this again diminishes it as a singular reason for Glasgow’s continued acceptance. In turn I’ll next engage with the role of identity.
5.2.3 Identity Formation

I found the role of identity is a key normative factor influencing Glasgow’s relationship with asylum seekers. I found identity to be imperative to the Scottish relationship with Westminster, highlighted by the tension between Scottish Politicians and UK policy makers, due to immigration not being a devolved matter. Despite this, I found that Westminster’s approach to asylum care is completely opposed to that of Glasgow, ‘they (policy-makers) believe they are being philanthropic, charitable even, and we believe they are simply fulfilling a moral obligation’ (WD, Glasgow, 9th September, 2016). I found strong evidence to support a broader discourse of constraint where Glaswegian politicians feel held back by the policies implemented by Westminster. This was frequently mentioned during debates in the Scottish Parliament, ‘We want to do more in Scotland—more than the UK Government’s legislation allows us to do’ (SD, 2014), and ‘clearly, as a result of UK policy, more and more families are being subjected to inhumane treatment’ (SD, 2005). Another describes the UK system as ‘very harsh’ which ‘makes dubious decision’ (SD, 2005) and more recently; ‘In my constituency, which has the highest population of asylum seekers in Scotland and, indeed, the UK, I have had to deal with 106 asylum cases in the past five months alone, largely because of Home Office service level failures (WD, Glasgow, 10th October, 2018). This outlines Glasgow’s frustration, forced to work within a structure designed and controlled by Westminster. It correlates with the resistance to state policy on housing and working rights, which I have reflected on already and the entrenched friction between interests and ideas at the state level, compared to the urban.

The strength of this narrative is clear from the positioning of Scottish politicians who perceive themselves as morally superior and opposed to Westminster who are framed as morally redundant in asylum care and response, ‘Outsourcing may well suit the UK Government, as it allows them to outsource not only service delivery but a fair degree of accountability (WD, Glasgow, 10th February, 2016). In this regard I found that Scottish politicians have purposefully produced an ‘us’ and ‘them’, which has become ingrained in Scottish political discourse, with the strong belief that Westminster has no interest in caring for asylum seekers - ‘we often say that Scotland has a unique set of values, one that distinguishes our choices from those made elsewhere in the UK. No area more easily demonstrates that than immigration and asylum’ (SD, Glasgow, 2014). This illuminates the role of care in producing a unique identity in Scotland which is distinct to that of Westminster, and the rest of the UK. Said (2018, p.3) argues that Scottish parities want to ‘dissociate themselves from their British counterparts’ and ‘prove their commitment to Scottish national identity’ (ibid). As a result Scottish discourse has proactively promote an inclusive ‘civic’ articulation of a Scottish national identity (McCrone, 2002), based not only on the inclusion of
others, but doing so in opposition to the UK. Therefore I found that an inclusive identity exists as part of a broader strategy of identity, to distance Scotland, and Glasgow from Westminster.

The imperative role of identity is sustained at the urban level in Glasgow as I found a strong articulation of the connection between the cities acceptance of asylum seekers and the cities demographic heritage. This opposes the statistical trend visible in figure 3, with only 3.2% of the population classed as non-white in 1991 (Walsh, 2017) suggesting a lack of ethnic diversity. Nevertheless, on a cultural level it became clear the residents of Glasgow saw themselves as a population of migrants, which was imperative to their caring attitude today, ‘Glasgow is a mixed city, a lot of scots went to New Zealand, Canada and these other countries and many people have relatives in these places, so there was a feeling that if people are suffering then we should be welcoming towards them’ (MSP, Glasgow). One Cllr also mentioned this relationship; ‘It is to do with the specific culture of the city, its history and the Scottish relationship to migrants’ (Cllr, Springburn). This stance is supported by one parliamentary debate; ‘over the course of our country's history, although long ago, we have also suffered repression and forced emigration to other shores. We, from this country, were indeed asylum seekers (SD, Glasgow, 2001), again in 2007 - ‘We need to remember that immigrants have enhanced Scotland over many centuries’ (SD, Glasgow, 2007) and a specific reference to Glasgow ‘My city of Glasgow is built on the back of those fleeing crisis’ (SD, 2015). The framing of asylum seekers in Glaswegian discourse contests the dominant discourse of the asylum trade off, as the city recognises the positive historical contribution of migration, thus ability for asylum seekers to contribute to society in the present.
This differing perception of acceptance at the urban level is supported by the cities desire to cement its own identity and politics. This again challenges the notion CoS literature which sees care and acceptance as exclusively interrelated with the latter a response to the good nature of its residents. Exploring the case of Glasgow in the broader context of Scotland it shows the more elusive causal mechanisms which contribute to an expanded level of acceptance in the city. It frames how we can rethink asylum reception, not as zero-sum but open to being increased and contracted at the urban level. So far all three factors help explore Glasgow’s extreme stance of acceptance. However to better understand the practicalities of care I’ll next engage with my final assumption, the role of funding in expanding or contracting the overall capacity of acceptance.

5.2.4 Funding
Starting my data collection I expected funding to be a key point highlighting Glasgow’s level of acceptance. Instead I found that today funding is limited, and contracting the overall ability of the city to accept. The blame for this is pointed at both the Scottish Government, ‘the Scottish government could stabilise what we are doing more’ (Govan Integration Network) and Westminster. The latter specifically underlined in Glasgow’s Task Force report (2019) ‘The dispersal model can only work if there is a genuine and meaningful partnership between Local and UK Government and the contract providers. Such a partnership must be characterised by shared information and decision-making and underpinned by sufficient funding’ (Task Force, 2019, p. 24). Therefore rather
than supporting Glasgow’s unique instance of acceptance I found the lack of funding to contradict its position as a dispersal site, instead highlighting the role of NGO’s in maintaining the practical ability for Glasgow to care.

Despite the lack of funding today I found recognition for the initial role of funding in supporting the city. One cllr confidently stated that ‘Glasgow got a contract for a £120million to accommodate the asylum seekers. From the period 2000 to 2008,’ (cllr, Springburn), which was supported by another; ‘the council was paid, a reasonable amount of money to accommodate asylum seekers and provide all round services’ (cllr, Hillhead). Yet, neither suggested funding was a reason for the city becoming a dispersal site. This fits with the strong opposition I found in parliamentary reports to the claim that Glasgow solely took asylum seekers for economic gain. This was believed by one politician ‘Glasgow City Council saw asylum seekers as a commodity—it saw them as a resource to seek money from the Westminster Government’ (SD, 2001) which was then meet with outrage from other members of the debate, ‘It is unfair for criticism to be aimed at Glasgow City Council’ (SD, 2001) and ‘Glasgow City Council had a deficit line in its budget year in, year out because of that (asylum seekers). It did not offer to take refugees in order to make money’ (SD, 2001). This frames funding as a site of numerous contestations, but most importantly stresses the belief that care for asylum seekers has to be mutually exclusive to broader urban interests. Nevertheless as this analysis has shown they do not have to be completely opposed but can work in tandem to rethink urban acceptance levels and the supposed ‘worth’ of asylum seekers for the benefit of all.

Govan Integration Network frames the current funding landscape in Glasgow today stating, ‘the funding dried up’ (Govan Integration Network). This appears as a distinct area of concern with repeated calls for increased funding, ‘the Home Office attempts to expand the programme without adequate funding for developing services, we would be seriously concerned about the impact on public services and community cohesion’ (WD, Glasgow, 3RD May 2016). Supported by an open letter from Glasgow council to the Home Secretary; ‘We (the council) would urge immediate action by the Home Office to compensate Glasgow City Council for the provision of asylum support services, on the same basis as English local authorities’ (Aitken, Open Letter, 2018). I found that the lack of funding has placed pressure on NGO’s to cope with the demand for care where state support has left a void, therefore exposing the role of NGO’s in carrying out the practical work to maintain Glasgow’s level of acceptance.

