Welfare as control: contradiction, dilemma and compromise in the everyday support of asylum seekers in the UK after the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act.

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Abstract

Informed by particular theories of migration and of new global migrations as problematic European states, pulled by both exclusionary particularist and inclusionary universalist tensions, have taken increasing measures to restrict access to 'unwanted' forced migrants to their territories and welfare states. To these ends governments have devised welfare policies for forced migrants which are simultaneously mechanisms of deterrence and internal immigration control, in tension with their obligations to protect refugees. These are systems of 'Welfare as Control'. 1990s UK legislation has increasingly eroded and separated asylum seekers' social rights, culminating in the "*qualitative leap*" (Cohen, 2001) of the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act (IAA), which introduced a separate and inferior welfare 'safety net' for asylum seekers, explicitly designed to control their migration externally and internally. These legislations have implicated welfare and social care workers in implementing welfare fraught with tensions of control. In their 1999 IAA New Labour extended this to utilise voluntary sector agencies to implement key sections of the deterrent 'safety net.' An intensive ethnographic case study grounded in critical realism was undertaken with a voluntary sector organisation in this contradictory positioning of delivering Welfare as Control, as a Reception Assistant for the Home Office's National Asylum Support Service (NASS). Using observation and gathering insider accounts and documents over eight months in 2002-2003, the ethnography explored the lived experiences, practices and understandings of service providers and people seeking asylum, in this everyday world at Refugee Arrivals Project. The setting resonated with tensions, dilemmas and compromises. RAP's autonomy was constrained by NASS' chaos, bureaucratic dominance and imperative to restrict and control access to welfare, compromising the organisation's ability to address clients' often 'complex and multiple' needs. Asylum seekers experienced "*anormalised*" (Geddes, 2001) lives, loss of autonomy and dignity in Reception, feeling they were "*hanging*" out of control in multiple uncertainties, with those the safety net was designed to protect, often least protected. Although RAP used their discretion and ethical urges to increase the "*informal gain*" and fill the gaps of social rights in practice, (Morris, 2002), their integrity was threatened. This research contributes to a new 'Sociology of Forced Migration' (Castles, 2003) and has implications for all voluntary and public sector agencies and workers embroiled in delivering 'Third Way' policy generally, but specifically Welfare as Control.

Acknowledgements

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Glossary of abbreviations

<u>Organisations</u>

ALG	Association of London Government
ASU	Asylum Screening Unit
CMHT	Community Mental Health Trust
DSS	Department for Social Security
EA	Emergency Accommodation
GLA	Greater London Authority
HPU	Homeless Persons Unit
IAP	Inter-Agency Partnership
IND	Immigration and Nationality Directorate
LA	Local Authority
LGA	London Government Association
MF	The Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture
MH	Migrant Helpline
NACAB	National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux
NASS	National Asylum Support Service
OSS	One-Stop Service/Shop
RA	Refugee Action
RAA	Reception Assistant Agency
RAP	Refugee Arrivals Project
RC	Refugee Council
RCO	Refugee Community Organisation
RSA	Refugee Support Agency

RSL	Registered Social Landlord
VS	Voluntary sector

Worker titles

BfSW	Befriending Service Worker
RSW	Refugee Support Worker (Interpreter)
IC	Interpreter Co-ordinator
PW	Project Worker
NTPW	NASS Team Project Worker
STPW	Support Team Project Worker
TL	Team Leader
SM	Senior Manager
CSM	Casework Services Manager
OM	Operations Manager
ED	Executive Director
V	Volunteer
YPA	Young Person's Advisor

Legislations and operational terms

AIA 1996	Asylum and Immigration Act
IAA 1999	Immigration and Asylum Act
NIAA 2002	Nationality Immigration and Asylum Act
S55	Section 55 of the NIAA 2002
RANS	Restricted Access to NASS Support
ARC	Asylum Registration Card
ELR	Exceptional Leave to Remain
SEF	Statement of Evidence Form

1 Introduction

>*…asylum issues are an index of our spiritual and moral civilisation. How you are with the one to whom you owe nothing, that is a grave test and not only as an index of our tragic past. I always think that the real offenders at the half way point of the century were the bystanders, all those people who let things happen because it didn't affect them directly. I believe that the line our society will take in this matter on how you are to people whom you owe nothing is a signal.* (Rabbi Hugo Gryn, Auschwitz survivor, 1996. Cited in Kushner and Knox, 1999:416)

>*That a social democratic government has succeeded in making 'asylum seekers' and 'refugees' into monster words is almost unbelievable,* (Stan Cohen, 2000:43).

In his millennium contemplation at the dawn of the 21st Century, in the light of events of the closing 20th Century, Stan Cohen struggled to comprehend how the current British government could, through word and policy deeds, represent and treat people seeking a safe state of refuge, as folk devils, "monsters." In 2000, when I began this research, the newly elected (1997) New Labour government had passed and begun enacting a legislation aimed at controlling entry of and controlling post-entry, people seeking asylum in the UK. The predominant, explicit rationale behind the legislation was to deal in a "*Firm but Fair"* way, (Home Office, 1998) with the 'problem' of 'bogus' refugees (or 'economic migrants' pretending to be refugees). This rationale was based on then accepted and popularly understood notions of people who claimed asylum and their migrations, and the 1999 Act was a culmination and continuation of (yet also departure from) the rationales of similarly targeted Conservative legislations through the 1990s. I felt the same disbelief as Stan Cohen, that a New Labour government could join with the right wing press, and previous right wing governments, in using demonising and stigmatising rhetoric and in devising policies to fit this view, so contributing to society's understanding of people seeking safety as 'bogus' "monsters".

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By way of introduction to this piece of research, I offer a "*natural history*" of my journey to the study it has become and is presented here, with the aim, as Silverman (2000:236) suggests, of engaging the reader with my "*thinking in **process;**"* illuminating *why* I began this research and chose the topic, focus and approach I have. This reflexivity should place the researcher firmly within the research, as is essential to all (qualitative) social science. Documenting the inevitably messy and roundabout journey (necessarily edited) that a project of this kind involves, should not only make the research more understandable but, I hope, more interesting. The 'natural history' begun here is continued in the methodology.

From a young age, I have had an acute awareness of global injustices; immense disparities of wealth and security and all that goes with that, including peoples' forced displacement. My interests in issues affecting people seeking asylum were initially aroused when I became aware of the withdrawal of entitlement to welfare benefits from any person claiming asylum 'in-country' or pursuing their legal right to appeal after an initial refusal, by the Conservative government's 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act. This awareness came not just from broadsheet reports of hundreds of people forced to sleep rough, seeking out phone boxes and park benches, but from personal tales of friends in church groups trying to house and help destitute and distraught individuals. I became aware of widespread protest and the involvement of churches, refugee support groups and concerned individuals setting up emergency soup kitchens and finding beds for people affected. My partner wrote a newspaper article on the experience of some people in this position, interviewing destitute asylum seekers and members of support groups witnessing the distress the legislation had caused. He took some destitute people to the school he worked at to raise awareness, educate the teenage pupils and challenge their media-fuelled misconceptions about refugees and the reasons they seek asylum. We accommodated some young asylum seeking men when we could with a house full of four young children. This personal experience further stimulated my interest in issues around the seeking of refuge from global troubles and British societal reaction to people doing so, as well as disbelief and outrage that any government would deliberately legislate to enforce the destitution of an already particularly vulnerable group. The pressure of protest forced the High Courts to take on that government. The judiciary decided that the Conservatives' 1996 action was illegal, that the Government could not have *intended* these consequences, and that local authorities *must* accommodate and feed destitute asylum seekers under different previous legislations.

1997 was a year of hope. I began my undergraduate degree, and so began attempting to make sense of the world social scientifically through sociological and psychological lenses. Also New Labour, which in opposition had bitterly opposed and accused the Conservatives of 'playing the race card' with their 1996 legislation and demonising rhetoric, was elected. Prior to their 1997 election, then shadow Home Secretary and minister, Jack Straw and Doug Henderson wrote in *Fairer, faster, firmer: Labour's approach to Asylum and Immigration, "No other act in this Parliament has aroused such justified and widespread opposition as the Asylum and Immigration Act."* They quoted The Economist (09.01.1996),

> *… by promoting anti-immigrant policies the government risks encouraging racism and undermining liberty. It deserves contempt, not votes, for proposing this nasty little bill.*

And continued,

> *Labour fought the act every step of the way because it…hits genuine asylum seekers as hard as fraudulent applicants…threatens race relations…inhumanely denies refugees the means to live* (cited in Hayter, 2000:77).

The election to government of New Labour represented new hope for many, desperate to see the back of eighteen years of Conservative rule and to see significant change and reform in most areas of public life. Their stance in opposition, and these kinds of statements, gave many campaigning and caring for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum much hope that, in government, New Labour would improve the asylum system *for* asylum seekers; increasing their rights and making the conditions of their claim-making more humane and less harsh. At the time I hoped, indeed expected, that a New Labour government would de-stigmatise and clear the name of people travelling around the world to find security in the UK; would fight the tabloid press, attempt to change the terms and tenor of public discourses and re-educate the public so that these migrants were welcomed, not vilified.

My (and many others') hopes were dashed when it became clear from the delayed white paper that appeared in June 1998, that New Labour would make its primary aim and underlying premise, to deter 'abusive' claimants, so continuing the same direction and drive of previous Conservative legislations. Disregarding almost all of the objections raised by refugee support organisations such as the Refugee Council, Amnesty International and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, the Immigration and Asylum Act became law on 6th December 1999. Despite professing to be 'fairer and faster' and to be providing adequate protection to 'genuine refugees', the fundamental and overwhelming tenor of this legislation was on the 'firmer.' Only 60 MPs, and only 17 of these Labour, voted for an amendment recommended by the predominantly Tory House of Lords, to allow asylum seekers normal welfare benefits until the government had reached its own target of processing asylum claims in 6 months. Therefore, instead of restoring a reasonable means to live to people claiming asylum in-country, this Act withdrew the rights to welfare benefits from ALL asylum seekers, replacing these with a separate and inferior cashless system of vouchers worth significantly less than the national minimum standard of living. When this Act was passed, I felt disbelief and dismay; let down by a labour government abandoning socialist for neo-liberal principles and responding, it seemed, only to the tabloid cry, 'Britain is a soft touch,' by getting tough.

Through the summer of 1999, the relentless media campaign to smear people seeking asylum and other migrants, de-humanised, criminalised and often indiscriminately grouped together as 'illegals,' became hysterical and intensely unpleasant with some outright racism (for instance, from the Dover Express). This 'campaign,' which rounded on one group or another, notably at this time Eastern European Roma (The Sun, '*Kick the gypsies out,'* cited in Hayter, 2000: 82), seemed to go hand in hand with the by-election calls of politicians, notably Ann Widdecombe and William Hague, on the 'softness' of Labour towards asylum seekers. It was in this context, and it seemed in response to and unable to resist such public populism, that New Labour introduced its 'get tough' legislation. I had felt appalled and ashamed by this media smearing and one-sided representation, and angry at the politicking and new policies and laws, it seemed, hurried in to appease such right-wing, and in some cases, racist thinking. I began thinking of the human individuals whose lives would be affected by these new policies, and wondering what the implications might be for them in their daily lives, trying to find security.

My interest and concerns about British (and 'Fortress Europe's') treatment of refugees led me to begin my third year undergraduate dissertation seeking to explore some of the more complex issues and some of the humanly lived realities of seeking refuge in a strange and hostile country, under such legal conditions. I was inspired by one of my lecturer's, (ethnomethodologist Max Travers), research of immigration courts which explored the minutiae of legal officials' decision-making, administrative processes and interaction with asylum claimants and how a 'culture of refusal' might affect their deciding on claims, (Travers, 1999). However, for practical and other reasons, I changed my dissertation subject, in the hope that I might have the opportunity to take up this research at post-graduate level, with more time and resources to research the area thoroughly. When the opportunity arose to start a PhD, in the summer of 2000, the 1999 Act had been in force for three months and many stories had begun filtering through of people suffering at the hands of a chaotic and seemingly inhumane new system of 'safety-net' welfare. This was especially through no-choice dispersal around the country, receiving subsistence by voucher and the failings of the new bureaucracy established to manage the system (NASS), at the first hurdle. I began wondering about the hidden and complex realities, practices and voices that I knew would lie beyond the one-sided, or sometimes polarised public debates dominated by the screaming dailies and politicians' statements. What *were* the processes, and ethical, practical and political decision-making, that resulted in policies such as these being written and enacted? For the thousands of different people involved in many different ways, in enacting these policies daily, on-the-ground, what was involved? Particularly, it seemed to me, those involved in trying to support people seeking asylum, must face considerable dilemmas when putting these policies into practice. Also, how was this new system experienced by the people it was designed to control and 'support'? What was it like to arrive in a strange land and be dispersed without any choice to Newcastle or Glasgow or Hull, where there were few other minority ethnic populations, to survive on and shop with vouchers, and when the only information local populations might have about you, is learned from the Daily Mail or Daily Express?

When I submitted my PhD proposal I hoped to be able to explore some of these hidden areas and voices and understandings, with the aim of illuminating and making heard and understood how these policies were lived out in daily practice, what they involved people

actually *doing,* and what they meant to and for individuals, families, organisations and workers living them out. I felt this could contribute towards a better understanding grounded in the complexity and detail of lived experience, of some of the issues around policy responses to forced migration. From the exploration I had done, there seemed to be a dearth of qualitative and ethnographic research in this field. Whilst so much of the public debate centred around *numbers*, a de-humanising practice in itself, much research around forced migration to this country, while important, seemed to be either secondary, or within social policy and focussed on more quantitative aspects and effects of specific policies (Duke, 1996, for example). Hidden voices belonging to hidden human beings leading hidden lives, of both forced migrants and those working with them dealing with hidden issues, seemed little heard or known about. Therefore to achieve the aim of illumination of these shadowy areas, the only way of approaching this research would be to do an in-depth qualitative study, where ideally I would immerse myself in some of these daily settings, observing and listening to the actors and action involved, or failing that, I might be able to interview people in-depth, about their experiences. Also, I felt drawn to ethnography as a methodology which would suit my personality, of exploring in-depth and attempting to understand others points of view and experiences. My initial research proposal was entitled "*Mechanisms of Ostracism,*" where 'mechanisms' referred to the specific measures of the 1999 legislation (such as no-choice dispersal or cashless subsistence) designed to 'ostracise' (or socially exclude) asylum applicants. With Max Travers as my first supervisor, his theoretical and methodological positions and research provided me with a number of challenges and questions to ask of my own research.