The imperative role of NGO’s was noted by the those I spoke to first hand, as the Govan Integration network noted ‘You need to react, react, react, it is reactionary work,’ asserting ‘we’re putting a
plaster on it’ (Govan Integration Network). St Rollox Church commented on the changing, but consistent demand for services, ‘most recent demand for advice services, ESOL classes and sewing classes.’ This was supported by one cllr ‘I dread to think, if we didn’t have that sort (NGO’s) of support (Cllr, Govan). This supports Duvell and Jordan (2002, p.500) who contend that NGO’s under the dispersal scheme are ‘increasingly being drawn into the complex and often competitive arrangements to support asylums seekers and refugees.’ This competitive arrangement links to the complex field of asylum care today, with a range of different stakeholders having diffused power and responsibility. This is further acknowledged due to the lack of devolved control in Scotland, placing an even greater accountability on the role of NGO’s who as Teegan et al (2014) contends, are left to fill the void of care. This frames the practicalities of care as something imperative to the maintenance of acceptance, therefore unlike the CoS literature which simply frames ‘good will’ as the necessary requirement, it is also important to ask who is doing the care and how.

Delving into what could be done to relieve the pressure on their ‘reactionary work’ I found again funding was key. Whilst there is funding available to NGO’s in the city - ‘The Scottish Government already provides extra funding to a number of organisations that work with people who are at risk of destitution and eviction’ (SD, 2018), it is clear this is not enough to cope with the multiplex demands. St Rollox Church stated - ‘Funding is always an issue’ whilst one cllr ‘there needs to be more money from the government, we could do a lot more if there was money in this.’ It was clear that the lack of funding really restricts the work of NGO’s in the city, and as the case of Govan Integration Network highlighted are only able to provide for the most needy ‘great services but demand outstrips supply.’ This is supported by one cllr ‘I think it has got quite critical for a lot of organisations in terms of what they can do’ (cllr, Hillhead). This pays relevance to the disenfranchisement of caring activities in todays society with ‘caring devalued, underpaid and disproportionately occupied by the relatively powerless in society’ (Held, 2006, p.31). In light of these actions by the political elite, Glasgow is a poignant case where care has been ‘organised and extended without the help of the respective governments, and in many cases against the will of the state’ (Sluga, 2011 p. 275). This reveals the potentiality of the smallest intervention by NGO’s at a local level to affect local power relations (Jordan & Van Tuijl, 1998), but I would argue not just local power relations, but in the case of Glasgow, national power relations. In this instance NGO’s play a vital role in maintaining and shaping Glasow’s ability to accept, this therefore frames then as important political actors in asylum support and acceptance. However as I have shown their work is under-threat due to diminishing funding, which is likely to contract the cities overall capacity to accept.
This final line of enquiry shows that the limited and increasingly diminished funding available frames the disconnect between interests and ideas at the state level, which means caring practices for asylum seekers are sidelined. NGO’s in Glasgow are subsequently maintaining the cities ability to accept, albeit under increasing constraints. Overall, reflecting on the provision of care in Glasgow today outlines the contribution each of the factors explored; housing, immigration needs, identity and funding which all play a part in Glasgow’s accepting stance overtime. Interestingly, interwoven with each factor I found that a ‘culture of ‘care’ has developed in Glaswegian society, initially in light of the fusion between interests and ideas but today it has taken a life form of its own. For the final part of this analysis I’ll explore this culture and outline a possible area for further research.

5.3 Glasgow and a ‘Culture of Care’

By tracing the relevant lines of enquiry I have challenged the focus of the CoS literature which sees acceptance at the urban level purely based on the good-will to care. Through an engagement with Glasgow I have noted the importance of a number of individual but interrelated factors which support the cities role as a dispersal site. In doing so it does not undermine the practical role the city plays in providing support for asylum seekers, instead it offers an alternative, perhaps more practical lens to discuss how we overcome the deadlock of asylum dispersal at the state level. Nevertheless alongside these instrumental factors I also found Glasgow’s extreme level of acceptance to be underpinned by the development of a normative ‘culture of care’ which I believe has evolved overtime to produce a steadfast commitment to asylum seekers.

Alongside the instrumental factors, Glasgow’s sustained commitment to the dispersal policy can be unraveled through an engagement with the chronological development of a ‘culture of care’ which I argue is now entrenched in the pathology of Glaswegian politicians. This is visible in parliamentary debates ‘this Government is determined that Scotland should be a place of safety for people seeking asylum—a place that gives them the space and the peace that they need to rebuild their lives (SD, 2018) and ‘once you face up to it and open your eyes, however, there is no going back. You either have to harden your heart or you have to do something’ (WD, Glasgow, 9th September, 2015). It was also supported in my interviews, ‘If we can’t help another human being then what the hell is the point’ (Cllr, Canal), This ‘culture of care’ seems to extend across the city into the lives of both political actors and the local population, ‘but even for a labor led council at the time it was quite a statement, clearly not every labor led council in the UK took that view. But no one could have done it individually if there wasn’t buy in from
other people (MSP, Glasgow). This outlines the commitment Glasgow’s has towards the act of caring, which has remained steady, despite the altering and in some cases diminishing relevance of housing, funding, and population needs overtime.

Reflecting on this culture in Glasgow pays relevance to the cities uniqueness, alongside the recognition that the interconnection between self-interested needs and care are not mutually exclusive, as the case of Glasgow shows both have contributed to its unique stance. Reflecting on my findings so far I find Glasgow as an extreme case of care because today its level of acceptance comprises a level of self-sacrifice. I note this self-sacrifice because I believe the city is accepting beyond its practical ability to do so. This extreme form of acceptance places the city in opposition to tolerance, instead a pivotal example of extreme acceptance. This self-sacrifice is formed through both external and internal factors, for example funding cuts are making practices of care harder to deliver, but not diminishing the cities incentive to help. This makes it relevant to question the sustainability of Glasgow as a dispersal site when acknowledging the ability to give care is not infinite, ‘as care as an activity, ‘carries economic and emotional costs’ (Williams, 2001, p. 470).

The sustainability of over-caring in the city is further challenged by a multitude of other socio-economic vulnerabilities, including a ‘homelessness crisis’ (Littlewood et al, 2017) with clear discontent stemming from resource management ‘if you put people in deprived places, go figure,’ (Govan Integration Network). From this viewpoint, Dassler asks ‘wanting to help refugees may be possible to a certain extent, but where should we draw the line?’ (Dassler, 2016, pg.44). This has further value when looked alongside Pettersen’s who argues, ‘we fail to care in a mature way when we fail to care for ourselves because we care too much for others’ (Pettersen, 2011, p.87). Without supporting the rhetoric of division this does bring to light the question of resource management. Whether morally justified or not, the state level narrative assumes that states should ‘guarantee stable, work and welfare goods for our own citizens who are granted such rights by the state’s constitution’ (Dassler, 2016, pg. 44). This adds a new level of complexity, as like the CoS which only frames expressions of care as positive in nature. The case of Glasgow demands that ‘care be subjected to moral scrutiny and evaluated, not just observed and described’ (Held, 2006, p.11). This opens up a starting point for an additional enquiry, where the provision of care be critically discussed. Overall this reflection expresses the entrenched role of care in contributing to Glasgow’s prolonged willingness to accept which indicates that care politics has become entangled with the relationship between interests and ideas overtime. This frames Glasgow as an extreme case of acceptance, whilst also framing care
as moldable and elastic to changing external and internal demands.