I was inspired by his research interests in the 'private worlds' of often unexplored work settings of various administrative agencies involved in deciding about immigration and asylum claims, focusing "*on the practical concerns of people dealing with concrete tasks in particular institutional settings,*" (Travers, 1999:3). He hoped that by describing and illuminating these 'private worlds', his reader would be enabled to "*reflect upon the nature and effects of immigration control at both a human and institutional level",* (ibid). Max Travers countered criticisms that interpretative sociological research at a micro-level could say nothing to, or ignored, the wider political debates or broader levels of social existence. He was also particularly critical of academic research that he believed was heavily 'value-laden', or "*unashamedly moralistic,*" arguing that for sociology in Britain,

…there continues to be a need for theoretically-informed research about social processes that does more than offer a selective description of the facts, interspersed with moral commentary, (Travers, 1999:178).

Whilst refuting the possibility of 'value-free' social scientific research and recognising these age-old debates, I took heed of Max's warnings, but felt it would be essential to do theoretically-informed research which *also* engaged with the ethics and political debates of this highly politicised and ethically charged area of study. This would involve a personal journey, alongside my research journey, and I hoped that with honesty and reflexiveness, I would be able to move beyond an urge and tendency just to rant against seeming injustices to develop a sensitive, theoretically and empirically informed, yet *critical* understanding of the field of asylum policy in practice. I felt it important to take up the challenge of playing a part in, as O' Neill (2001) describes it, the civic role of the university and its academic researchers; that describing and illuminating some of the hidden, micro areas of social life, and listening to and re-presenting some unheard voices, might offer some emancipatory potential for addressing injustices uncovered and not just assumed. I felt that through exploring the lived experiences of policy in practice, any questioning of that policy would be based on firmer and more sensitive ground, involving an understanding of the "*difficult moral choices*" (Travers, 1999:179) of policy makers, politicians and practitioners when devising and operating policy.

Having taken on the task of doctoral research with broad ideas of my direction, the journey to a narrower focus and then completing it was a long, messy and complex one involving a variety of influences and chances helping shape it into what it became and is. Early on, some important happenings contributed to my understanding and the direction I began taking my research in. At a debate I attended in June 2000 on the fairness of Britain's treatment of asylum seekers featuring Home Secretary Jack Straw, Shadow Home Secretary Ann Widdecombe, Refugee Council CE, Nick Hardwick, among others, I noted Straw's acknowledgement of the contradiction stemming from the 1951 Convention. That is, that there is no international right to asylum, just a right to non-refoulement, which means that travelling legally to a country for asylum is almost impossible, but if fortunate enough to set foot on a territory, claiming asylum is legal. I was heartened at Straw's acknowledgment

of the contradiction, but felt this was disingenuous considering the intense efforts of his government to make travelling to Britain legally as difficult as possible, through their new national laws. Straw also said Britain's treatment of asylum seekers was not fair but he was trying to make it fairer, by trying to steer a path and securing a balance between the two poles of the left, who suggested there should be no immigration controls at all, and the right who were playing the race card and seeking to block New Labour proposals "*to deal with genuine abuse*" (!) Ann Widdecombe argued that all asylum seekers should be locked in Reception Centres until their claims were settled. One questioner from the floor stated that the vouchers for subsistence introduced with the 1999 Act, were akin to the stigmatising yellow stars Jews were forced to wear in Nazi Germany. Straw stated that asylum policy and issues involve shades of grey, not black and white.

I attended several conferences which helped shape my thinking. Especially important, was hearing the contributions of Steve Cohen, a radical lawyer, campaigner and writer on immigration related issues and migrants' rights, (specialising in the history of responses to Jewish migration to the UK) at the Barbed Wire Britain Conference, September 2000. At this event, Cohen described and criticised the involvement of social work and voluntary sector agencies in implementing the 1999 Act, as *collusion* in policy harmful to the welfare of asylum seekers rather than protective of it. Cohen was particularly disparaging about the role of the large VS Refugee Support Organisations, such as The Refugee Council and his contributions set me thinking about the role of the multiple agencies that were agreeing to play a part across the country in the new 1999 system. Cohen argued such organisations were complicit with the government in implementing a new 'Poor Law', when their first duty should be to the vulnerable individuals they were set up to support. One local (Oxford) VS support organisation had refused to comply with the Act. Steve Cohen told me of some research a colleague of his (Humphries, 2001) was engaged with on the role of social work teams in implementing legislation potentially compromising to anyone 'subject to immigration control'. This argument struck me very powerfully, and set me puzzling over the ethical dilemmas such organisations had presumably (though not necessarily) battled with when deciding to be 'in' or 'out' of the new system and I began following a line of enquiry into this puzzle. I found myself personally, ethically racked over these dilemmas. Could these agencies have brought the legislation down by refusing to be involved, as Cohen suggested, and forced restored social rights to asylum seekers? Or would the

government merely have turned to the private sector, despite their lack of expertise, in which case social care agencies would have been abandoning asylum seekers to less able and less concerned businesses? How compromised would they be in practice?

I began reading around the subject of welfare and internal immigration control and talking with social workers teaching social work at my institution about their roles and professional codes of conduct, and their experiences of working under the 1996 asylum legislation. I also began researching the reach of the new legislation, and the experimentation of the government setting up new multi-agency consortia, and visited another conference run by Capita for country-wide stakeholders in these consortia on initial teething problems and issues in their regions. One project manager of a consortia was furious because he had spent a year co-ordinating and preparing multi-agencies for receiving asylum seekers in that region, only to be told that the government would not be signing the contract with them. An LGA executive spoke of the dispersal as "*a huge piece of social engineering, which would have profound effects.*" The overwhelming subject at the conference, formally and informally, centred on the immense problems encountered on all levels at attempting to provide practically to co-ordinate adequate services and to address the issues involved in the arrival and reception of asylum seekers under the new system. This conference gave me a flavour of diverse public and voluntary sector agencies and individuals within them attempting to grapple with the numerous practical and ethical issues of planning for and putting this policy into practice, of wrestling with and attempting to hold onto the aims of their daily work. The Refugee Council speaker gave away some of the contradictions implicit in her organisation's role. Her brief was to speak of problems which remain (with implementing the 1999 Act). She began by saying, "*what problems don't?*" She commented on the constant talk of crises and problems, and the consequent equation of asylum seekers with problems. Eventually however, she concluded that asylum seekers should be viewed as opportunities *not* problems. The RC speaker also spoke of the separation of asylum seekers from refugees, into two totally different systems, the former being based on social exclusion, with the intention of government (although without any planning or policy on it) to develop integration for the latter. She argued that integration *should* start on day one, but that each Act has progressively removed more rights from those seeking asylum, and has been designed to socially exclude them. However, she answered "*yes,*" to her own question, "*Does the Refugee Council want the new system to*

work?" Another speaker from a local authority said that their definition of *success* was different to that of the Home Office, but also that it was too simplistic for local government to say the Home Office was 'bad' or 'not interested'. Attending and observing at this conference was a further lead towards an ethnographic study of the anomalies (and complexities) of these policies in daily and longer term practice, for agencies designed to provide supportive services, when those policies were *designed* to facilitate social exclusion rather than inclusion.

During the two years from November 2000, when I officially began my PhD research, to November 2002, when I began my main ethnographic fieldwork with Refugee Arrivals Project, I both expanded and narrowed my focus in attempt to work out my direction, my methodology, who to research with, and what my research was *about*. My research process was both inductive and deductive, purposive and contingent as I explored the literature, wider conceptual issues, the concerns of practitioners in primary pilot interviews, the constantly changing political and practical scene and the methodological options. My thinking and reading broadened out as I began to consider the interconnectedness of local issues, processes and practices with much wider national, international and global ones, over time and space. Individual and local experiences of forced migrants and in relationship with forced migrants were woven into a global picture of conflict, power and resource distribution and exchange, of complex histories between and within nations. Literally, the arrival of global migrants on the doorstep of local UK and European citizens brought the world and the processes of globalisation home, alive and real, and these could not be ignored. I explored the literature on globalisation and global migrations and forced migration, raising my awareness of the interconnectedness of these forces and patterns with national and regional policies and histories of immigration and migration controls. Thinking around these national and regional policies led to considering the ethical and philosophical bases and boundaries of belonging and non-belonging; of citizenship, sovereignty, social exclusion/inclusion, human rights and convergences in international and national law. I also explored the growing (and related) literature on the convergence of regimes of welfare and immigration control. I considered the huge literature on 'race', racism, anti-racism and ethnicity, as an approach to regional, national and local responses to the arrival of forced and other 'new migrations.'

Whilst broadening my field of view in my reading and initial literature review, I began with broad ideas about conducting research with several agencies involved in implementing welfare aspects of the 1999 Act. Following up this puzzle, or problematic, of their 'contradictory positioning;' (implementing legislation potentially contrary to the welfare of their clients), I considered doing some ethnography, or at least interviews, with a few different agencies at different positions to the government and asylum welfare legislation. I had decided that this would also be the best way to gain access to the ethnography and accounts of people seeking asylum's experience of the new NASS system. With this, and the aim of establishing some of the issues on the ground to guide my research, and attempting to gain access for ethnographic work, in early 2001 I interviewed and worked on building the trust of several social services Asylum Team Leaders in the South and a receiving VS organisation's ED in a North East dispersal region. These threw up some interesting themes, confirming and elaborating on the contradictory and differentiated nature of their positions and roles, encouraging me to pursue my hunches and the direction set by hearing Cohen's protest and my ongoing secondary research. My attempts to secure any of these organisations for further ethnographic study failed, but fortuitously a more apposite example of an organisation in this contradictory positioning agreed in theory to give me access for such research, but not until they had climbed out of the chaos they found themselves in, in early 2002.

In the meantime, I had discovered Duvell and Jordan's (2000) research on the compromising role of Asylum Teams following the 1996 Act, and was beginning to search for an ethnographic stance and methodology that could encompass the rich micro complexity of daily lived experience *and* the social structures that constrained and enabled it. A breakthrough came by being immensely inspired and spurred on by Stephen Castles' case for a 'Sociology of Forced Migration', at a conference in April 2002 and Castles' (2003), and also O' Neill's (2001:10) aim (though in a quite different ethnography) to "*deal with the contradictions of oppression and the utter complexity of our lived relations towards the close of the twentieth century."* I explored critical realism, as a methodological approach that could do this work, drawing on Pierre Bourdieu, Dorothy Smith and Michael Burawoy who, in very different ways, accepted a critical realist understanding of social reality in their methodologies (despite divergence on what that social reality consists of). I also explored the work of Michael Lipsky, who offered an insightful guide to understanding

the dilemmas of individual workers within the structures of public service organisations and 'street level bureaucracies,' offering a potentially promising generic blueprint to hold my specific findings up against.

It was with these general ideas, and gathering of selections of the literature mentioned in a long and unwieldy literature review, my initial pilot interviews and some papers and preliminary research reports I wrote about these, that I was eventually able to enter the everyday world of Refugee Arrivals Project, after the six month postponement while they re-staffed and re-structured. These and other elements of deduction, induction, planning and focusing or funnelling of my research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) were what took me into this voluntary sector organisation and the lived experiences of the individual workers, clients and involved others, and of the agency as a whole. Eight months of gathering data, of inductively and deductively following leads and beginning to analyse these in interaction with commitments in the field, then months more of transcription and data analysis (such as thematic coding) led me into finally writing up. I found some themes and conclusions that had been suggested by the literature and influences I had identified before entering the field. I also found new themes and conclusions, and needed to turn again to others' research literature, some newly written since beginning my research and fieldwork, and my thinking took new twists and turns as I used some of this (as well as those already mentioned) to help me analyse and make sense of my data. *"Welfare as control,"* emerged from the research process as a whole; from the very beginnings described here; from the initial research problematic as I grasped it and developed it from Steve Cohen's observations, to the ways in which I found and interpreted the 'safety-net' Reception of people seeking asylum in West London, and hence thought and wrote about it, as follows.

I have attempted to explain why and how this research came about and is the way it is, by way of introduction. In order that the reader may make further sense of this thesis, it is important to explain the rationale for the order of material in chapters and how these fit together as a whole. Chapters 2 and 3 are my selection and review of the relevant literature that I have used to understand and make sense of the everyday worlds I researched ethnographically. They were written *after* the proceeding chapters; although including a re-write of my pre-fieldwork literature review, they also contain much post-fieldwork

material. As I have explained, this literature was identified both before *and after* doing my fieldwork and analysing my raw data, which threw up some new and unexpected themes and previously unexplored ideas to attempt to make sense of. Therefore, Chapters 2 and 3 are intended to be understood as an essential part of the *data analysis*, despite their appearing before the presentation of my analysed data in Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9; they introduce the themes uncovered both before during and after data collection. They serve as part of the *explanation* of the descriptions of the lived experiences of the data chapters. Chapters 2 and 3 are also intended as an essential contextualising of the primary research, from the global, macro and conceptual levels of analysis predominantly in Chapter 2, to the closer national historical, local and micro levels, predominantly in Chapter 3. The closing section of Chapter 3 is a summary framing and providing justification of this research.

Taking into consideration the vital identification of wider and deeper social structural influences on the local setting in Chapters 2 and 3, the methodology Chapters 4 and 5 lay out my understanding of this social reality and both the philosophical, theoretical and methodological grounding for the methods I used to collect, analyse and understand my data. Again these chapters were re-written (and written) *after* doing fieldwork and alongside data analysis. Describing what I did was obviously not possible before doing it, and methodology only seems to come alive and begin to make sense, in practice. Therefore the methodology described in Chapter 4 is intrinsically interwoven with preceding and proceeding chapters; offering a detailed explanation for the inclusion of the material in chapters 2 and 3, describing how the data in Chapters 6 to 8 were collected and analysed and providing a guide to understanding the rationale behind my interpretation of those data and conclusions from them (Chapters 9 and 10). In order for the reader to be able to make sense of the detailed analysis of the fieldwork and of the local setting of this voluntary sector organisation and its position in the system of safety-net welfare under the 1999 IAA, it is essential to provide a descriptive picture or profile of the case study organisation, Refugee Arrivals Project, which is the purpose of Chapter 5.

Chapters 6, 7 and 8 are the products of analysis of the ethnographic fieldwork data. From identification of the main themes arising from the dialectic (interactively inductive and deductive) process of exploring the research puzzle 'on the ground', these chapters are organised around overarching themes. Chapter 6 explores what implementing policy in

practice ('welfare as control') involved doing daily; for differently positioned workers and the organisation as a whole, as they negotiated with their clients around the boundaries to the specially designed welfare safety-net. Chapter 7 explores the experiences and understandings of some of the people journeying through the Reception stage of 'welfare as control,' as they seek asylum. Chapter 8 addresses ways in which Refugee Arrivals Project, as a VS Refugee Support Agency, sought to maintain its integrity in the face of the contradictions of 'welfare as control;' when clients presented with "*multiple complex needs,*" RAP was resourced only to provide for "*very basic needs*", therefore work generated frequent dilemmas and compromises.

Chapter 9 concludes the thesis by considering conclusions from the three data chapters taken as a whole, and then Chapter 10 discusses more generally how this research might contribute to the understanding of the contradictory positioning of a VS organisation (and others similar) implementing a policy of 'welfare as control' at this time and place. Having discussed some of the strengths and limitations of the research, Chapter 10 explores what this research 'says' to the broader picture as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3; what its broader relevance, contribution to knowledge, policy implications or suggested ways forward might be, in the light of the study.

It is worth highlighting that this piece of research describes and explains a specific historical moment in time and space, set within a complex constantly changing and shifting social and political environment moving and shaping migration movements and responses to them. Between the summers of 2000 and 2006, while I have been working on this research, there have been numerous changes in UK (and EU) official asylum policy and policy in practice, from amendments to the 1999 IAA to two new Acts and amendments being debated and implemented (the 2002 NIAA, the 2004 AIA, and a 2005 five year policy plan on asylum and immigration). Perceptions, reactions, understandings and the framing of 'problems' around asylum, migration and immigration have shifted and changed with political and global events, and trends. From September 11th 2001, asylum seekers became perceived and represented in media discourse, more as a threat to security, and as potential terrorists, than (as previously) as threats to a British 'way of life' or to the Welfare State (although these continued to be underlying perceptions). There followed the American and British invasion of Afghanistan, provoking extensive movement of Afghani

refugees across borders and continents, including to the UK, to find refuge. However, by the 2002 NIAA, some political discourse and the government, was discussing and moving towards the more positive concept and policies of 'managed migration'; actively encouraging specific groups of economic migrants to migrate to and work in the UK. Former 'White List' Eastern European countries joined the EU in 2003, and overnight hundreds of previously 'illegal immigrants' or 'manifestly unfounded' asylum claimants could legally enter the UK to work.

Towards the end of my fieldwork period, workers in RAP discussed the build up to, protests against and eventual US and UK attack on Iraq in March 2003. There was intense mixed feeling among them about the war, many Iraqi and Kurdish refugees having flown Saddam Hussein's regime previously. However this war precipitated further Iraqi migratory flights, and with a few terrorist attacks on European cities, some argue it precipitated stronger anti-West radical Islamist feeling. With the introduction of more extensive anti-terrorist legislation in the UK, it seems a greater mistrust of Muslims generally *and* amongst Muslims of the state has grown. Very recently in 2006, a new focus of distrust and anger has been directed at those immigrants serving criminal convictions in the UK, but not subsequently deported, and the Home Office for allowing this, feeding a differently nuanced criminalisation of immigrants.

Throughout the 6 year research period, focus and emphasis in public, media and political discourses seems to have shifted somewhat away from the demonisation of asylum seekers and refugees specifically, to a more general mistrust and resentment of immigrants in general. Again, during my fieldwork in January 2003, Tony Blair promised that he would *halve* the number of asylum claimants in six months. Based on a trick with the asylum statistics, and an actual decrease in numbers of claimants, it seemed that some of the government's deterrent measures, particularly those outside UK borders (the closing of Sangatte was one such), had successfully deterred some asylum seekers from coming to the UK. However, despite such a change in focus, the asylum system of 'welfare as control' initiated with the 1999 IAA continues to operate in adapted, amended and also more practised ways after 6 years of trial and error. The Government continues to devise 'mechanisms of ostracism' of asylum seekers. It also seems that the debates and many of

the factors raised in this research seem likely to stay relevant in a continually globalising, conflict-ridden, divided, and disparately resourced world.

2 The 'big picture': the global and broad context of a local sociological study of forced migration

In local studies on issues concerning forced migration, it is essential to recognise their implicit and explicit inter-connectedness with the broader levels of the spatial, conceptual, historical, relational, social and structural, (Castles, 2003). This chapter aims to contextualise this study concerned with a local setting in forced migration within its' broader and global context, and so aid understanding of the micro in its connectedness with meso and macro levels of analysis and 'reality'. This chapter discusses various contradictions at these levels, whilst focussing in. Firstly however, it is vital to discuss terms of reference and discourses which so dominate this contentious area, because "'*perceptions'…are central to the politics of migration,"* (Geddes, 2003:153).

2.1 The terms and discourses of 'asylum'

It is essential, arguably particularly in this area of study, to discuss, deconstruct and problematise the formal and informal terms of reference, labels, concepts and discourses currently used in everyday social contexts such as in everyday talk, in the media, in politics, and law, by practitioners, activists, and academics , and those I will use in this study. Although holding to the fundamentally material character of social relations, it is essential in understanding this social world, to make visible taken-for-granted discourses where the "*matrix of concepts through which we understand the world and act in it profoundly affects those actions and thus the world itself*" (Levitas 1998:3).

The term 'asylum seeker' entered the online OED in 2001, was first inscribed in UK law in the 1999 IAA, being a cold war creation used first in the *American Political Science Review* in 1959 describing the few dissidents seeking a safe asylum from the Soviet Union, (Moss 2001). The word 'refugee' from late 17th Century French origin (from the Latin for refuge)(OED 2001) referring to people "*forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution or natural disaster"*, has become narrowed, in signatory statesto the 1951 Geneva Convention (and 1967 Protocol) definition, to the extent that Tuitt (1996) talks of the metaphorical "*death of the refugee."* In the UK media 'asylum seeker' became common parlance in the 1990s; in the Guardian in 1990 the term 'refugees'

outnumbered 'asylum seekers' by 10:1, by 2000 it was less than 2:1. Moss (2001: www.guardian.co.uk) found the unquestioned 'refugee' displaced by war in former-Yugoslavia in 1993, replaced by the 'asylum seeker' in 1994, matching "*bureaucratic unease about growing numbers claiming to be refugees.*"

Western European construction of the refugee in law Tuitt (1996:2) argues is "*a grossly aborted conception of the refugee,*" denying many of the global conditions producing refugee-hood, denying the refugee identity and thus adequate protection. The so-called "*new asylum seeker*" from the 1980's represented not just greater movements of people for new reasons due to greater ease of travel, but their unexpected arrival at the borders of the developed world *and new tensions and hostilities* towards them from the receiving states (Tuitt 1996:69). The 1951 Convention was drafted when the "*statist paradigm,*" was unquestioned and "*refugee protection was constructed as a compromise between the desire of states to control entry and the continuing existence of mass displacement,*" (Harvey, 2000:372). These tensions became greater with the "*new asylum seeker,*" which Gibney (2004:10) points out includes only those refugees who arrive at the borders of another country and whose status "*as an endangered person is typically undetermined. To be an asylum seeker a person merely has to **claim** to be a refugee,*" and so the category of 'asylum seeker' is both narrower *and* more expansive than that of refugee.

Therefore the UK bureaucratic category of 'asylum seeker' raises immediate doubt over a person's status as "*endangered*;*"* whether they are a 'genuine' or a 'bogus' refugee. Moss (2001:www.guardian.co.uk) argues "'*Refugee' is a word that evokes immediate sympathy; 'asylum seeker' is a colder, more bureaucratic term, and it is convenient for the Home Office that the latter is now increasingly favoured.*"   It joins the other newly used quasi-bureaucratic categories differentiating types of migrant, including 'economic migrant' often used pejoratively to refer to an asylum seeker considered not to be a 'genuine' refugee. 'Asylum seeker' also largely became a pejorative term, "*Those on the right no longer even have to use the word 'bogus'; their tone suggests that they consider all asylum seekers bogus,*" (Moss 2001:www.guardian.co.uk).

Alongside its official use in legal and bureaucratic decision-making, such terminology is used in various discourses by the "*primary definers*" (Hall et al 1978:59) socially

constructing migrants to the UK and migration in general, in an interpretive framework or "*inferential structure*" that has been predominantly negative. A lot of academic (and other) attention has turned to explicating this negative social construction in the (particularly tabloid) media and politics, many deeming it racist, or 'scapegoating' migrants in moral panics of extraordinary proportions (e.g. Bralo, 1998; Kaye, 1998; 2001; Speers, 2001; Law, 2002). Cohen (1994:82) citing the then Home Secretary Douglas Hurd as one of Britain's "*frontier guards*", argued

> *The construction of a new stigmatised group, the 'disguised economic migrant', was necessary to the deconstruction of the morally untouchable category of the 'deserving political refugee.*

The actual effects of such popular discourses and representations, (e.g. on public opinion, action and policy making, Statham, 2003; Saggar, 2003) have also been researched and acknowledged, not just by left-leaning academics and activists defending refugee rights, but by the police (ACPO, 2001),

> *…racist expressions towards asylum seekers appear to have become common currency and acceptable in a way which would never be tolerated towards any other minority…Experience over the last four years has been that where asylum communities have been established there has been ill-informed adverse media coverage which has contributed to heightened local tensions and resentment of asylum seekers.*

And the government's Audit Commission (2000:33), advising on dispersal,

> *…negative press coverage can inflame public opinion and create a climate in which fair treatment is hard to achieve. At present, press coverage of asylum seekers is overwhelmingly negative… Devising a local press and publicity strategy prior to receiving asylum seekers can help to create more positive coverage.*

However Threadgold (2001:3) warns "*some politicians, policy-makers and academics are sometimes too quick to call community common sense 'racism,' or to brand the media with racist reporting,*" that too straightforward links should not be made out of "*extraordinarily complex processes*". East (2000: i, 1) argues that the 'asylum debate' is polarised and "*Neither the 'bogus' nor the 'forced to flee' discourses promote an understanding of people seeking asylum as creative, reflexive agents of their own destiny*" leaving neither asylum seekers nor 'agents of welfare' to articulate their own perspectives. She proposes that some discourses defending refugees

> *…can lead to a glossing over of some deep and challenging issues… People who are refugees are caught between these diverse yet similar responses: between those who treat them as objects of moral concern and those who treat them as objects of suspicion. In the process, human beings are defaced.*

Bralo (1998:19) argued from her research on 1997 newspaper representations that refugees were predominantly constructed in discourses of "*social exclusion*" which falsely suggested their homogenous "*pseudo-group identity*" and 'otherness' and did not reflect people's lived experience as a 'refugee' or their own identity. Instead it "*replaces individual and group identity 'by stereotyped identity with categorical prescription of assumed needs' (Zetter 1991:44) in the eyes of the in-group,*" (ibid:19). This "*pseudo-group identity*" allows for easy scape-goating with different social exclusion discourses which may be "*subtler than racism or nationalism,*" (ibid:37). Participatory action and life-history research such as O' Neill's (2001:6-7) has sought to redress "*valorizing discourses, and the reduction of the Other to a cipher of the oppressed/marginalised/ exploited…*" by instead seeking "*to understand, express and re-imagine the complexity of loss, longing, exile <u>and</u> re-construction.*" O' Neill (2001:3) aims to challenge and resist dominant images and stereotypes of 'refugees' and 'asylum seekers' which "*include those of 'victim,' 'passive,' 'dependent,' and do not reflect the courage, resistance and the need for building self-esteem, self-identity and cultural identity in the face of tragedy and loss…*"

Many activists and academics have sought to problematise, unsettle and reclaim the popular dominant discourses around 'asylum' by referring to people who seek asylum in

ways which are not negative, de-humanising or objectifying in the senses mentioned above; by 'myth-busting' (e.g. Refugee Council) and through research they try to describe the actualities of people's 'lived experience.' One preferred term for the area of study is "forced migration" and for those in such a situation "forced migrants," Marfleet (1998:71) argues,

> *The notion of 'forced migration,' of those coerced into flight, is the only approach which encompasses the predicament of most asylum seekers. Such an idea has long been resisted by Western governments keen to differentiate refugees from other categories of migrants... Today, migrants are part of the process in which capital, information and ideas do move more freely across national boundaries and in which large numbers of people are both induced and coerced to migrate. Differentiation between 'economic migrants', 'refugees' and others becomes meaningful only for those most determined to perpetuate systems of exclusion.*

However others would argue that while the boundaries differentiating refugees from other migrants, especially the narrow 'legal' definitions used in Western Europe to exclude people, are blurred and peoples' reasons for migrating often complex, it is still important to differentiate those in fear of their lives through persecution or danger in order to ensure they are offered adequate protection, and their needs met in different ways from those not in this position. Gibney (2004:11) suggests this depends on which end of the spectrum of reasons for economic migration a person is on,

> *Whereas a refugee claims to enter because he or she is being persecuted or faces a situation of life-threatening danger, economic migrants are driven to seek entrance by (often only slightly) less pressing considerations, such as the desire to improve a low standard of living. Individual economic migrants might be located at various points on a continuum according to their reason for entrance, with those seeking to improve an appallingly low quality of life marked by serious economic deprivation... at one end and those migrating between first world countries in order to take up more lucrative employment opportunities...at the other. Clearly, some, though not all, economic migrants have a strong claim to enter based upon need.*

In this study I will use the bureaucratic and legal labels that the UK government uses to differentiate migrants, while accepting that these are socially and legally constructed, are problematic and do not sum up such individuals' identities, they *may* refer to people's different experiences before arriving in the UK, so *possibly* shared needs. Essentially, being ascribed such a status by immigration and asylum law and bureaucracy, has *real* consequences on the rights, obligations, freedoms, constraints, and access to specific types of welfare a person is entitled to as well as deciding the most likely pathway through bureaucratic and legal systems. Thus to be labelled 'asylum seeker,' or granted 'refugee' status is likely to affect the real and often shared 'lived experiences' of people in these structural positions, in quite significant ways vital to understand in this study. Obviously differences between individuals labelled 'refugee' are as great as their similarities, but this study aims to ascertain what is *"emblematic"* about a person's experience as an asylum seeker from her unique *"idiosyncratic"* journey (Bourdieu et al, 1999:ix). Where I believe differentiation is unnecessary, however, I will use more 'humane' terms.