5.4 Chapter Conclusion
This chapter has traced the four point of initially inquiry to help explain Glasgow as an extreme case of acceptance. In doing so I have outlined that there is not on singular factor which explains the case, nor is it the most obvious case of funding which I found holds little relevance. Instead I found there is a combination of both normative and instrumental factors at the urban level, which expand and contract the overall capacity of the urban and subsequently the state to accept. This challenges the assumption that acceptance is static, whilst adding new depth to the CoS literature which passively frames the urban as caring. Nevertheless I found that in doing so does not disregard the ability of the urban to be more caring and as I have explored they continually challenge state policy on asylum. Furthermore Glasgow has producing a ‘culture of care’ which has gained increased traction overtime and led the city to continue caring despite the reduced tie between interest and ideas. My final chapter will explore my overall conclusions in more detail.
6. Conclusions

A reflection on the extreme case of Glasgow has provided me with the opportunity to engage with a specific urban response to spaces of sanctuary. In doing so I have been able to produce both site-specific findings which are unique to Glasgow, alongside broader conceptual challenges to the dominant framing of ‘acceptance’ in the academic literature. To explore these interconnected but distinct findings this final chapter will draw across my data sets to scale back up to my core research questions and finally outline the limitations of this study, alongside recommendations for further research.

‘How does Glasgow’s level of acceptance for asylum seekers exceed that of the UK at large?’

In order to answer ‘how’ Glasgow differs to other dispersal sites I engaged with a cross-comparison looking at the other major dispersal sites receiving asylum seekers under Section 95 support. It places Glasgow as unique due to its long-standing commitment, which sees it repeatedly take responsibility when other local authorities do not. This is carried out on a voluntary basis therefore positions the city as out of sync with the dominate framing of interests and ideas at the state level. This stressed two key points, first the importance of recognising the difference between rhetoric and actual instances of care. The first appears to be widespread with demands for more humane and productive policies from all sectors of society, but in reality only a small number of local authorities are voluntary accepting asylum seekers across the UK. Delving further I found that even within these authorities the numbers can vary. This is specifically evident with the case of Sheffield where the rhetoric of acceptance does not match the actual intake of asylum seekers. This indicates that surface level notions of acceptance and good-will do not go far enough to explain dynamics at the urban level, a key limitation of the CoS literature. Overall the cases of Sheffield and Glasgow, and the other dispersal sites shed light on the limitations of the zero-sum approach to acceptance, as the urban level is imperative in reshaping and challenging the state. This sets up the requirement to explore the multiplicity in urban responses to asylum seekers, and for this study I chose the Glasgow as an exceptional case of acceptance.

Why does Glasgow’s level of acceptance for asylum seekers exceed that of the UK at large?

Following my descriptive statistics, a qualitative approach explored how the case of Glasgow challenges the divergent relationship between interests and ideas at the state level and instead outlines how interests and ideas regarding asylum seekers can collide. At the scale of the state it is
predominantly understood that the UK marginalises asylum care, reflecting the juxtaposition between the legal responsibilities of the state to provide care under the Geneva Convention, whilst framing asylum seekers as a burden, therefore the provision of care is not within the states interests. This is what I define as a system of tolerance, whereby the UK is only fulfilling a legally obligation to care, an approach visible across other EU countries today and explains their inability to produce productive mechanisms of distribution. Nevertheless the case of Glasgow is an extreme example of how the urban can overcome this zero-sum approach, instead outlining the intersection of different factors which can generate sustained acceptance overtime.

Exploring the relevant lines of enquiry I found that acceptance is not static but can expand and contract at the urban level in relation to a number of inter-related instrumental and normative dynamics. Rather than finding one pivotal explanation for Glasgow’s accepting nature, I found a range of multi-scalar and interconnected factors, which have alternative relevance overtime. These included the availability of housing, need for immigration, availability of funding and identity construction and each holds merit in contributing to the ‘culture of care’ which is now entrenched in Glaswegian political discourse today. Reflecting on the stance of Glasgow I conclude that the city is unique as it has reached a point of self-sacrifice where the decision to voluntary accept asylum seekers goes beyond the cities capabilities to do so, a response to the entrenched pathology of care in Glasgow. The ability for Glasgow to reach this pinnacle point of acceptance did not emerge from a void, but the gradual merging of ideas and interests, alongside the development of NGO’s in maintaining the practicalities of care. This shows that acceptance not only differs between the state and urban level, buts how this can alter between accepting urban scales. In sum rather than emerging simply from the ‘good will’ of Glasgow’s political decision makers, I found that acceptance is based on the convergence of housing availability, funding, the need for population growth and today a entrenched duty to care.

The focus on the case of Glasgow was selected due to its extreme level of acceptance therefore the factors which present it as unique cannot be assumed of other dispersal areas. Yet what this case shows is that it is too simple to state that acceptance is purely linked to the good will or generosity of the general population or political actors. Whilst this is likely to always remain an underlying factor, the decision is further bound up with broader instrumental and normative reasoning which may have more or less significance overtime. This critiques the simplified notion of ‘good will’ which underpins the CoS literature today and exposes the relevance of a critical turn to the urban as a site of enquiry for a more productive response to the demands for sanctuary.
What role (can) the urban scale play in asylum care and response?

Glasgow’s high level of acceptance is the critical turning point in the conceptual framing of ‘acceptance’ as static and zero-sum at the state level. As I already noted, Glasgow is an extreme case of acceptance and showcases how urban acceptance can diverge away from the states strategies and be more accepting. Reflecting on this led to two key findings, first the role of urban spaces in challenging state level discourse and second the role of urban spaces in carrying out the practicalities of care where state support is absent.

First, key to Glasgow and subsequently the role urban spaces can play in asylum care is the challenge they present to UK discourse. I found that Glaswegian politicians are challenging UK policy on asylum. This is not only framing Scotland as unique to the UK in its ability to care, but is demanding that the UK rethinks and adjust its policies. This emphasises a key contribution of the dispersal process as urban localities are given an instrumental role in the asylum procedure, which I believe is greatly overlooked in the current discourse. This shows the bottom-up movement of power from urban localities to the state. Nevertheless despite this power dynamic, reflecting on Bagelman’s (2013) work it is important to recognise the relationship between the state and the urban is fragile, and ultimately it is the state that has the ability to give, retract or change support for asylum policy. Yet despite this, at the urban level Glasgow is actively challenging the boundaries between who is inside, and outside the state, pinpointing the power of urban spaces in (re)formulating their own discourse around asylum and sanctuary. This underlines a clear benefit of the dispersal process as it places power into the hands of local authorities that can shape a more productive approach to care.

Second, despite the connection between ideas and interests in Glasgow I found its ability to care is linked to the role of NGO’s, a trend likely to be visible across other dispersal sites. I found that NGO’s did not influence Glasgow’s initial decision to become a dispersal site in 2001 but have since responded to the increasing demand for services, where the consistent retraction in state welfare has left a void in services. My focus group with the Govan Integration Network, alongside interview with St Rollox Church provided an initial insight into the weight of care placed on third sector groups where levels of governance are either restricted from providing support e.g. Glasgow city unable to provide any housing provisions, or does not provide or receive funding. In response to this finding it become apparent that NGO’s in Glasgow are holding up the system, and undertaking ‘reactionary work’ which enables Glasgow to remain so welcoming towards asylum.
seekers. I found that this sheds light on the sustainability of the system and the importance of sufficient, well-placed funding to maintain the dispersal process in Glasgow, but also across the UK.