2.2 Towards a 'sociology of forced migration'

Castles (2003) has recently proposed that sociology has neglected or sidelined 'forced migration' and should study it, as it is a fundamental aspect of current global social transformations. This research aims to take up his challenge, so it is important to summarise it here. His reasons include the massive growth in numbers of people forced to migrate in different ways, for different reasons since the cold war, (and explaining why most do not). The *significance* of forced migration in contemporary societies is more sociologically important, as Bauman (1998:9) argues, *"mobility has become the most powerful and most coveted stratifying factor"*. Forced migration, as *all* migration, is intrinsic to globalising economic systems, as many 'Northern' states rely silently on undocumented migrants to fulfil labour needs and the 'migration industry' emerged to facilitate forced migration. Globalisation maintains and increases systems of inequality, exclusion and inclusion socially, economically and politically particularly in (but also within) the North-South divide, making reasons and distinction between economic and human rights motivations for migration multiple and blurred. The study of migration has

been dominated by geography and economics, however the failure of policies based on that research has led sociology to explain migration's social dynamics, largely ignored by refugee and forced migration studies. Thus, it is timely and essential to theorise *forced* migration sociologically, as an integral part of North-South relations and intrinsically related to (often indistinguishable from) economic migration, both being "*forms of expression of global inequalities and societal crises*" (Castles 2003:17).

'Refugee Studies,' has grown phenomenally over the past 50 years into an inter-disciplinary academic focus "*based around a 'label'*" (Zetter 1988, in Black 2001:57).With 'Forced Migration' studies dating from the early 1980s, it has been closely linked to practical and policy concerns, and traditionally close to inter-governmental and NGO humanitarian organisations. Castles (2003) argues that this is both a strength and a weakness of research; a strength in that research has been intended to serve vital practical purposes to alleviate human suffering; but a weakness in that research has been largely narrowly policy-driven and dominated. The failure of migration policies, Castles explains, is due to research unquestioningly using problem definitions and concepts of policy makers and researching often specific, short-sighted bureaucratic problems. Sociology has thus considered forced migration studies as peripheral and a-theoretical (e.g. Travers 1999). Castles argues that a more theoretical, historical 'sociological' take, embracing inter-disciplinarity, would offer "*more useful public knowledge,*" (ibid:27).

Castles agrees with Portes (1997) that the existing sociological studies have over-emphasised local, empirical, cultural distinctiveness and adaptation, neglecting broader theoretical explanations on the structural causes and dimensions of forced migration and the incorporation of forced migrants into receiving societies. He argues that forced migration should be analysed as a pivotal aspect of the emergent global world order, political economy, transnationalism and globalisation, and that local studies should always be contextualised within these broader processes that are intrinsic to them; "*there can be no compartmentalised theory of forced migration,*" (ibid:27).

A sociology of forced migration needs a division of labour where micro, macro and meso levels of analysis and processes between them are linked, and "*specific studies of specific*

groups or situations are informed by broader studies of global social, political and economic structures and relationships – and vice versa," (ibid:22). It must acknowledge itself part of, and bring together, an inter-disciplinary project, as *"Migration is an existential shift which affects every part of human life"* (ibid:22). This involves understanding forced migration in terms of social relations on global, regional, national and local levels, as well as studying processes of loss of identity, community disintegration and their regaining and rebuilding.

A further aspect in sociology which could impede its adequate theorising of forced migration has been its often implicit nation-state framework of analysis, other than Marx's political economy which pre-empts globalisation theory. This has meant that the *"stranger, or 'Other', is seen as deviant and potentially dangerous"* (p23) and theorising has centred on assimilation and integration of the 'stranger', and deeply rooted, hard-to-shift national traditions with *"tunnel-vision,"* (p24). Castles argues therefore that current global transformations necessitate *"the analysis of transnational connectedness and the way this affects national societies, local communities and individuals,"* (p24), that the sociology of forced migration is vital in its own right *and* contributing to 'global sociology'.

Castles (2003) makes a strong case for forced migration as an integral aspect of the emerging new global order and ongoing social, political and economic global and transnational transformations, citing the globalisation literature (Castells, 1996; Held et al, 1999). Although movements of migrants are as old as recorded history, a contemporary sociology must analyse new aspects of forced migration in the current era of globalisation and as *"both a result and cause of social transformation in the South,"* where there have been *"new wars"* and conflicts (Kaldor, 2001) which Northern economic interests have exacerbated. While Southern underdevelopment is increasingly seen as a security threat to the North, and humanitarian aid and peacekeeping as essential to development, a system of *"networked global liberal governance"* controlled by the North, attempts to transform whole Southern societies (Duffield, 2001).

Crucially to this research, Castles outlines ways in which forced migration is socially transforming Northern societies. In common with, *and* distinctive from other migrations,

forced migration has significantly increased the social and cultural diversity of populations and proliferation of transnational communities. Such increases in forced migration coincided with the settling of older immigrant communities, multiculturalism and the end of the long boom, economic restructuring, deindustrialisation, privatisation and deregulation thus "*immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers appeared as the physical embodiment of the external threat to jobs, living standards and welfare,*" (ibid:20). Asylum and migration became politicised; extreme right movements and racist violence proliferated; and construction of the threatening 'Other,' legitimising public order policies diverted attention from economic and political problems. New exile diasporas are taking on different either transient or permanent characteristics to transnational communities under globalisation conditions (Cohen, 1997; Van Hear, 1998). The impact of forced migration in the Northern world is clearly important for sociological attention.

Castles suggests possible research topics, outlines methodological principles and a theoretical framework important for an emergent sociology of forced migration. The overarching principle is *"to integrate various levels of analysis into a global political economy,"*(p28) so research topics would range from local to global political economy. And it would include as relevant here, "*dynamics of settlement*" such as "*social policy for forced migrants and its relationship to broader social policy*" and *the "relationship between bureaucracy and human agency in refugee settlement,"* (p28,29). With theoretical grounding, relevant methodological principles include: interdisciplinarity; a historical understanding of sending and receiving societies; a holistic approach linking specific topics to embeddedness in different spatial levels of social relations; local, national, regional patterns of social and cultural relations and broader changes; comparative studies; human agency of forced migrants, sending and receiving communities; importance of participatory research methods.

Castles' (2003) proposals for a new sociology of forced migration seem an ideal framework and challenge for this study. Reviewing the literature will serve to contextualise a local ethnographic study of a refugee welfare agency in the UK within broader theoretical debates, global structural determinants of forced migration including the reception and settlement of forced migrants in this receiving society, a historical understanding of the reception of forced and other migrants, the relations of welfare and

immigration policies and the agency of these specific forced migrants and host welfare workers.

2.3 Contradictions around forced migration

A dominant theme in the literature on global migration in general and forced migration in particular are the contradictions and tensions involved, at all spatial levels of analysis (global, regional, national, local and individual), from the conceptual, ethical and political to the real, lived and practical (Geddes, 2000; Castles, 2000; Morris, 2002; Miles, 1993; Gibney, 2004). These contradictions raise dilemmas for individuals, governments, policy-makers, groups and organisations involved. Exploring and grasping the essence of these contradictions is essential in order to make sense of the construction of 'asylum' as problematic and the welfare policies and practices of particular nations for receiving forced migrants.

In line with the premise, identified by Castles (2003), that any local level, small scale exploration of individuals involved in forced migration cannot be viewed in isolation but should relate to the integral, broader, global structural implicit within it, this contextualisation will start from the global (and transnational) level of analysis of identified tensions as a framework, working down in scale. It will consider the conceptual and general (or real) to the practical, particular and empirical (or actual).

2.4 Globalisation, migration and forced migration

> *Globalization is a process that generates contradictory spaces, characterised by contestation, internal differentiation, continuous border crossings* (Sassen, 1998:xxxiv).

Within the conceptual framework of contradictions and tensions, this section will attempt to understand the character and causes of contemporary migration, particularly forced migration, in the context of globalization where, as the literature demonstrates, such processes are far more complex and multi-dimensional than popular and policy understandings, allow for. Sassen (1998) and Castles (2000) both argue that migration

and immigration are fundamental to the processes of globalization, and marked by contradictions. Characterising globalization with multitudinous ambiguities and contradictions is the explicit sociological norm, though Morris (1997:193) finds the "*implicit presence*" of a linear, developmental perspective "*hard to escape.*" These tensions make the globalization thesis hard to fault though there are tendencies to speculative and abstract terming of any transnational trend as global, and insufficient empirical illustration and analysis of such phenomena (Morris 1997).

Globalization is a contested phenomenon, though there is general acceptance of *some* aspects or manifestations of 'it'. Critiquing Third Way philosophies Callinicos (2001) observes that Held et al (1999), presenting themselves (and Giddens) as moderate "*transformationalists",* arrived at the correct dialectical synthesis between the "*sceptics"* (e.g. Hirst and Thompson, 1996, globalization is a myth hiding international and continuing national powers) and the "*hyperglobalisers*" (e.g. Soysal, 1994, nation state power is fundamentally reduced and transnational processes dominant). Held et al (1999:16) envision globalization as a non-evolutionary historical process or processes with an irreducible plurality of causes, "*which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions.*" Marxist, Callinicos (2001:19) argues that "*boosters*" and *"critics"* is a more useful division. He also asserts that the critical belief that "*global economic integration has qualitatively increased over the past generation and the probable outcome will be greater rather than less economic instability,*" is coherent. Castells (2000) account of globalization as "*The Information Age,*" includes 'boosterism' and 'critical thinking.'

Burawoy (2000) also criticises globalization theorists who Giddens terms the "*radicals*" and the "*sceptics,*" where Giddens has set the sceptics (Hirst and Thompson; Wade; Evans and Weiss) up as a straw argument to knock down with his own 'radical's' view (if there is so much hype about globalization then it must be real). Burawoy (2000:339) criticises Giddens and the radicals for their *"cavalier approach to history,"* including Castells, Jameson ("*the apotheosis of the radicals bringing together cultural epiphenomenalism and historical unconsciousness")* and Harvey who "*gets nearest to a serious engagement with transformation.*" But he ultimately gives a speculative Marxist

teleology of capitalism and resolutions to its crises. Burawoy is equally critical of "*perspectivalists,*" anthropologists whose ethnography does not go beyond the ethnographer "*who hold onto their radicalism by being sceptics at the same time*"(ibid:340). Burawoy (2000) himself wants to "*construct perspectives on globalization from below, what we call grounded globalizations*" by using ethnography "*to drum some reality into theories of globalization, investigating to what extent globalization is a flight of academic fantasy.*" These ethnographers sought theories to stretch from the local spatial, temporal "*real experiences*" they investigated to the global, the result of which Burawoy (2000:341) claims "*are the antidote to sceptics without context, radicals without history, and perpectivalists without theory.*" Having re-evaluated his theories in the light of his team's ethnographies, Burawoy's, conclusions disagree that

> …*there is a transition between globalizations, between Global Imperialism and the Global Postmodern… Instead we prefer the more agnostic perspective of globalization in transition. Our studies point to the displacement of an old order while the contours of the new one are simply not clear… To Giddens cosmopolitanism from above we propose… a new cosmopolitanism from below. Globalisation cannot be reduced to an inexorable force; it is also a process in which we participate; it is a process embedded in imaginations we construct. It opens up opportunities as well as closing them down.* (ibid:348,349).

Both Sassen and Castles could be described as "*transformationalists,*" accepting the existence and increase of the multi-dimensional (economic, political, social, cultural) character of globalization but also as "*critics,*" certainly of the economic "logic of capital." Also, like many theorists, they both accept the differentiated advances of globalization in different realms but the generally continuing, if eroded, powerbases of nation-states. The trends understood as globalization are fundamental to Habermas (1999:48) analysis,

> *are transforming a historical constellation characterized by the fact that state, society and economy are, as it were, co-extensive within the same national*

boundaries. The international economic system… is being metamorphosed into a transnational economy in the wake of the globalization of markets.

He also accepts that "*the ongoing erosion of borders is not just characteristic of the economy*" (ibid:48), citing for examples Held et al's discussion of peace-keeping and organized violence, media and communications networks, growing migratory movements.

All Castles' (2000:124-32) nine "*fundamental contradictions*" characterising contemporary globalization and migration involve that between inclusion and exclusion; "*global linkages*" embrace every human group and geographical area, but while some are fully included "*in the new global order,*" others are marginalised. Groups and individuals possessing characteristics that fit global markets for labour, capital or cultural goods are included as citizens with civil, political and social rights, those without are excluded and some denied the most basic rights. International migration of all 'types' is closely linked with such processes, so "*migrants' motivations are complex and multidimensional.*" The transformational processes of inclusion/exclusion do not just envelope the 100 million people living outside countries of birth, 20 million of whom were refugees (in 2000), but societies they have emigrated from and immigrated to.

Where anonymous market forces (not any tangible individual, institution or state) are held culpable for the inclusion of some and exclusion of others, the contradiction between the market and the state, means inequality is accepted as necessary to the efficiency of capital, and the state and welfare have drawn back from interfering with this (particularly since the 1980s). Developing states have been forced to open up to neo-liberal markets at the expense of providing welfare and employment to their people. This contradiction is central in international migration, dictating the emigration and immigration of differentiated labour; and where governments attempt to stop migration, informal social networks and migration industries emerge to facilitate migration more effectively than states can control it (Castles, 2000). In exploring the meaning of borders Sassen (1999:4) says "*we see a combination of drives to create border-free economic spaces and drives for renewed border control to keep immigrants and refugees out.*" The market/state contradiction includes policies which promote both free movement of capital, goods,

information and culture transnationally but highly selective resistance to the free movement of labour and other migrants.

The freeing of markets and decline of welfare states has produced greater inequality, and Castles' (2000) third contradiction of growing wealth *and* poverty, *within* older industrial and newly industrialising countries and *between* developed and developing countries, to the extent that "*whole nations are being excluded from the new global order*"(p127), not now simply divided North by South. The supposed "trickle-down" of wealth predicted by modernization theories not materialising, Habermas (1999:51) asks

> *how long will it take to cross the 'valley of tears' and what sacrifices will have to be made en route. How many people will be marginalized and then left by the wayside before the goal is reached?*

Exclusions overlay such inequalities based on membership of differentiated groups (women, ethnic minorities) and migrants within industrializing and developed nations find themselves "*in situations of marginalization, impoverishment and social conflict,*" (Castles, 2000:127). In her attempt to "*recover the concrete, localized processes through which globalization exists*" Sassen (1998:xx) analyses the presence and co-existence within global cities of strategic sites for corporate global capital and a global disadvantaged workforce, "*women, immigrants, and people of colour, whose political sense of self and whose identities are not necessarily embedded in the 'nation' of the 'national community.'*"

Sassen's (1998) analysis of global cities also echoes Castles' (2000) fifth contradiction between the global and the local, his eighth between the national and global citizen, and ninth between globalization from above and from below, which they both argue (echoing Burawoy, 2000) provide the hope for greater equality and inclusion in a new notion of citizenship, and political action.