Reflecting on the relevance of this thesis I intended to rethink how asylum dispersal managed and perceived. Most significantly I have advocated for a complete shift in the scale of analysis, away from the state to the role of urban, which can reshape the notion of a trade off. In order to do this I was required to rethink the conceptual vocabulary and develop my own framework, noting the limitations of the current framing of ‘acceptance’. By doing so I have accounted for a new, currently underdeveloped site of enquiry which this project begins to reflect on. However I note this is only the start and the final section will note limitations and key areas for further study.

7.1 Limitations and Further Research

There are some limitations to this study. First the number of interviews undertaking restricts the scope of study. This was most apparent with the NGO’s as it proved to be very difficult to set up interviews with them, largely because they did not have the time or people to spare. Whilst this created a gap in the data it could partly filled with an extensive coverage of the relevant documents that often express the opinions of politicians, councilors and NGO’s within the city. Secondly, focusing solely on the city of Glasgow as an extreme case is based on my statistical analysis, this would have been further developed through an engagement with local councilors and NGO’s in other dispersal sites across the UK for further comparison.

The study has opened up a number of lines for further research. I noted the importance of NGO’s in carrying out care-giving, as the case of asylum seekers shows this is marginalised in mainstream state level decision making. Moving into an era of further budget cuts, and reduced local council spending, the role of NGO’s as care-givers is a fruitful sight for further research as they are likely to become increasingly imperative in the provision of services. Secondly, in relation to Glasgow I touched on the importance of care being evaluated and contested. Reflecting on the finite ability to care, it would be interesting to evaluate the provision of care in Glasgow, but more broadly apply a critical lens to care-giving, rather than framing it as one-dimensional and solely positive but to account for its intricacies.
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8. Appendix

Appendix 1: Semi-Structured Interview Questions

I used the following questions as guidelines to develop the conversation with respondents.

National Level

- Scotland appears to have a welcoming approach to migrants and refugees, why is this?
- Is this culture reflected across Scotland as a whole?
- Migration policy is not a devolved issue for Scotland, what impact does this have on asylum care and how would it differ if it became devolved?

City Level

- Why does Glasgow take over its fair share of asylum seekers?
- Glasgow has continually accepted a high number of asylum seekers, is there a reason they are placed in Glasgow over other areas of the country?
- How has the city been able to sustain care for these individuals over a prolonged period of time?
- Who is responsible for implementing asylum care in the city of Glasgow?
- How has your locality responded to the rise in asylum seekers? Integration and sharing of resources.
- Do you think it is now an expectation that people welcome asylum seekers?

Current situation

- What is the relevance of funding for Glasgow and how has this impacted the dispersal scheme?
- The privatisation of housing, did this impact Glasgow’s commitment to asylum seekers? More specifically did the lock change incident last summer either positively or negatively alter Glasgow’s commitment to asylum seekers?
- Do you think Glasgow would ever consider withdrawing?
- How will asylum care continue to take place in light of further budget cuts? Is it sustainable and if so how?
- How do you think other cities could become more welcoming to asylum seekers?
Appendix 2: Documents

A list of all documents used in this study

House of Commons debates 2000-2019

All available to the public on Hansard: [https://hansard.parliament.uk/](https://hansard.parliament.uk/)

House of Commons

1. Immigration and Nationality Directorate debate (29/March/2000)
2. AS debate in the House of Commons (12/April/2000)
3. Asylum Seekers (inner London) (5th July 2000)
4. Asylum Seekers (N/E Lincolnshire) (1/May/2001)
5. Nationality, Immigration and asylum bill debate in commons chamber (24/April/2002)
6. Establishment of centres debate in commons chamber (5th November 2002)
7. Home and Constitutional Affairs debate in Commons chamber (2nd December 2003)
10. As debate in house of chamber (1st December/2006)
11. Asylum seekers debate (28/March/2007)
12. As debate in house of chamber (1st December/2010)
13. European Convention on Human Rights (June/2012)
15. Immigration detention debate in commons chamber (10, Sept, 2015)
17. Asylum Support Contracts 10th of February 2016
18. Engagement debate in commons chamber (9th March/2016)
19. AS discussion in House of Commons (3rd May 2016)
20. Asylum Seekers: Glasgow debate in Westminster Hall (5th July, 2016)
22. Detention of Vulnerable people Debate (13/March/2017)
23. Immigration Act 2016: Section 67 debate in commons chamber (19/July/2017)
25. Asylum Seeker accommodation debate (14 December/2017)
26. Refugee and asylum seeker debate in commons chamber 26/Feb/2018
27. Asylum Accommodation Contracts (10th October/18)
28. The Right to Work (Feb/2019)

Scottish Council

Debates in the Scottish Parliament between 2000-2019. Each is referenced and can be found online.

1. ‘Asylum Seekers and Refugees’ - October 2001
2. Asylum Seekers’ - September 2003
3. ‘Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimant’s)’ - February 2004
4. ‘Asylum seekers (Children)’ - September 2005
5. ‘Asylum Seekers’ - September 2007
6. ‘Asylum Seekers (Destitution)’ - November 2012
7. ‘Asylum Seekers and Refugees’ - June 2014
8. ‘Asylum Seekers’ - November 2018

Glasgow

Reports

   Available: https://glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=44501&p=0
   Accessed: 25/4/19

2. Open Letter from Susan Aitkins to the Home Secretary titled ‘Glasgow Politicians Urge Home Secretary to Prevent "Humanitarian Crisis"
   Available: https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/article/23034/Glasgow-Politicians-Urge-Home-Secretary-to-Prevent-Humanitarian-Crisis
   Accessed: 12/5/19

Appendix 4: Consent Form

Consent Form

This form is to ensure that you, as a participant in this research project, have been made fully aware of its purpose and have consented to your involvement. Please either tick the boxes you agree with or respond accordingly:

I understand the motives and aims of this project.

☐

I know I don’t have to answer all the questions I am asked.

☐

I agree to the interview being recorded.

☐

I agree to inform the interviewer of any sensitive information I do not wish to have recorded.

☐

I would like to remain anonymous.

YES/NO
Appendix 5: Interview Transcripts

Transcript 1 – Councilor for Canal
Interview took place Glasgow City Chambers 30/4/19

Interviewer: So why did Glasgow become a dispersal site?

We became the only local authority in 2000 to take in asylum seekers. We don’t get any extra funding for doing that and I personally think now, my philosophy that it could have been any one of us. I think it is only right and proper, as a human race that we try and help people. Because as you say, I have travelled all over England and it is like the Brexit thing, there is a undercurrent. Its not nice, and that concerns my hugely. I wouldn’t want the Brexit thing to effect what Glasgow as done. When we were in power, when labor was in power, we kicked all this off. Before I became a councilor I remember Glasgow getting nothing but abuse.

Interviewer: From?

From people.

Interviewer: People outside of Glasgow?

Yes for taking asylum seekers and our argument was then and still is, well I can’t speak for the current administration, if we can’t help another human being then what the hell is the point. I think the government could be putting a lot more money into this

Interviewer: One of the interesting things is the fact that now there is no funding in Glasgow, has there ever been any funding?

No, never any funding there. When we started doing this and putting people in for instance the red road flats, my argument is that if there was money coming in we could help these poor souls a lot better, rather than just putting them into the housing nobody else wants. That is currently what is
happening. Although Serco is responsible for housing, although they have lost the contract, it is also private landlords, and housing associations taking there fair share. 19 years down the line still so much could be done.

**Interviewer: Not a devolved issue, if it was would it improve the situations**

If it was devolved, you need the people on the ground to make these decisions, I don’t think these decisions being made in Westminster helps, if it was localizes as in Scotland making these decisions then it would helpO t’s the whole scenario one size doesn’t fit all. If there was more money put into this by government I think a lot of these people wouldn’t be getting stigmatised, they are in a lot of areas people don’t want to live in and those areas are quite territorial. I’m not saying everyone is rude or offence but there is that element out there.

**Interviewer: Is there tension at the local level?**

I think everyone has got the right intentions, right across the city. We have led the way. I remember when Glasgow started doing this and we got negative press, but maybe you could learn something from what Glasgow is doing. Okay maybe we have an issue with housing but come on we are doing their fair share.

**Interviewer: Is it frustrating no over local authorizes are stepping up to the mark?**

I think it can be exhaberating, but even if we’re in the minority of one I don’t think we should give up and we should still do our bit to help. You couldn’t imagine what it is like having to flee your homeland and take refuge in a strange country, it is hard enough for these people without having to meet that barrier of ignorance. It is a educational thing, you have to teach people

**Interviewer: There is a culture of welcome in Glasgow it seems?**

When I hear other people talk about asylum issues I think, you’re a dinosaur. I remember hearing one elected mayor say in the news oh we have enough issues but my argument is if we cant help each other then what the hell is the point. But there needs to be more money from the government, we are doing are best, but we could do a lot more if there was money in this’

**Interviewer: Would that come from UK?**

This has to come from the UK level, we can all allocate certain amount of money, but we have to spread the jam the best way we can. If there was a dedicated pot then we can implement it.

**Interviewer: What is the role of NGO’s and civil society?**

They do play a major role but it all comes back to funding, if you have the funding the opportunities are endless. The language must be difficult, we need more money for interpreters. There are over 100 languages and that has to be addressed. There is an injustice, if there was a dedicated pool of
money then that would go along way to help these people. Again I go back that no one would want to be driven out their homeland. Education has got to be said a lot about it, it’s the native that need to be educated. Everyone deserves the right to a decent life, if they come here for refugee then we should help and doing a lot more. It is commendable what is being done but there is massive room for improvement which comes down to government money. Sadly the British culture is that if you have a rotten lot in life then it is someone else’s problem. If there were more resources people could integrate in the community. We should be a multi-cultural society, society is so white, male and stale.

*Interviewer:* What is your opinion of working rights, lifting the ban?

I am on the licensing committee applying to work. You cannot fault them for that. You get these idiots who say they are taking off us, but sorry I ask have you ever done a days work in your life. I don’t mince my words because I think ignorance has a lot to do with this. That (working) cap needs to be lifted, good on them for earning there own crust, so that they are not draining the system. That’s were government forgets, these people generally want to work but we are restricting them, it makes no sense. Completely contradicting. If the cap was lifted we feel better about ourselves and that applies right across the board. Government needs to wake up and smell the coffee and do something about it. I am totally proud of Glasgow and I was proud when Glagow said we need to do our fair share. The only council in Britain, lots of bad press which said oh Glasgow’s deprivation but they want to take asylum seekers but no its called helping your fellow brother.

*Interviewer:* Was it shared opinion across the council?

Oh yeah, I know some of my colleagues said that charity begins at home but if we cant help someone who needs it then what the hell is the point. It is all down to education, funding and education.

*Interviewer-* What would encourage other local authorities to take asylum seekers?

They need to think everything through, but how are they going to go about it. I am not saying Glasgow was perfect but they thought it through enough to say lets get the people here and then get the groundwork started. Now19 years on, there are the agencies there but there is still room for improvement. You see this with the lock changes with Serco. What a bad situation. Not one of you would like it and you don’t have an input. It is wrong and the injustice of that is unbelievable. Glasgow done it the right way but like anything it would have been done better with more resources. If other local authorities looked at Glasgow, need to think yes we will do that but how are they going to do it. People today have a positive experience but go back to 2000 not everyone had a positive experience. 19 years down the line I still see things and think that could be done better or that could be in place. I think the situation is only going to get worse. Why the hell kick them when they are down, treat each other like you would want to be treated. You look at the British society with the Brexit nonsense, they are looking inwards and become more racist.

*Interviewer:* Is it a sustainable policy?
Well we have sustained it over this time, I would hope and I am sure Glasgow would continue to do it. But I hope, underline that word as some politicians say one thing and do another and that is very evident right now. We have continued to do it and long may they do it. If other councils are going to do it they need to think it through, you can’t just have people stuck with no helping hand, as with the language barrier as that is a serious issue. If that money was ring-fenced then it wouldn’t be a problem. I think it is only going to get worse with the Brexit scenario. Some of the problems in the world, Britain has played a part in those problem so it is only right and proper that we try. I think also with the Scottish Government who are not my favorite people, can all talk a good game but actions speak louder than words. There are some national members who still focus on inward problems. There is still room for improvement, make no mistake about that, Scotland wide, UK wide. The penny pinching is only going to get worse, much worse. You tell me they haven’t got money, there is money there that could be tapped into, we know communities are struggling, every community is struggling but come on it is one thing taking people but you need resources to address it, you cant take someone stick them their then forget about them, that seems to happen a lot. These people can be part of the community, they can enrich it.

Interviewer: Engaging with asylum seekers seems to reduce the barrier between people?

You got that more personal level, a couple of friends who are police officers live in the more affluent areas of Glasgow, they said to me why do the asylum seekers get put in the deprived areas of Glasgow, and I said say that is my argument entirely. It is the people from the affluent areas who say oh we cant be helping them but wait till it is on your doorstep. If communities with high levels of poverty can be helping these people then the most affluent areas can spare a dim, it does not make sense. This is part of the forward thinking, how can we disperse and spread these people in a even and fair way For a lot of these people, sadly there memory of Scotland will be being abused, verbally, physically. Again it is all done to the education They need to get that money tree and get it growing because as I say this problem is only going to get worse. I fully support this council to continue to do this. Still room for improvement big style. If you’re going to bring people on then you need to inform people at the community level. I don’t want people coming to Glasgow to think we’re a bunch of uneducated idiots but sadly, like anything it is the negatives that make the headlines not the positives

Transcript 2 – Councilor for Springburn
Interview took place in Springburn community centre 2/5/19

Interviewer: How did the dispersal process start?

My community set up support networks, in a community which didn’t have any facilities, there wasn’t social services, doctors, pharmacy, there was a post office and a shop. The residents set up a community flat, so they had someone. The residents were doing the basic orientation. They started English language classes that have been going for almost 20 years. So that is how it began, it was actually residents doing it first. At the time of the racist backlash that was as small minority of people, and Sighthill got this reputation. But actually Sighthill folk had always had incomers, a diverse population to some extent. However overtime the schemes were allowed to deteriate and the people in them were already people with multi-level social deprivation problem and had no
resources to look after themselves. Sighthill and Red Roads have now been demolished, but they would have been demolished many years before if it hadn’t been for the arrival of refugees. At first Glasgow got a contract for a £120million to accommodate the asylum seekers during the course of the labour environment. From the period 2000 to 2008.

Interviewer: 2009 the funding ended?

Yes, and of course that was when the recession happened which had a impact on public spending and there were a lot of cut backs to public spending and one of the ways it cut back of spending was to pander to racial dogma about immigration and one of the ways to do that was to cut back of resettlement. Prior to that councils where able to bid for contract, then the tory government came in and stopped councils from being able to bid for resettlement councils. We have the weird anomaly where councils are responsible for social services, education, welfare and heath stuff but it is not responsible for housing. That is ridiculous. The contracts are now only available for private sector bidders.

Interviewer: The privitisation altered the housing and allocation of asylum seekers across the city?