2.5 Theories and causes of migration and forced migration globally & movements

> *Over the last five centuries mass migrations have played a major role in colonialism, industrialisation, the emergence of nation-states and the development of the capitalist world market. However international migration has never been as pervasive, or as socio-economically and politically significant as it is today.* Castles and Miller (1998:283)

Kushner and Knox (1999) suggest the twentieth was the century of enforced displacement, in their "Refugees in an Age of Genocide". Although migration and forced migration have occurred throughout human history, it is widely accepted that the period since 1945 saw unprecedented growth in numbers of people migrating, and again since the 1980s and end of the Cold War, including massively increased forced migration globally. There is also agreement (though debate) that these new migrations are qualitatively different, with new causes and changed responses to them in a globalizing world, the new global order, or disorder. Castles and Miller (1998) identify five tendencies characterising those changes in migration, which they predict will be most prominent for the next twenty years: *globalisation*, emigration and immigration affecting more geographical areas; *acceleration*, increasing numbers with accompanying political attention; *differentiation*, large range of types, and complexity, also problematic for policy; *feminisation*, women more prominent in all regions and types of migration; *politicisation*, increased interest and effects on domestic, bilateral, regional and national security policies. Sassen (1999), Castles, Phizacklea (1998) and others argue that traditional theories of migration, forced migration and immigration have too narrowly, simplistically and ahistorically explained what is now (maybe always was) a broader, highly complex multitude of processes, nevertheless all tied up in broader economic, political, social, cultural, environmental processes of global change, or 'globalization,'

> *…it is therefore inappropriate to analyse migration as an isolated phenomenon; it is one facet of societal change and global development. The different forms of migration… all arise from these broader changes. The categories are interdependent…* (Castles and Miller, 1998:140).

Castles (2003) and Sassen (1998) both argue that all types of contemporary migrations are an *integral* part of globalization; "*Immigration is, in my reading, one of the constitutive processes of globalization today…*" (pxxi). Castles and Miller (1998) divide migration theories into three fundamental approaches. The first of these is "*Neo-classical equilibrium theories,*" often discussed as 'push-pull' theories based on ideas similar to neo-classical economics where individuals make rational cost-benefit decisions on migration, influenced by various push and pull factors The second are "*historical-structural*" explanations, stemming from Marxist political economy, which suggest that migrations are driven by the forces of capital, mobilising cheap labour, perpetuating inequality and uneven development, ensuring the domination of First over Third world countries. Castles and Miller (1998) argue that both are too one-sided, (the first overemphasising agency, the second, structural determinism) and cannot account for the empirical and historical realities and complexities of current migrations, their logic unable to explain why the majority of people do *not* migrate.

"*Migrations systems theory*" approaches emerged out of such critiques, suggesting that migrations occur out of interacting macro (e.g. political economy, interstate relations, practices for managing migration) and micro (social and informal networks, beliefs and practices of groups and individuals) factors, especially in the specific linkages or systems between sending and receiving societies, between which "*migration chains*" develop. Castles argues this approach is much better able to explain the complexities, specificities and anomalies of contemporary migrations and resettlings. Although reminiscent of the 'perfect' dialectical syntheses of 'Third Way' approaches to globalization, the work of Castles, Sassen, Phizacklea and others fit under the migrations systems approach broadly and seem able to offer the most useful explanations with most integrity for current migrations, 'voluntary' and forced. For instance, Phizacklea (1998) rejects the "*orthodox*" and the "*structural*" models (fitting Castles 'neo-classical' and 'historical-structural') dominating migration theory for twenty years, to develop a feminist perspective on migration and globalization by using Giddens 'structuration' framework to combine the agency and structure in women's migrations.

Broadly within this systems approach, Sassen (1999) uses historical analysis of migrations to Europe over the past 200 years to challenge the notions of *"invasion" which permeate* current political and popular understandings of immigration. She argues that a broader historical view crucially demonstrates that receiving immigration countries are not *"innocent bystanders"* but *"active participants"* in their immigration histories (echoing the 'we are here, because you were there' contention). She finds that migrations, including those of refugees, are *produced,* having been conditioned historically by the links, interrelations and *"binding mechanisms"* of sending and receiving countries, by specific complex geopolitical, economic, social conditions and structures between and within countries (e.g. colonial and postcolonial relations). Sassens also found that migrations are highly bounded in space, time and scale. They are extremely selective processes where only certain people leave, following *"highly structured"* routes, where many return or follow circular migrations and only some permanently settle. Refugee migration has been similarly conditioned and structured historically; this century by interstate agreements on narrow definitions of the 'refugee' since WW1, recently challenged by obvious broader realities of global refugeehood, similar to pre-WW1 notions where 2.5 million Jewish refugees of economic despair through war and generalised oppression, were offered safety. Without denying people's agency,

> *…such migrations transcend the brute facts of persecution, poverty and overpopulation… these brutal motivations are raw ingredients which combine and metamorphose within larger political and economic structures so that people are set in motion,* (Sassen, 1999:2)

She concludes that immigration policies must reflect such broader realities, to move beyond attempted gate shutting against a perceived invasion of 'others', allowing immigrants and refugees to be considered

> *…"'today's settlers' to indicate old concepts of belonging do not fit present realities. Migrations are acts of settlement and of habitation in a world where the divide between destination and origin is no longer a divide of Otherness, a world in which borders no longer separate human realities,"* (ibid:6).

The UNHCR's (1997) analysis of contemporary forced migration encompasses a broad and complex range of global circumstances where human security is threatened and forced displacement occurs, prompting growing categorisation of people both inside and outside the UNHCR's protectorate of 'people of concern.' The concepts "*asylum flow, mass expulsion, ethnic cleansing, disaster-induced displacement, development-induced displacement, forced migration, internal displacement, population transfer, population exchange, involuntary repatriation, and imposed return*"(ibid:2-3) go someway to reflecting this. The differentiation of voluntary and involuntary migration are problematised, in recognition that nearly all migration involves *some* compulsion. For examplelabour migration prompted by poverty and virtually all migration involves some element of choice, like where to go, or even in choosing to stay and die, or stay when everyone else leaves. Distinguishing between planned and spontaneous movement raises dilemmas problematising *when* people leave as a sign of forced or voluntary displacement. The UNHCR (1997:27) detail a complex combination of factors causing current loss of security and forced displacement, including "*unbalanced development, economic decline and environmental degradation; by state collapse, state formation and the authoritarian exercise of state power; and by new forms of violence and warfare*" such as violence and war-based economies and privatised violence (for instance, up to 35 civil wars and far more lower-intensity conflicts were being fought globally in 1997).

Such theoretical, academic and practical understandings of the complexity, contradiction and ambiguity in causes of contemporary migrations, specifically forced migrations raise further contradictions, ethical and practical dilemmas for supranational humanitarian bodies (e.g. the UNHCR), regional polities (e.g. the EU), national governments, local groups and individuals. Raising questions such as, how to respond, who has responsibility for protecting whom, if states are to have immigration policies, whose interests must be considered in designing them? These issues may be understood as tensions between national sovereignty, citizenship, the welfare state, particularism, partiality and impartiality, universalism, human rights, an understanding of which will further contextualise national and local responses and policies for receiving people seeking protection or asylum.

2.6 The tensions between universalism and particularism

There is a massive growth of the global presence of millions of displaced people in need of security and protection and a greatly increased, though nevertheless small percentage, of people seeking refuge, arriving recently at the borders of most developed nations. This raises immense ethical and practical dilemmas for political communities, particularly but not exclusively, those organised as nation-states. There has been a growing literature debating these tensions. Although part of the wider debate on managing migration and immigration policies, the specific issues of refugee protection and asylum, are based on the assertion that on scales of 'neediness,' that of refugees is the need of the protection of a *new* state and the right to life (Zolberg et al, 1989) and is more acute than those of other needy migrants. The character of nation-states contradicts the universalism of human rights, raising ethical dilemmas around controlling territorial entry and access to state resources, and obligations to protect those needing protection not based on physical proximity, (Singer and Singer, 1988).

This conflict is between *"partialism and impartialism"* (Gibney, 2004) or *"particularism and universalism,"* (Noll and Vedsted-Hansen, 1999) arising because the key characteristics of nation-states - sovereignty, citizenship and democracy - are fundamentally based on inclusionary and exclusionary principles, *"Inclusionary and democratic to the inside, nation-states are necessarily exclusionary and undemocratic to the outside, rocks of facticity that defy universal justice and human rights,"* (Joppke, 1999:2). The sovereignty of nation-states was fully transferred after WW2 as the dominant system of rule of liberal-democratic states, that the political legitimacy of states or governments was determined by will of the people over the internal order of mutually exclusive territories: *"rule in the modern world flows from the absolute sovereignty of state over its national territory"* (Sassen, 1996:3). The shift in sovereignty from monarchy to secular republic, necessitated a new basis for belonging and solidarity within territories, so the *"invention of the nation… essentially a **cultural community** – is a vital precondition for the emergence of the modern democratic republic as a **political community"*** (Castles and Davidson, 2000:81). Thus another basis of exclusion from nation-states raising contention, is Walzer's (1983) claim that political communities (nations) have the right to be *"communities of character,"* on the basis that members

have a *"collective right to shape the resident population,"* in other words a *cultural* community diversely *"based on common descent, language and historical experience,"* (Castles and Davidson, 2000:81).

So, the argument goes, this territorial sovereignty gives states the rights to control both their literal and metaphorical borders (*"physical borders and administrative thresholds"*) so *"by its very nature, migration and asylum law is situated in the conflict zone between particularism and universalism"* (Noll and Vedsted-Hansen, 1999:362,360). However migration control (particularism) and refugee protection (universalism) are based on different foundational principles, and are pursuing different systemic goals, *"migration control is to manage the inflow, presence, and outflow of non-citizens on state territory…it is about the preservation of a particularist community…refugee protection is about the safeguarding of a certain level of human rights"* (ibid:363). Though they share some fields of operation and guiding procedural norms, *"We are left with a formidable conflict between the state's prerogative to exclude and the human rights imperative to include…"* (ibid:364). Joppke (1999:281) argues that *"Carried to its logical extreme, the doctrine of human rights and duties under international law is subversive to the whole principle that mankind should be organized as a society of sovereign states."*

Noll and Vedsted-Hansen (1999) argue that without a pre-established check on these two interests, particularism tends to *"colonize"* universalism, and without an inarguable right of way of one, balancing both is the only solution. They highlight the merging of refugee protection and migration control since states began questioning the legitimacy of most of the increasing numbers of asylum seekers as 'genuine' refugees, thus defining their overall rationale as preventing *"irregular arrivals."* So control has taken over from protection. Joppke (1997) and Geddes (2000) also contend that increasing control against immigration tends to fit more with democracy, and generosity to immigrants (and humanitarianism to asylum seekers) is less popular thus elitist, another aspect of the dilemmas of states in responding to refugees and migrants.

Some theorists argue that this conflict between universal human rights and particularist nation-state interests is not so stark, being mitigated and challenged by several factors. Habermas (1994) argues that liberal democratic states were built on the dual principles of

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human rights and popular sovereignty, and have inbuilt internal constitutional human rights, "*members of a democratic community are governed by themselves collectively*" and "*they are governed by law and not by man.*" However Castles and Davidson (2000:81) stress the contradictions in the mix of "*nation,*" when understood as an "imagined community" culturally, with "*state*" ensuring equal rights for members because "*It's model of inclusion always meant exclusion*" and could lead to nationalism for example. Soysal (1994) and others, Joppke (1997) label as "*human rights internationalism,*" argue that the sovereign power of states is being limited by universal human rights laws imposed from *without,* such as the ECHR. More circumspectly Sassen (1998:7) argues that fundamental to immigration policy are "*that it singles out the border and the individual as the sites for regulatory enforcement,*" that although ratifying international human rights conventions, states' sovereignty is supreme (e.g. not granting the right to asylum just accepting the right of non-refoulement) She asserts that "*the individual* emerges *as a site for contesting the authority (sovereignty) of the state because she is the site for human rights*" (though she is wrongly held solely responsible for her migration in the first place, ibid). The transnationalizing of legal and regulatory regimes especially for economic globalization, and respect and enforcement of international human rights codes not based on national membership (such as judicial action defending asylum seekers rights against the legislature) offer tentative transformations in states' sovereignties and the possibility of "*de facto transnationalising of Immigration Policy*." Though Joppke (1997) disagrees, arguing that states capacities to control asylum seekers' entry is increasing and that international human rights systems are not very effective in constraining states. Gibney (2004) stresses the need not just to resolve these dilemmas theoretically and ethically, suggesting impartialists demanding open borders is "*other-worldly*" but "*into actual **prescriptions** for governments*" recognising the "*profound **conflict of value** between legitimate claims of citizens and those of refugees… exacerbated by the **scope** of the contemporary problem*" (i.e. not just numbers of displaced people, but the complexity and extensiveness of the problems generating them). Gibney's (2004) solution is that states without any discrimination on the "cultural" claims of nation, "*should accept as many refugees as they can without undermining the provision of collective or public goods among their members,*" (p84).

2.7 The Contradictions of migration and citizenship

As well as the tensions around national sovereignty, another site of contradictions (Morris, 2002; Joppke, 1997; Castles and Davidson, 2000) and challenging of boundaries (Brubaker 1992) by migration and recent asylum seeking is the national institution of citizenship. While sovereignty refers to the state as a territorial organization, citizenship denotes the nation as a *"membership association,"* (Joppke, 1997:5). Many theorists stress the *"exclusionary tensions inherent in the concept of citizenship,"* that *"Inclusion and exclusion represent the two sides of citizenship's coin,"* (Lister, 1997:42), most obviously as citizenship delineates those belonging and not belonging to the 'community' of members. Historically citizenship in liberal-democratic states conferred various rights in exchange for the loyalty of citizens. Civil, political and social rights were and are gained progressively, as Marshall (1950) claimed, with social rights, (realised last through welfare states), being essential for full participation of citizens in their formal civil and political rights. Marshall has been criticised for not recognising the differential exclusion of those outside formal citizenship and the informal exclusions by gender, 'race', ethnicity, class and culture *within* citizenship (Anthias and Yuval-Davis, 1992). The boundaries of citizenship are not clear but blurred (Castles and Davidson, 2000; Baubock, 1998), or as Lister (1997:43) put it operate more on a continuum than as a dichotomy, (other than absolute exclusion from a territory), because *"boundaries and allocative processes serve to include and exclude simultaneously,"* and new boundaries are being drawn and re-drawn at the borders of and within nations and at supra-national levels (e.g. the EU).