The council could have chosen (where to house individuals) but they chose to house people where there was available housing. The right to buy had effected where they had housing, so all the best had gone by the time refugees started coming here. This meant that all the wealthier communities in Glasgow didn’t have the housing to accommodate them apart from in the private sector. What they did was house them in these deprived multi-story blocks and then caused these areas the transformation and regeneration areas which was code for mass demolition. There are 8 such areas; Sighthill and Red roads are two of them. This has led to the demolition of 17,000 homes. We saw a mass influx of people who knew nothing about Scotland, or Glasgow in some cases didn’t even know they were coming to Glasgow. While many did receive a good welcome and glad they landed in Glasgow a rather than another place, the truth is they were landed in a place which was not at all equipped to deal with their needs. By 2004/5 there was the start of services for asylum seekers, refugee council, YMCA housing provider, they did it badly but at least better than other people. Police were developing and the organization of refugees themselves. We had to resist Home office, evictions, and deportations, and that mass movement was important in Glasgow to recognize the refugees communities right to stay here. We were very successful in getting appeals and juridical reviews so Glasgow is the most successful place in UK in getting successful appeals and getting people to stay here. At one point over 50% success rate, which is a lot higher than anywhere else in the UK. This was, in part due to a degree of public support of the local community which is lacking in other parts of the UK. I do think an element of this is frankly because it is Scotland. I do think people in Glasgowsians are generally more fair minded, and down to earth and I think many in their family life have been migrants elsewhere, so they feel some level of solidarity with that. So that is particularly why there is a more welcoming sense , to do with the specific culture of the city, its history and the Scottish relationship to migrants. These are elements important in people’s mindset. Also what’s important is Westminster’s approach opposing on it but we are dealing with it and this is how, because we wouldn’t let people we destitute on the streets.

Interviewer: Migration is not a devolved issue? What impact does this have?
We have a different debate. We don’t have Scottish Newspapers going out there saying refugees are scum we don’t have any of that. It is a different discourse. Even the conservations are not anti-immigration, UKIP didn’t get any votes up here. This is so different to the debate down south which is so toxic, we have some racism for sure but it is no where near the same degree. Overall this contributes to a much more welcoming environment. And also with the war in Iraq, people also feel a solidarity with people because we know we have caused them some issues The other factor is population, population is a big issue for us and this country is that we don’t have enough people. This is different to down south which is worried about the provision of services. Our population has been declining long-term and only started to pick up in the last 10 years, partially due to immigration so actually we need people to come. Glasgow’s population has been declining by around 20,000 overall – now 600,000. Partially because we demolished all these areas so there is less housing, but our problem is not over but under populations and you need migrants to sort this. Having potentially highly skilled migration in our labor market could be beneficial to us. The immigration laws have prevented us from utilising them.

Interviewer: Scotland are for the lift the ban campaign? What impact would this have?

Refugees always said they wanted to work. If you haven’t had your case solved within 6-9 months you were given the right to work. But now destitution became part of the strategy; every year the government has introduced a new law to make destitution part of the system to make it less attractive to be here. As if those fleing a country will think about that, no one will think that way. Nonsense but the change in policy had enforced destitution, for example through the money cards, and then you couldn’t chose were to live. Housing providers, even the good ones 10 years ago would give case workers keys to peoples houses, these are people who have escapes wars and have terrors, this is still happening.

Interviewer: Evictions last summer?

That has been a complicated process, as they give power to private service providers, who don’t have linkages who don’t have linkages for social services, or educations who don’t have the trained staff. Secro is a prison company, this is not the right the right person to deal with sensitive refugees who have fled war zones and women who have been raped by soldiers. They should have never got the contract and I am very glad that they don’t have it. Secro were prepared to dump them (AS) on the streets and leave them with us, when we (council) are not allowed to spend public funds on housing. We can do social services, education, and health.

Interviewer: That was from 2009?

Yes since 2009, we don’t have the contract. If we did have the contract we would be able to do the whole thing, and the argument has been that we should have the contract because we are the only people qualified to do the wrap around services these people need. When the contracts were awarded, we had these discussions, what do refugees want and they had three consistent demands. The end to evictions, the right to education, and the right to work. The unity center was set up. At that time people were told to come in to the weekly, monthly meeting and basically be kidnapped and send to Dunhaven. So local activists had to set up a defense, we set up an office around the corner, people would report there first and if they didn’t come back we knew something was wrong. We did this for years. The Unity group grew into an activist network, this is not such a problem.
now but at the time it was a big problem. There was a war of attrition in regards to home evictions, deportations and detentions, they were all connected. Eventually we got some victories on that with protests and supports, they back off a bit. So many cases have been 5/10 years or more. In the old system if you have been here 5/10 years you got some automatic rights, this was before 2000. Now they have made it very difficult to pass their tests. Many people had their asylum application denied but then went down the family right to life route, I think this is under article 8. Many by this time had kids in schools.

When we were in Sight-hill we had a refugee community, mixed with a working class white community, integrated a bit. Then there was a plan to demolish our homes which dispersed our activists and leaders across West Scotland. This has happened in all 8 of the dispersal areas. This has had a negative impact on the communities as they are all dispersed. I am a housing activist my instinct, and become a pro-refugee activist through that. Today the community is spread across the West of Scotland, I used to have a refugee community living around me and I don’t have that now. This is one aspect of the policy I don’t like because they have moved people to troubled areas, with little facilities the burden has fallen on the poorest communities, haven’t dispersed them to places that could have handled it. They have been dispersal a lot more fairly.

**Interviewer**: The dispersal scheme, why do other local authorities not offer?

Local authorities got some money for the scheme for Syrian Resettlement, funds from the UN.

**Interviewer**: Yes there is EU funding for this

Interviewee: English now get funding, Scotland doesn’t even though we take the most but we don’t get any funding, from an English point of view the question of refugees and migration is more toxic so they have chosen to start funding it again because the pressure they have but on local government, they don’t have the resources. That is the same for use, we haven’t had our budgets slashed to the same degree but we have also been under pressure for 10 years because of austerity, but also we actually take more, Secro had a contract for 15,000 we took 5,000, we took a third. We took a third of the UK wide contract. We were due to take another 500 from Secro, we would have taken another this year if they had kept the contract. However, the council could refuse to accept them, we have that in our bag if we wanted to use it. What is interesting this time is that discussions this time, for the first time to UK government seems to be prepared to discuss granting the right to work. That is interesting because they had restricted the right to study; 4/5 years ago were able to give refugee children the right to study. Now it relies on universities to give funds which means most children only have access to basic college courses. The new challenges we now cant even send them to college.

10 years ago they were totally opposed to working rights, but now it looks like they are willing to negotiate it. They had restricted the right to study, up to 4/5 years ago we were able to give refugees the right to study as a home student, just had to live here for 3 years. They have now changed the rules so we are dependent on the universities to have discretionary bursaries. But this meant there was only really access to college courses. The new changes means now many young people are stuck a home, unable to study, they can’t even go to college. The system is quicker than it was but this also means it is less fair. Before everyone thought there was no way the government would
budge on the right to work but I think they have finally realised it is more cost effective to allow them to work, study and pay taxes so they don’t have to pay for housing for them in this passive receiving way. This wastes their talent whilst they are sitting waiting for a decision. I remember meeting an Iraqi in Sighthill who was the main dentist in Baghdad, he was never allowed to practice his profession again. There is so much human talent that we have lost by warehousing them through this process. Totally counterproductive.