National citizenship has historically been understood as an exchange of rights for the solidarity and loyalty of its members in a *cultural* community, so not just a legal status but an identity; *"As an identity, citizenship depends on and reinforces shared values and understandings, that is a common culture,"* (Joppke, 1997:7). Whether mono-cultural nations and national identities actually existed in Western liberal-democracies, the mass immigrations of culturally diverse migrants since 1945 have challenged the 'cultural' institution of citizenship. This initially pressed toward assimilation, but then, in nationally different ways (e.g. jus sanguine and jus soli) and extents, towards accepting multi-culturalism within citizenship. For instance Britain, with the increasing national and

cultural diversity of new residents since new migrations from the 1980s, has recently sought to strengthen the cultural dimension of citizenship, easing access to it, stressing the intent of *"integration with diversity"* and celebrating multi-cultural belonging, accepting dual-citizenship but demanding loyalty ceremonies, language competence and knowledge of national history, (Home Office, 2002).

With increased migration to Western nation-states, there have been increasing numbers of territorial residents living outside the boundaries of formal citizenship, with varying differential, predominantly civil and social rights, pathways of access to them and frequently moving boundaries as different states alter their policies for conditions of belonging. This increasing categorisation of foreign residents includes *"foreign citizens with a legal and permanent resident status"* that Hammar (1990:15) terms *"denizens"* and Castles and Davidson (2000:94) term *"quasi-citizens"* often with a full range of social and civil, but few political rights, who may (e.g. in Germany or Switzerland) have been born in their country of residence. But there is also a growing range of residents accorded varying, differential, lesser rights including tenuous or non-existent residence rights.,Martiniello (1994:42) terms these *"margizens"* (including asylum seekers) as living on the margins of wealthy western societies. Non-citizen residents are also known as Third Country Nationals (TCNs) in Europe (nationals of states outside the EEA). Morris (2000:4) cites figures of 14.25 million resident foreign nationals in EC member states in 1990, two-thirds of whom were TCNs, with unknown numbers of unofficial migrants.

The growing trend of EU states to differentiate and categorise migrants, permitting differential rights of access to state resources and participation, or social citizenship, is sometimes understood in terms of welfare-state protectionism or "welfare chauvinism" (Habermas, 1994). This is understood to have increased as, from the 1970s European states began to accept that their invited labour migrants were not going to return, and attempts to integrate them were co-ordinated with attempts at closure of further entrants. Bommes and Geddes (2000:2) argue,

> *National welfare states can be viewed as political filters that mediate efforts by*
> *immigrants to realise their chances for social participation. These filters exclude*

certain forms of unwanted immigration, define a variety of legal conditions for immigration and residence, combine them with differentiated welfare entitlements and, consequently, pave the social options for those who enter the country. The ascription of individuals to various categories of migrants… does not refer to the quality of the individuals falling into these categories, but to the labelling capacity arising from the political differentiation of migrants.

Castles and Davidson (2000) and Morris (2002) point out the difference between formal access and substantial access to equal chances of participation in the different realms of society, in *practice*, that accompanies the differential categorisation of 'belonging' within nation-states. Morris (2002:6) uses a Weberian-style conceptualisation of this increasingly complex categorisation of migrants in EU states, which "*is only hinted at in the conventional distinction between citizens, denizens and aliens (Hammar, 1990)*" and is the outcome of a "*cluster of contradictions,*" diverging political dynamics and attempts to balance them. Different forms of migration continue despite a dominant discourse of closure, "*the logic of the market is weighed against welfare protectionism; welfare and labour market regulation against demands for labour; and national resource concerns against trans-national obligations,*" (ibid:6). The outcome is "*an elaborate hierarchy of statuses with varying attendant rights… an increasingly complex system of civic stratification,*" (ibid:6). Morris (2002:6) argues that this "*nascent structure of inequality*" displays another contradiction: "*discriminatory exclusion and partial inclusion set alongside assertions of equal treatment.*"

Morris (2002) develops and adapts the concept of "*civic stratification*" from Lockwood (1996) which, she argues, is better able to deal with the "*negotiated pragmatism*" typifying the actual *practice* of rights, than previous sociological conceptualisations of 'boundary drawing,' such as Brubaker's (1992) and Freeman's (1986), or the battling dualisms of the universal/particular, global/local, post-national/national. For instance, even universal human rights, such as the ECHR "*contain their own hierarchy of absolute, limited and qualified rights,*" (ibid:6). Morris (2002) conceptualises and applies the concept of 'civic stratification' in empirical research in three differently positioned European states (Germany, Italy and Britain). She proposes three sets of paired opposite 'types' of civic stratification; civic gain and deficit refer to the ways implementation of

rights are enhanced or impaired by informal processes; civic exclusion and inclusion are the formal access to rights; and civic expansion and contraction suggest the changing character of specific types or 'regimes' of rights over time. Such exclusions and statuses of partial membership are a further domain of inequality added to the battles for greater cultural equality and multi-culturalism traditionally explored in citizenship theories (e.g. Kymlicka, 1995). Morris (2002) views this area of civic stratification in terms of national government and regional (EU) polities' management of the contradictions of contemporary migration. She explores the classificatory system (structure of legal statuses) governing eligibility for particular rights, the sorting of migrants by processes of exclusion and inclusion into these statuses, the actual realisation of such formal rights, and the shifting nature of the regime in its delivery and in relation to broader government practice. Her exploration provides a useful framework for conceptualising the position of those classified as 'asylum seekers' including various shifting statuses within this label, in relation to their formal and actually realised rights and entitlements to welfare support. Also useful to this study is Morris' (2002:7) recognition that within her use of the concept of civic stratification this is "*a system which in practice can serve as both a statement of rights and as an apparatus of surveillance and control.*"

2.8 The politicisation of 'asylum': the social construction of a 'migration crisis'

The contradictions outlined so far on global, regional and national levels work together to condition and inform what has widely been regarded as 'contentious.' The increasing politicisation of the 'new' migrations, particularly asylum seeking as a 'crisis' and social problem needing solving through legislation and policy changes at EU and nation-state levels. Castles and Miller (1998:253) even argue that "*The most lasting significance of international migration may well be its effects upon politics.*" However most theorists agree that the portrayal of a 'crisis' is out of proportion with the reality of scale and impact of actual new migrations to the wealthy West, that this so-called 'migration crisis' is more 'social construction' than reality, (e.g. Koser and Lutz, 1998; Lohrmann, 2000; Geddes, 2000). Others debate whether these perceptions of 'crisis' are produced more by public opinion, far right, media or mainstream political discourses (e.g. Statham, 2005). It is also recognised that while these particular constructions of a 'migration' or 'asylum'

crisis are distinct and historically specific, they are not new or unusual historically. For instance Hayes (2002) demonstrates similarities in political rhetoric to the 'unwanted' migration of Jewish refugees to Britain at the beginning of the twentieth century to discourses around asylum seekers at the end of it.

Since the 1990s increased politicisation around asylum and migration has involved a range of political actors, discourses and actions with immigrants as both political objects and actors: the emergence and variable legitimacy of new far right groups and political parties with nationalist, racist, anti-immigrant stances (e.g. le Pen in France, Pym Fortuyn in the Netherlands); EU polities; national governments; pro-migrant and asylum seeker groups; migrant mobilisation and new issues such as Islam; media discourses and public opinion, (Castles and Miller, 1998; Statham, 2005). The most dominant discourses have constructed new immigrants and asylum seekers as posing various 'threats' to Europe and individual nation-states, so demanding policy responses to such 'threats' in the context of the regressing borders of globalisation and within Europe, and more recently of global 'terrorism:' *"The social construction of the challenges posed by globalisation and immigration to the nation state is a central issue in the politics of both immigration and European integration,"* (Geddes, 2000:21). This social construct is *"the mixed result of discourses and practices by given social groups and institutions in a particular cultural, socio-economic and political context,"* (Lohrmann, 2000:5), but there has been conjecture over exactly *who* is dominating the discourses and setting political agendas.

Whilst the political mainstream argue they are responding to public opinion, others dispute that government policies respond to far-right agendas of immigration threatening national 'communities.' Many agree that right-leaning media (claiming to represent public opinion) are also responsible for directing government policy agendas. Statham's (2005) British longitudinal and European cross-national research on the main roles of different political "claims-makers" within the 'contentious' politics of asylum, found that it was British government actors that *"strongly shape"* the debate, promoting an anti-migrant/immigrant position. This countered Freeman's (1995) 'client-politics' argument that organised political elites and interest groups drove the debate away from disorganised publics. Statham et al (2005:6) also found that *"Counter to the 'racist public' thesis…to the extent that they get involved, civil society actors do so with a pro-*

migrant stance," and there was little civil society mobilisation of extreme-right groups. Thus the "*present restrictive and stigmatising*" debate was dominated and shaped from the top-down, by British Governments and, Statham argues, media actors were more often the "*carriers*" than the proponents of political discourse,

> "*The 'asylum crisis' in Western European countries led them to perceive these new migration flows as a destabilizing factor for their economic, cultural, social and political (including externally) stability",* (Lohrmann, 2000:7).

While these social constructions, political discourses and actions of political actors must be understood in their broader global and historical contexts and in the specific historical and social contexts of individual nation-states and their European Union, some general tendencies are prevalent. The most dominant feature of the 'migration' crisis construction has been the merging of 'asylum' with 'immigration' featuring the kinds of tensions mentioned between national sovereignty and human rights, where the majority of new asylum seekers are understood to be 'economic migrants' falsely posing as refugees fleeing persecution. This cloud of illegitimacy over all asylum seekers has fuelled suspicions and perceptions that these predominantly 'unwanted' migrants, constructed as mass 'hordes,' pose various threats to the stability and security of nation-states. Since 9/11 particularly asylum seekers and undocumented migrants have been perceived as potentially threatening to national security. They have also been perceived to threaten 'national identity' or national 'cultural communities,' and in particular Husbands (1994) argues that Islamaphobia has increased with perceptions that growing numbers of Muslims will cause the "*cultural dilution"* of nation states. Such nationalisms also translate to a European level as Essed (1995) discusses "*'Europism' to describe the defensive discourse involved in the construction of a 'pure Europe' as a symbolic continent which is cleansed of foreign and 'uncivilised elements' in its territory,"* (Koser and Lutz, 1998:8). The new migrations are also depicted as threatening national European economies, welfare states and other social resources, in what Habermas (1992:27) calls the *"'chauvinism of prosperity', focussing on the current process of European self-definition through defending its prosperity and the institutions of the welfare state against greedy, indigent 'outsiders'"*(ibid). Governments have also constructed new migrations

(like previous immigration) as potentially disturbing local social stability, formerly 'race' but now 'community' relations.

Many such social constructions of an asylum or migration crisis through public, political but specifically right-wing popular media discourses have been resoundingly critiqued in most academic literature across political positions as stigmatising, racializing and stereotyping asylum seekers. These have been discussed as moral panics, scapegoating migrants (while mixing labelling terms) for broader social and political processes, such as globalisation and welfare state 'roll back,' (e.g. Mac an Ghaill, 1999:11). Also, new racisms have been conceptualised in more cultural and nationalist terms such as "*Euro-racism… quasi-nationalistic assertions of a European 'us' and a non-European 'them' taking place within highly contested national arenas"*(ibid). Castles (2000:170) argues that, "*the link between nationalism and racism is very strong,"* and contemporary crises of national economies, social relations and politics, and the desire to protect class interests can lead to different forms of racism which seek either to exclude, inferiorize or exploit the racialised "Other". Sivanandan (2001) talks of xenoracism (stronger than xenophobia) to describe new forms of racism directed at migrants and asylum seekers who may be white Eastern Europeans, and Phoenix (1998) similarly conceptualises new "*hierarchies of whiteness."* Others wish charges of racism, for instance in media discourses, to be used cautiously, not simplistically to cover sometimes more complex responses to social changes (e.g. Statham, 2005; Threadgold, 2001). Others prefer to conceptualise asylum seekers in terms of sociological understandings of "*the Stranger,"* rather than "*the Other.*" Because, as Pickering (2001:204) argues, "*The stranger is inherently ambivalent. The relations of belonging and unbelonging are unsettled and confused by the figure of the stranger because he or she exists in a continual contact zone between belonging and unbelonging."* East (2001) uses the term "*stranger shock"* to describe the responses of local "hosts" to dispersed asylum seekers in Britain, where it is more the clash of the global dispossessed with notions of solidaristic welfare rights than their cultural "otherness" that raise internal dilemmas and ambivalent reactions to them.

At EU and national government levels the responses to social constructions of an 'asylum crisis' has overwhelmingly been to devise and enact policies to restrict entry to migrants seeking asylum .This combines with further "anti-asylum" rhetoric and political party

competition to control asylum and immigration movements. EU policy institutions, have devised policies "*driven by its member states*" (Statham and Gray, 20051) which while disassembling internal borders to EU citizens have attempted to construct stronger external borders to prevent access to 'outsiders', actions widely discussed as building "*Fortress Europe*" (Lister, 1997). These have included the Schengen Agreement and Convention (1985,1990) abolishing border controls between signatories (currently excluding the UK and Ireland) but cooperating on preventing external immigration, whilst the Dublin Convention (1990, ratified in 1997) prevented asylum seekers making more than one claim in any European 'safe' country. Thus Geddes (2000:23) argues, "*it is the co-existence of restriction and expansion tendencies that is a central feature of contemporary European immigration policies,*" as governments have also begun to accept that in line with global economics, labour migration is essential for their economies and also that "*liberal states can restrict but cannot control immigration*" and will permit certain types of immigration alongside restrictive policies, while attempts at closing borders will always initiate migrants to find other (then illegal) entry means. Thus national and supra-national governments have begun to talk a little more of "*managed migration,*" but also failing to reach their restrictive targets may "*actually reinforce the rhetorical commitment to tough and restrictive policies and a ratcheting up of the rhetoric of immigration control while politicians look nervously over their shoulders at the lurking menace of the racist extreme right,*" (Geddes, 2000:23).

2.9 Welfare as control

> There is no more potent contemporary myth than the immigrant welfare scrounger, (Geddes, 2000:167).

One of the most fundamental aspects of negative social constructions of asylum seekers and other 'unwanted' migrants in Western Europe has been the beliefs that such migrants are drawn ('pulled') by generous national welfare states and social rights, and that as the primary national resources welfare states represent, are already stretched to provide adequate welfare they cannot extend resources to newcomers. Also believing that most asylum seekers are not actually in need of state protection, they are perceived as welfare "*free-riders,*" or attempting to cheat welfare states by getting welfare support for nothing

in return. Welfare states are another of the fundamental sites of inclusionary/exclusionary tensions; designed in liberal universalism to promote inclusion and equality, but also arguably on the exclusionary basis of national belonging, although specific national welfare state (and migration) histories and designs condition differential tendencies, (Banting, 2000; Geddes, 2003). With new types of migration since the 1990s renewed attempts have been made, to clarify and restrict the "*community of legitimate receivers of welfare state benefits*" (Bommes and Geddes, 2000).This has been partly to reassure 'legitimate' members and quell misconceived perceptions, but also as a method of immigration control, designed both to deter potential entrants from crossing external borders and as "internal controls," intended to prevent access to social benefits to 'unwanted' or 'illegitimate' migrant claimants who had gained territorial access. Roberts and Bolderson (1999:211) discuss the particular dilemma concerning asylum seekers' claims and entitlements to welfare support that, on the grounds that "*they have special needs, for accommodation, medical care, legal advice, language tuition or counselling,*" they might justly 'deserve' such social care. But this is countered by the implicit notion of membership in all social policies and the 'give and take' of social transaction, and even when welfare is based on membership not of a group or nation, but universal human rights, "*it seems inevitable that its substance is contingent on the polity within which it is framed and operated..*" Asylum seekers "*are deliberately regarded as 'non-members' of that country: the whole process of determining asylum-seekers' rights to refugee status challenges the claim to membership,*" (ibid).

However, the ways in which migration and asylum seeking to Europe challenge organisational (basis of entitlement) and conceptual (notions of 'belonging' or 'deservingness') boundaries of national welfare states, involve different trajectories of inclusion and exclusion. They are "*mediated by national historical, social and political contexts… and by diverse organisational and decisional infrastructures of different welfare state types,*" (Bommes and Geddes, 2000:3). Miles (1993), Cohen (2001) and Hayes (2002) for instance, also argue that specific historical understandings are necessary to make sense of current policy responses to different forms of migration. Banting (2000) and Geddes (2003) draw attention to Esping-Anderson's (1990) typology of three types of welfare state, differentially influencing inclusions and exclusions of migrants and asylum seekers. More liberal or residualist welfare states such as the UK with less

complete commitment to social rights, more means-testing, and provision only for a low-income minority, are more likely to induce *"welfare chauvinism"* and neo-liberalist emphasis on self-reliance and the market, because newly arrived, poor and unemployed migrants might qualify immediately. The conservative-corporatist models of nation states, such as Germany, with moderate levels of welfare support have also been pressured into more firmly demarcating *"legitimate welfare receivers"* and negotiated pragmatism. The social democratic models of Scandinavian universal, egalitarian redistributive welfare states have been challenged as countries, like Denmark, have attempted to deny access to new immigrants. Southern European welfare states differ again with higher levels of economic informality generally, making state internal controls of immigrants unpopular among majority populations also involved in the informal economy, (Geddes, 2003). Geddes (2003:154) argues that it is not so much migration that 'challenges' welfare state borders, but rather *"welfare states and perceptions of needs, requirements and resources structure perceptions of migration as wanted or unwanted… changes within these welfare states that can 'challenge' understandings of international migration."* As welfare states are *"important symbols of membership, entitlement, identity and belonging,"* their coercive and disciplinary use to internally control immigration, and particularly in the suspension of many social rights from asylum seekers, potentially makes their social exclusion more keenly felt, (ibid:153).

The different measures European nation states have taken to restrict the access of asylum seekers to the social entitlements of their welfare states (allowing for differential histories and 'types'), as well as moves towards harmonising policies on a European level widely agreed to be the lowest common denominator of reception (e.g. Duvell and Jordan, 2002; Dwyer, 2005) involve the contradiction of "welfare as control." With asylum seekers perceived to be outside the *"legitimate community of welfare receivers,"* as the 'undeserving' poor, until their legitimacy, deservingness or 'genuineness' has been established by state decision-making systems determining their refugee or 'other' status, European states have progressively and variably reduced social support to minimum survival (or non-existent) levels. States have used these measures for several purposes. They are attempts to appease "members'" supposed welfare chauvinism and reminding them of their own legitimacy (Geddes, 2001; 2003). Reducing and making welfare rights less 'attractive' has been intended to deter potential migrants outside state territory, based

on the largely unsubstantiated premise that such social rights are a pull factor for either 'economic' migrants using the 'asylum' route for entry or 'genuine' asylum seekers who might otherwise go elsewhere, (Robinson et al, 2003).

With varying attendant social rights the 'civic stratification' of all individuals "*subject to immigration control*" (Cohen, 2001) including asylum seekers, necessitates public services and workers in all areas of the welfare state, as well as employers, to check an individuals socio-legal/ immigration status so regulating access to services, thus enhancing "*the ability of the state to monitor, observe and control the lives of asylum seekers*" and other migrants (Geddes, 2003: 153). This use of internal immigration controls was first discussed in Britain in the wake of new Conservative government policy, by Gordon (1985:2) who argued that "*the overall effect is the questioning, restricting and controlling of rights, not just of those who are immigrants, but those who are commonly assumed to be, because they are black*". Another intention of denying and restricting social rights is to ensure that asylum seekers (and other affected migrants), are not able to participate, integrate or be included socially, to establish roots in a society, so that they may be more easily uprooted, removed or deported, their migration reversed, (e.g. Geddes, 2001;2003).

2.10 The welfare and immigration control 'nexus'

There is a growing body of literature (predominantly in social policy and political science disciplines) since the late 1990s concerned with the connections, or "*nexus*" (Cohen, 2001) between European welfare states and immigration controls, particularly in relation to (seemingly inspired by) the conjunction of controlling the immigration of asylum seekers with the provisions for their welfare support (e.g. Bloch, 2000; Cohen, 2001; Schuster, 2000; Bommes and Geddes, 2000; Cohen, Humphries and Mynott, 2002; Duvell and Jordan, 2002; Sales, 2002; Bloch and Schuster, 2002). This joins a longer tradition of literature exploring the issues of "refugee reception" and "refugee integration" in receiving countries. This literature attempts to understand and explore the tensions intrinsic to the notions of "welfare support" as designed to facilitate social inclusion, with immigration control, designed to facilitate social and territorial exclusion,

and the effects these tensions have on the lived experience of the objects of policies incorporating both. The more 'radical left' literature has stressed the long-standing historical relationship between nation-building, controlling immigration and welfare, where nation-building and welfare have operated together as 'exclusionary,' even racist processes, where excluding outsiders considered "socially and economically costly" from accessing national welfare states has aided 'strong nations' (Cohen, Humphries and Mynott, 2002; Miles 1993; Cohen, 2003; Hayes, 2004).

It is argued that the British history of building its welfare state is entwined with its history of immigration controls, both of which were designed to strengthen Britain as a 'nation,' and, arguably both therefore are constructed to an extent on nationalist, even racist premises (Cohen, 2003). The first legislative attempt to control entry to Britain in the twentieth century, following the nineteenth century's almost entirely open borders and official state welcome of refugees, was the 1905 Aliens' Act passed following agitation concerning the "*undesirable presence"* of thousands of Jewish refugees fleeing Russian Poland, (Miles, 1993; Hayes, 2002). Although many Jews had found refuge in 19th century Britain, and the 1905 Aliens' Act did not specify restriction of entry to Jews and retained the right to entry for refugees, the agitation that preceded it and its main sections were premised on the basis of excluding those considered "undesirable immigrants," defined on several criteria. Aimed only at steerage passengers, the Act counted as undesirable people with a disease or infirmity, "lunacy", or a criminal record, and anyone else who "*cannot show that he has in his possession or is in a position to obtain the means of decently supporting himself and his dependents"* (Section 1 (3), cited in Miles 1993:144). The legislation aimed to exclude anyone who might be or become a "*burden on the public purse,"* which effectively, if implicitly was an exclusion of poor or sick Jewish refugees, previously constructed as "*undesirable"* and unwanted competition with the indigenous population for scarce resources. Miles (1993) emphasises the aims at exclusion on *class* grounds, with a more implicit racist consequence, whereas Cohen, (2003) argues that the Act signified a more explicit, if not named, anti-Semitism and the desire to protect the newly emerging British welfare institutions of Liberal reform from undesirable "foreigners." Hayes (2002: 32) quotes a Conservative MP from Hansard 1903, arguing "*What was the use of spending thousands of pounds in building beautiful workmen's dwellings if the places of our workpeople, the backbone of the country, were*

to be taken by the refuse and scum of foreign Nations?" Hayes (2002:30) argues that the 1905 Aliens Act and such preceding agitation for it, was the beginning of a continuing construction of the refugee as *"burdensome, needy, socially costly, and consequently undesirable"* and this logic is part of a further ideology around welfare and nation, *"producing immigration controls which consistently place at their centre the need to access welfare as grounds for refusal of entry, and a welfare state which ensures provision is restricted to ' its own.'"*

Cohen (2003) and Hayes (2002) argue that the history of British welfare demonstrates its intrinsic nationalism (if not racism), and connection with attempts to control immigration, *"...the ideological concepts of efficiency, eugenics, nation and empire have been a constant in the debates about welfare throughout this country"* (Cohen, 2003:79). Heavily influenced by post-Darwinian 19th century concepts of 'race' and eugenics, the 1906-1914 Liberal reform programme was conceived in terms of building the nation and breeding a strong British Imperial 'race', in the wake of the protracted struggle of the Boer War and shrinking Empire, and consequent fears that British 'stock' was weakening, (Hayes, 2002). The 1905 and 1914 Aliens Acts combined both border and internal controls to refuse entry to and deport several thousands of people considered *"undesirable"* particularly in their potential burden to public funds, and implicitly, their unsuitability in terms of the ideology of the British Imperial 'race'. Such determinations of entry refusal and that eligibility for the entitlements of the Liberal Reform Acts were dependent to an extent on immigration status, Hayes (2002:36) argues, *"are a direct forerunner to the present-day use of immigration rules, which prevent entry to anyone who may have 'recourse to public funds'"*. Cohen (2003) goes on to argue with reference to the Beveridge Report, in which *"we find an explicit incorporation of pre-war assumptions of efficiency and eugenics,"* that the post-1945 Welfare State was also founded on strengthening a war-depleted nation and British 'race.' According to Cohen (2001;2003) both *"labourism"* and *"welfarism"* being historically entangled with the introduction and enforcement of immigration controls, are founded in a combination of *"a virulent nationalism, expressed through state control of foreign workers."* And in conceptualising welfare for British nationals only and improving British 'stock,' immigration controls *and* the welfare state are intrinsically racist institutions. Although Cohen (2003) concedes that the post-1945 Welfare State proudly gave entitlement to

benefits and the NHS, based not on nationality or immigration status but presence in the UK, exclusion from the welfare state was gradually achieved by further immigration controls and, Hayes (2002) argues, by discriminating through informal practices of exclusion particularly of black immigrants, for instance in new housing schemes. Geddes (2000:3) states that Marxist or neo-Marxist arguments emphasise the restrictiveness and exclusion of welfare states and immigration policies, whereas liberal theses emphasise their expansiveness, universalism and inclusionary principles and practices.

2.11 Conclusion

This chapter has, by reference to the prominent literature, developed a context at a predominantly global or macro and philosophical level, exploring some of the contradictions and tensions around the forced migration of millions of people, and international and national responses to receiving forced migrants. This serves to underline and explain the *"transnational connectedness"* (Castles, 2003:24), which affects the national, local and individual social relations and settings, of the conception, delivery, reception and experience of social policy around forced migrants.

Initially this chapter discusses some of the contentions around the terms and discourses used in everyday and popular understandings of forced migrants, academic and activist resistance and problematising of such labels and discourses, seeking to develop less oppressive and stereotyping terms. Castles' (2003) challenge to develop a 'sociology of forced migration', essentially encompassing the many levels from global to local, macro to micro, of analysis and explanation, multi-discipline and theoretically rather than policy driven research agendas is taken up for this study. Accepting such a challenge involves the exploration of the wider and broader picture, the global and philosophical issues and social relations which have an undeniable effect on, and so inform and will assist in making sense of, the local and individual worlds where the ethnography will be carried out.

Having acknowledged the dominance of contradictions and tensions in the literature on the global and conceptually broad level of analysis around forced migration, the chapter turns to go through those considered most important for this study. After raising some

contemporary debates on 'globalisation', this section explores how some of the contradictions of globalisation condition and contribute to causing forced migration, that as Sassen and Castles argue, migration is a key aspect of globalisation where the 'logic of capital' drives states to open their 'borders' to the market but close them to 'labour' and other migrants. Though migrating has always been part of human history and human nature, twentieth and twenty-first century migration, including forced migration, some theorists argue is qualitatively and quantitatively different, especially since WW2 and again since the 1980s, being an inextricable part of other global processes. The analysis turns to explore some of the theoretical explanations for the scale and character of current migrations and forced migrations, between which there are no straightforward boundaries. Sassens' contention that migration including forced migration is 'produced' and conditioned historically by sending and receiving countries and the links between them, and not simply the decisions and actions of individuals, is preferred. However, receiving societies, national and regional governing bodies struggle with the tensions of their universalist and particularist tendencies, their obligations to universal human rights and their particular polity and sovereignty, making the immigration and reception policies of receiving national and regional governments fraught with problems. Related to this are the challenges such mass migrations bring to the institution of 'citizenship' of nation states, which hold its own tensions of inclusion and exclusion. The boundaries of citizenship are blurred and challenged as nation-states have sought ways to include and exclude some on different levels and from different rights, including to welfare states. They devise increasingly differentiated and complex layers of membership, of inclusion and exclusion, which Morris (2002) has termed 'civic stratification'.

These and other tensions have contributed to the increasing politicisation of 'asylum' and 'immigration' in the West and Europe, where dominant discourses have constructed and raised the profile of a 'migration crisis', justifying actions to stop it through increasingly restrictive attempts to control immigration. This alleged migration 'crisis' also includes social transformations within receiving societies, with theorists beginning to conceptualise new racisms, such as 'Euro-racism' (Mac an Ghaill, 1999) and 'xenoracism' (Sivanandan, 2001). One major aspect of the politicisation of migration and asylum has been the supposed (mythical) assault on Western receiving nations' welfare states which confer the social rights of citizenship, and a populist and political drive

towards welfare state protectionism or 'chauvinism' and tightening of welfare state 'borders' mirroring territorial national borders. The delineation of "*legitimate welfare receivers*" by excluding and stigmatising the 'illegitimate' and the scale and character of controlling access to welfare states differs according to welfare state 'types' and specific national, social and historical contexts. The literature on the 'nexus' between immigration controls and welfare states is growing, and stresses, giving the British example, the historical connections between the development of the two and their current closer weaving. The next chapter will use this macro analysis to inform the closer focus on the national and local context of the ethnographic research.