Interviewer: Yes it does seem counterproductive

Caroline Notes and the leader from the council, Jen Layden have been meeting around the last year to get some agreement for netter policy for housing, and the right to work and study. If the government does concede it in Scotland, then effectively you would have a different immigration in policy. The SNP policy is different; they want to control its borders and policy on this. The UK government wont want to recede that but in practice if they allow the right to work and education then its 2/3 of the way. If we study work, study and housing then effectively we would have control over asylum policy. I would never have imagined this in 2004.

Interviewer: Yes it does seem like it has been a topic that has come up a lot in debates. So if these concessions were made, would this change the position of asylum seekers, and response to them?

It would, we can compare it to the Republic of Ireland, they have an organisation on called the movement of asylum seekers in Ireland. They came over to visit the migrants organising for rights and empowerment, the current refuge self-organized group. What we learnt from them, is why they use the term International protection applicant. A lot of the discussion about refugees comes down to legality, and the ridiculous discussion of the bogus refugee and the deserving asylum seekers. This name outlines the fact that they are legal. Ever seen then I have used that term. I hope this does take off, and make people think look how unfair the laws are if you’re a genuine asylum seekers. They have made it vitally impossible for people to get through their system, unless you are in one of these UN camps. They are asking people to prove they need sanctuary.

Interviewer: What is also interesting is who has the power to make these decisions

Interviewee: Yes these people just go off the country reports, it is very clear they have no idea about the country. There is a culture of disbelief and that is the default setting. But if you know you have to get and to save your life then you might not tell the entire truth about what happened. The kind of people who are interviewing them god knows, the home office has been long unfit for purpose. Our people have to go to out of Glasgow to have their Home Office interviews, this isn’t cheap. Who pays for this well volunteers, NGO’s sometimes the council.

Interviewer: So is there any funding?

There is a partnership between the council and providers, there is the Glasgow asylum seeker support service. So our logistics work with those groups. We’re allowed what we are allowed to provide and that is how we work together.

Interviewer: Glasgow is unique in terms of the numbers you see.
Interviewer: Glasgow Girl’s, group of mates who worked together to prevent a friend getting deported. Started a public awareness campaign, started when people went to the house to look out for the Home Office vans and physically stopped them carrying out evictions. We did this throughout Glasgow but particularly for this family and we managed to stop it. That campaign led to meeting the First Minster and it got the support of politicians who then became more involved. The girls are now making great contributions to Scottish society. It started as a small campaign that looked like it had no hope, it has become part of our political history, part of our struggle and history.

Interviewer: Glasgow really appears to be a potential game changer?

I hope we get to that point. It may be the UK doesn’t want to give us the same resettlement funding that they give to England, but if they give us the right to work, I would happily exchange and not take a penny of them if its means refugees and work and live their lives. They are not simply victims who need help actually they are people who can actually really help our society, I wish we could have sorted out things quicker, if given the right to work and study all these people would have been able to make a much bigger contribution. We have been in their way, the state has been in their way and we need to get out their way.

Transcript 3 – Councilor for Hillhead
Interview took place in Hillhead Library- 2/5/19

I have been a councilor since 2007, prior to that worked in the voluntary sector in the Sighthill area, when asylum seekers first arrived in Glasgow in 2000/2001. At that time I was employed to support people to be volunteers and encourage community activism, in an area which is affected by poverty and health issues. So also the area had a number of high rise blocks and flats vacant, so they adapted the empty flats for asylum seekers. At that time their was a contract, The council was paid, a reasonable amount of money to accommodate asylum seekers and provide all round services. They didn’t think through the impact this would have on the voluntary sector at the time. This sector wasn’t really informed of the requirements and the impacts of being a dispersal city. It was a council decision at the time.

Interviewee: Who’s decision was it to become a dispersal city?
It seems to have been a council decision at the time. I knew very little about asylum. I am a member of amnesty international, so I had an understanding of human rights. But I hadn’t really been prepared. It took about a year, there was a need for joined up services and education. I was instrumental in setting that up at the time. We set up the North Glasgow integration network to join up services because I didn’t have enough experience or knowledge of asylum seekers. A range of different demands were placed on voluntary groups and communities there. People from all backgrounds were coming to the area and it was already a disadvantage community. So my background has been community development. A lot of people in the voluntary sector don’t have resources, it was a lot down to individual resilience and commitment to manage the crisis and form a response. We set up a fruit and veg bar, and language classes. There was a integrated fund created through the Scottish Government, there were grants available form the Scottish government which community groups could apply too.

**Interviewee:** I have struggled to uncover the role of funding, what is your understanding of this?

There were grants available for community groups to set up projects. One of them was a food group, North Glasgow Community Food initiative. Individuals had a lot of practical skills, cooking, gardening. I helped develop a project which is still going on today. I moved on to that job, the job changed and I thought it was going to be too difficult so I moved onto a new job but I stayed involved in the project. It was first set up in Sighthill. The other key group was STAR, a student action group. A lot of them are studying to be lawyers. They had been running a clinic, dealing with people with different cases. They saw a need for practical support. Glasgow University have been critical. There was a terrible stabbing in Sighthill in the first year or two. I got involved on a voluntary basis because I knew the area to help people who felt isolated because of racism. This started a Glasgow Campaign to help Refugees, set up to address situations of people feeling intimidated or in isolation.

**Interviewee:** What was the reaction to asylum seekers settling in the city?

It was a mixed bag really, it was generally a positive feeling of more people coming to the area, boost regeneration, as Glasgow has lost its population. It helped boost the schools. People saw it as diversity bringing a good thing. Other people who resented, a certain group who like to blame other people for things. Networks have spread across the city through the Glasgow community planning partnership. There have been various individual associations rallying together.

**Interviewee:** Yes there now seems to be a broad range of NGO’s and services?

Yes, the Glasgow community partnership, received small grants for development workers to coordinate refugees and asylum seekers.

**Interviewee:** This is support from the council?
There has been funding set aside for integration grants from local council, this has been ongoing since that time. One in Maryhill, Govan, and one in the North of Glasgow. Obviously people have to reapply for funding.

*Interviewee: From your understanding is funding these organisations still a priority for the council?*

Well there is always new people arriving, it is good to know there are the community networks there to support them. They are organizing different social activities, training, language classes. Different events that bring people together. We also have other groups, students, quite a mixed population. They are open to all not just the asylum seekers, a range of people can benefit from them.

*Interviewee: Seems to be a lot of awareness across the city?*

The trade unions have a big hold in the city, they have an international perspective. We were city of culture in 1990, shift in how the city was perceiving itself. We were then the UK city of architecture in 1999. The city was trying to reimagine itself, post industrial decline, how do we undertake a revival, another issue was population decline so how do we reenergise the city, attract people to live here. And we had the empty flats, the housing stock available.

*Interviewee: Today, the housing has been privitised?*

Oh yeah, contract has changed a lot, now under Secro. It has all changed.

*Interviewee: I think now it has been taken over by Compass?*

Yes it has been controversial. There are regulations on the private sector but now the council now does not have direct day-to-day control over the housing, more and more private landlords engaged with accommodation AS.

Working rights, Glasgow seems to be for the lift the ban? What is your view?

A lot of effort to get that changed, long held view that we shouldn’t restrict a persons right to work. We should give them an income and let them contribute to society?

*Interviewee: Do you think this is likely to change?*

I support we just have to keep talking about it and the benefit migrants bring to the Scottish economy. Help economic development and bring new business opportunities. We have skill gaps. We need teachers, social workers, healthcare providers so the labor market it requires that we do encourage people to work. The labour market requires us to allow people to work. One of the biggest problems its an aging population, it will become more of an issue as we don’t have the
people to care for them. 600 people are needed over the next year, a lot of people are retiring. Child care is the biggest barrier to employment so we need more child-care.

*Interviewee: The Task Force Report, February mentioned the reluctance in moving forward if their isn’t the funding available. Do you think Glasgow is able to continue this support?*

I think it has got quite critical for a lot of organisations in terms of what they can do. There have been changes in the contract. There are not as many families coming here, mainly single men. People are being left destitute by the system, and require more support, more of them. I think there tends to be support for people when they arrive, it is when they fall through the cracks and are left with nothing. What happening is most families are relying on donations from the public. The council can’t provide support for anyone who is destitute so it is left to Ngo’s and donors. I think the numbers are increasing. Also there is an issue with homelessness in the city, people sleeping rough. Bit of a homelessness crisis due partially to universal credit coming in. It is tricky, a lot of complex needs across the city, huge demands on the homelessness charities as it is. So the push is for the Scottish government to provide more funding to house destitute asylum seekers. There has been money given but not enough. I think we have a moral responsibility. We need to support people who are facing persecution and make sure they are treated fairly and given a house, it is a basic right.

*Interviewee: The role of NGO’s does seem imperative to the work Glasgow is doing.*

Interfaith Glasgow is another site worth looking at, been developing a food justice initiatives. There are food banks across the city. We want to grow our population to an outward looking, international city. The CoS is something we fully endorse and would like to carry on with. Strong faith community which brings people together, provides services and supports across the city.

*Interviewee: Thinking about this, surely the UK is breaking international law by not providing these individuals with suitable housing*

Yes, so the question is who funds the housing, as it stands it is from charitable donations from individuals in the city. Or they get put up in a spare room. Also a night shelter providing support.

**Transcript 4 – MSP for Glasgow**

Interview took place in MSP community office - 2/5/19

Interviewer: At that time we were the only local authority

I was a councilor from 1998 to 2008, so I was in the council at the time. There was a lot of cross-party support for this and we were the only local authority in Scotland to be doing that. There were a lot of teething problems but people wanted to work it through and wanted it to be supportive. If you go right back, Glasgow is a mixed city, a lot of Irish input and a lot of scots went to New Zealand, Canada and these other countries and many people have relatives in these places, so there was a feeling that if people are suffering then we should be welcoming towards them. There has always been a few people who have questions about it and would be negative.
Interviewer: Where did that negativity stem from?

There is a bit of racism, probably more reaction from people from Africa or Asia than Poland. That is a factor. I get more people saying it now, we haven’t got the jobs or the housing available. A lot of people do realize that Scotland is short of people and Scotland’s population has either been stable or falling for sometime. We have a lot of skill shortages, reflect in Brexit as Scotland voted to remain, some of that is the realisation that if we don’t get workers in from somewhere else we are not going to be able to function as an economy. If we want to build more houses, we need more taxes so more people, so the two go together. A lot of people get that and are open to be persuaded but some people are just racist or just don’t understand that we need a growing population.

Interviewer: Do you think the population decline was a bit factor in becoming part of the dispersal policy?

The demographic has changed quite a lot. That has taken people a bit of time to adapt too. There is lot more multi-culturalism here. The proportion of people from an ethnic minority is still quite small here, so people do not feel as threatened, if you like, as they do in Birmingham or London.

Interviewer: With the dispersal process individuals were placed in certain communities, often ones already facing deprivation. What implications did this have?

That is right, the north of the city which is not my part there was high concentration which did cause some issues. But on the whole people have been genuinely welcoming, and churches and different groups have been welcoming. Integration, depends on the nationally, the Pakistani community have been the hardest to integrate, but I hope to see this improve.

Interviewer: Inability to work, if this was devolved would this help?

This would help a lot of people. It would help people’s mental health. I totally understand the frustration with people who come here and can’t work. The whole system takes too long. This waiting thing is not good, it causes tensions. The local population sometimes resents the fact that people come here and don’t work but get money. Some of them don’t know, in fact they live on less than a person on minimum wage gets. But people get the wrong ideas. Schools are supportive about it. More often not the families have got a high commitment to education. They have been challenges aswell but headteachers on the whole have been positive about the changes asylum seekers have brought.

Interviewer: Has there ever been any funding for Glasgow to take asylum seekers?

There has never been enough; It has never been fully funded. I thought there was some extra funding but it wouldn’t be enough. I don’t know about the last few years but you’re right I expect it has got worse.

Interviewer: What is the role of NGO’s and community groups?
Community groups, it is the minority who are proactive in helping asylum seekers. Churches are providing ESOL classes, a number of churches run classes. Other groups have tried to adapt. It is patchy, the housing association now have people speaking different languages. When it comes to the actual asylum seeking process. The Home Office will only deal with MP’s wont deal with me as a MSP, that is there choice and we object to that. So if someone comes in here to look for help we have to send to the MP. We would prefer not to do we would prefer to help them. Obviously immigration is a reserved matter but other reserved departments are willing to speak to me. So it is a Home Office decision not to speak to me.

Interviewer: Why do you think this is?

Well to reduce their work load. My colleague Alison Thurow has the highest workload of any MP in Glasgow, because we have to send them to her. That is not ideal. The Scottish Parliament would like some devolution of migration. We know this happens in other countries, it is perfectly possible because we need more people. The visa could say these individuals can only work in Scotland.

Interviewer: Allowing the ability to work, what impact would this have?

I think if they where allowed to work that would be a positive thing. But frankly we need more people than they do down south. Brexit has sent out a signal that we don’t want foreigners; this is less the case in Scotland. I have met people who said they went to England and didn’t feel welcoming but can to Glasgow and felt welcoming.

Interviewer: Glasgow does appear to generally seems to be more welcoming?

Traditionally more working class, perhaps it is more accepting. To be frank one of the big problems here is the protestant and catholic issue which continues to run. I would say this is the greatest hatred in Scotland. People from an Irish background and those from a traditional Scottish background. This is not good and something I am trying to tackle but if takes the focus away from other forms of racism because the focus is more on this. That is our main tension.

Interviewer: Housing, what are your thoughts on this?

One time it was the YMCA, so at least it was third sector but I don’t think they were very successful. Then it went to the private sector. It is interesting again the thing with changing the locks. People don’t like it, the press don’t like it.
Overall it seems the press are very positive towards discussions on asylum seekers

Yes

Interviewer: Do you know why it was just Glasgow and no other Scottish City who took part?

The Syrian Resettlement scheme more councils took some, but this was a very small number. When there as a murder done down in Bute everyone blamed the Syrian community when in fact it wasn’t them. Edinburgh and Glasgow are different cities. We have the more of a left wing thing in Glasgow and I would say that leads to a more welcoming climate for immigrants. But even for a
labor led council at the time it was quite a statement and quite a risk to go as positive as they did. But clearly not every labour led council in the UK took that view. So it was a decision that was very positive and has been good. No one could have done it individually if there wasn’t buy in from other people.

Interviewer: Do you think the dispersal process will continue, will there be any obstacles to this?

The main thing is Westminster, sending out a message of restricting immigration. It is going to depend on them, a half way house is allowing us to have more ley way on immigration. You would see quite a different attitude (towards immigration) from an independent Scottish parliament than you would in England. People coming in want to stay with others. We now have established communities here, which we didn’t have not that long ago. So I would be hopeful that it would continue. I hope it would continue. You can’t let too much immigration at some time and we are not saying it can be uncontrolled immigration, but we have to be welcoming and positive.

Other Interviews
Govan Integration Centre – 7th May 2019 at Govan Integration Centre Head Office (not recorded)
St Rollox Church – 12 May 2019 - Phone Interview (not recorded)
Cllr for Govan – 15th May 2019 - Phone Interview (not recorded)