3. The social and historical context for a local voluntary sector refugee reception agency in 2002-2003 in the UK

The purpose of this chapter is several-fold. To make sense of the social relations and 'forces' at work in the local everyday setting of a voluntary sector refugee support agency, and the 'lived experience' of those participating in it in the specific social and historical position that it operates from, it is essential to consider its closer context. This chapter will consider how the contradictions raised in the previous chapter are manifest in the national context of the UK (sometimes broadening to the regional EU context where relevant), considering the history of migration and forced migration to the UK and British responses to it of immigration controls, and refugee reception. It will consider the development of controlling migrants' access to the welfare state, in the context of general national social welfare policy, and the specific social context of Britain (in Europe) in the 1990s and early 2000s. In order to understand (and evaluate) current reception policies for forced migrants (asylum seekers) it is useful to relate them to reception policies for refugees historically in Britain and where relevant, elsewhere. This must include a consideration of the role of civil society and the voluntary sector in the welfare state in general and the reception of forced migrants in particular. Research exploring the role and experience of welfare 'workers' engaged in implementing social policy is important to understanding that of those in this study. Important also is an understanding of forced migrants experiences of host nations reception policies and to review the literature on understandings of refugees' needs on arrival in receiving societies.

This will usefully place the introduction of the 1990s legislations into context, and specifically the "*qualitative leap*" (Cohen, 2001) in the nexus between immigration controls and welfare, that some argue the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 encompassed. The specific relevant measures and the design for their implementation that incorporated or 'co-opted' multi-agencies, including VS organisations will be detailed. Alongside placing this research into its historical and social context, this chapter by reviewing past and current research and sociological attention, will justify the space for and usefulness in adding this ethnographic study to the picture and contribute towards progressing the burgeoning 'sociology of forced migration.'

3.1 The reception of refugees and asylum seekers

The concept of 'reception' of refugees and asylum seekers is socially, politically and historically constructed and has only recently since the late 1980s become officially and formally used coherently to refer to one aspect of 'asylum policy', throughout Europe. Although European countries have differed, historically they have mainly organised 'reception programmes' sporadically on acceptance of groups of recognised or pre-arranged 'quota' refugees. It has only been since the increase in numbers of 'spontaneous' asylum seekers, that national governments have begun to pay increased legislative attention to 'reception' arrangements for them. {Also when asylum seekers lost their innocence as refugees, so former conceptions of reception and 'resettlement' were increasingly separated by design, the latter only encouraged in policy terms when refugee status had been granted.} 'Reception' suggests an active receiving; more than just passive admittance onto a territory, and has at different times and places historically involved recognition of potentially specific needs of displaced people in exile having escaped persecution. However, in relation to his research on the roles of RSL's in asylum support between the 1996 and 1999 Acts in Britain, Zetter and Pearl (1998:53) contend,

> *The term 'reception' is often perceived in a pejorative sense, linked to an ineffective system of cultural control and a perversely imposed dependency…This has discouraged development of good practice.*

Considering refugee 'reception' necessarily involves defining the concept of 'asylum'; what exactly is asylum or the provision of protection or safety? The concept of 'asylum,' sanctuary or refuge is as old as recorded human history, but it is only since the 19th century solidifying of nations and their borders in Europe that it became politicised and to take on the twentieth century meaning of protection by one state of people having lost protection of another state, (Joly, 1996). The 1951 Geneva Convention, constructed from previous legal instruments after WW1, was primarily concerned with safe nations' *non-refoulement* of an individual fleeing political persecution on arrival at their borders. Asylum was, therefore, primarily protection by state territorial admission or at least the obligation not to return a person to the state of lost protection. However, the 1951 Convention also specifies obligations states have to refugees on their territory, including

social rights ensuring a dignified existence and specified aspects of welfare and access to employment equal to that of nationals and no less than that of foreigners in similar circumstances, (Joly, 1996; Duke, Sales and Gregory, 1999). Since 1951, those not meeting a 'Convention' refugee criteria, but displaced for other reasons (such as generalised violence) might have been and still may be afforded protection under various nationally incorporated Human Rights legislations, where residence conditions are much more at the discretion of individual states. Living conditions for contemporary asylum seekers awaiting state determination of their refugee status, not mentioned in the 1951 Convention, are further at the discretion of their states of asylum, dependent to an extent on which Human Rights legislations they are signatory to (and very recently EU harmonisation of minimum standards for their reception). Therefore, states' reception of refugees or potential refugees (asylum seekers), with their obligations under international human rights laws to respond to their specific if potential need for protection, is and has been imbued with the tensions of universalism and particularism as discussed in the previous chapter.

Whether a person or group's exile is permanent or temporary, by their own or the protective state's bidding, 'reception' has usually referred to the treatment or form of social, cultural, psychological, welfare assistance provided during the early stages after their arrival in the country or their asylum claim, either by the central or local state or formally or informally by civil society; voluntary organisations, groups or individuals. The formal and informal responses of individual European and developed nations to refugees have been conditioned by their unique, complex histories including refugee migrations, national and international politics, overall immigration and emigration, economics and welfare systems. However from the 1990s, most accounts stress the increasing convergence of their responses towards contemporary asylum seekers (Schuster, 2000; Joly, 1996) formalised by efforts to harmonise EU member states asylum policies including reception or welfare provision beginning with the 1997 Amsterdam Treaty, although still preserving their national distinctiveness (Duvell and Jordan, 2002). For instance Germany was particularly liberal post-WW2, until the early 1990s when amongst its new asylum restrictions it suspended asylum seekers for longer in reception centres and further from citizenship rights and the labour market, (Schuster, 2000). However harmonisation meant Italy, Greece and Spain having just transformed

from emigration to immigration countries were obliged to introduce for the first time some minimum welfare reception provisions (Duvell and Jordan, 2002).

3.1.1 A history of 'reception' policies in Britain

Britain's self-proclaimed generosity towards refugees was most justified during 18th and 19th Century laissez-faire acceptance of predominantly Jewish Eastern Europeans. Since the 1914 and 1919 Aliens Restriction Acts, then the 1920 Aliens Order (renewed annually until the 1971 Immigration Act) those with recourse to public funds including refugees were allowed only severely restricted entry, or deported, (Bloch, 2002). From that time specific groups of refugees were granted entry and welcomed with varying degrees of assistance; 250,000 Belgian refugees arriving between 1914-1918 were treated extraordinarily well, whereas 65,000 wartime Jewish refugees from Nazism (1939-1945) were met with antipathy and sometimes internment (Bloch, 2002; Knox and Kushner, 1999). The predominantly 'quota' refugees, quickly granted asylum (Ugandan Asians, Chileans and Vietnamese) between 1969 and the 1980s, were met with short-term ad hoc reception arrangements for each group with some funding from the Voluntary Service Unit of the Home Office and Overseas Development Ministry. Central government funded initial reception services for these groups but not later resettlement, a mode of operating known as 'front-end loading', and distanced itself from the programmes by delegating to speedily assembled quangos, such as the Uganda Resettlement Board, who further delegated to NGO's and volunteers, such as the Red Cross (Robinson, 2003; Joly, 1996). These schemes typically involved dispersal of reception centres and later accommodation-led resettlement, with local authorities expected to volunteer accommodation and services to refugees. In some cases NGOs and voluntary groups initiated, paid towards and operated the reception of these refugees, (e.g. Joint Working Group for Refugees from Chile, in 1974) which included planned dispersals and periods in 'reception centres' or camps.

French reception of similar groups differed by establishing a centrally government operated and planned refugee reception infrastructure also heavily influenced by numerous civil society groups, but in place for the long-term, (Joly, 1996). From her comparative review of French and British reception and settlement policies of specific

groups of refugees, Joly (1996:116,117) argues that the *"typically British"* ad hoc, pragmatic character of the responses in keeping with *"its philosophical tradition of empiricism and its legal system based on custom and practice,"* prevented effective development of an *"institutional memory."* Traditional NGO involvement in humanitarian and social work was a *"blueprint"* for these reception programmes which although allowing flexibility, was also marked with a small budget and so impossibility of forward planning, (ibid). While there was some central government funding and distant direction of these reception and resettlement programmes for 'quota' refugees in Britain there was no reception policy beyond admission to most mainstream welfare services for 'spontaneous' refugees, arriving in small numbers predominantly from 'behind the Iron Curtain' or from the mid 1980s with increasing momentum from worldwide.

3.1.2 The aims and purposes of 'reception'

What were the aims and purposes of national reception and resettlement of refugees; what factors shaped these responses? The literature examining these responses reveals the obvious tensions of perceived national, particularist interest and universal human rights obligations. Joly (1996:21) argued, however, that

> *Generally speaking, naked 'national interest' seems to govern decisions and policies on asylum in the arena of domestic policy. However, such a situation is fraught with contradictions…*

The conjunction of a complexity of historical, economic, social, political, ideological and cultural factors conditioned such policies, as well as those groups or political elites, Joly (1996) suggests, with the political power to define what the national interest was. Duvell and Jordan (2002) also suggest asylum reception or welfare policies are strongly conditioned by economic and labour market factors. For instance, from 1946 thousands of Eastern Europeans in displaced persons camps or already fled to Britain, including 300,000 Polish exiles, were resettled in Britain but treated as labour recruits (European Volunteer Workers) to post-war reconstruction. With housing shortages after wartime bombing and some xenophobia, responsibility and operation of resettlement was

delegated to a non-governmental body allowing the government to distance itself, and those previously Polish soldiers were accommodated for long periods in dispersed accommodation camps, to prevent (perceptions of) competition in the housing shortage, (Robinson, 2003). Although at this time this group were considered useful to the national labour market and reception policies reflected that, at other times other groups have been considered more a 'burden' dependent on a number of factors including the policy and public opinion on immigration in general.

Most of these reception schemes were at least partially concerned also with the recognition of the national obligation to tend to these people's social rights as refugees, even if this was through the priorities of the charities and volunteers operating them. However these *"refugee-specific initiatives"* (Carey-Wood,1997) were, as stated, predominantly aimed at the early days of reception, with little attention or specific assistance given to longer-term 'resettlement;' refugees were expected to settle in dispersal areas accessing mainstream services until the Bosnian 'programme' between 1992-95. This catered for mid and long term support to facilitate ongoing settlement, although dependent on the expected length of protection (Robinson, 2003). Although all differing, generally these schemes aimed to provide some kind of orientation to the country, information concerning social systems, some language training, medical screening and care, assistance in accessing housing, post-reception centres and some advice on training and employment. In practice, this assistance was often inadequate and mostly stopped when refugees were housed in their dispersal areas. The Vietnamese refugees, for instance, housed in small 'clusters' in dispersal areas, following sometimes long institutionalising periods in reception centres, learning little English, being a visible minority, suffered many problems; isolation, high unemployment, debts, ill-understood DHSS claims, mental health and serious health problems, domestic violence and low school attendance, (Jones, 1982; Joly, 1996; Robinson, 2003). However, although often inadequate for successful long-term settlement, and *"largely resource-led rather than policy-led and also majority society-led rather than refugee-led"* (Joly, 1996:117) these schemes attempted to address at least in some way these people's immediate needs *as refugees,* as different from other migrants.

Based on her research Joly (1996:191) suggests 'refugees', although heterogeneous, can be considered as an 'ideal type' social group,

> *…there are such social types as refugees with their own characteristics and their own modes of settlement in the host society… Moreover refugees are not one single category and this study shows at least two social types: those who nurture a collective project oriented towards the society of origin and those who do not (they never did so or abandoned it).*

Although sociological and legal categories often do not coincide, Joly (1996:192) argues, both types of refugee she identified "*differentiate themselves from labour migrants in their motivations, their aspirations and their mode of settlement.*" Duke et al.(1999:105-6) also state,

> *Refugees have distinctive needs which necessitate specific policies if resettlement is to be successful. They have been forced to flee, usually at short notice, often leaving behind family as well as jobs, homes and possession: in fact everything that made up their identity… in many cases refugees seek asylum in countries with which they have no former connection, and they may have little knowledge of the language, culture or job market…preparation is impossible and the experience of exile, particularly in the early days, is dominated by a sense of loss. Their needs cannot be met merely by the provision of services on the same basis as nationals. Successful resettlement depends on programmes which allow them to find a place in the new society…*

While both Robinson (2003) and Joly (1996:192) stress the importance reception and settlement policies have had in the long-term experience of refugees' settlement in host countries, (they *"modulate possibilities of access, integration and exclusion"*), they also stress that refugees interact dynamically with their own reception and settlement; they are not just passive receivers of policy. This point is reflected in Zetter's (1998) problematisation of 'reception,' stressing the negative consequences of such top-down approaches.

While reception and settlement policies have been developed out of the perceived tensions of national interest and universal human rights, so theories of refugee experience of a host country of exile have until recently been dominated more by their adaptation to the host country than that nation's culpability, and there have been few separate theories for refugees as distinct from other migrants, (Bloch, 2002; Castles et al, 2003). Current research into refugee settlement reviews and critiques past theories and concepts that have influenced past policies and been used normatively, (Castles et al, 2003). These include the concept of assimilation coming from the race-relations paradigm (Park, 1950; Gordon; 1964), now largely discredited for presuming a one-way process whereby migrants should abandon their culture and outlook and take on that of their host-society, when host-societies are not mono-cultural and the encouragement of migrants to maintain their cultures, contributing to multi-cultural societies are preferred in most western nations.

The psychological concept of acculturation initially developed to explain the process of adaptation of migrants to a nation of immigration (Berry, 1980) has been applied to the adaptation of refugees to a host nation and purports to be a multi-dimensional several way, non-linear and non-normative process, "*by which migrant groups adjust to being in contact with different cultures,*" (Dona and Berry, 1999:171) and different outcomes are possible. Castles et al (2003) review further concepts that have been used: segmented assimilation; functional assimilation; incorporation; inclusion/ exclusion; insertion; settlement/ re-settlement (the favoured term in 'refugee studies'); denizenship; citizenship, before continuing to prefer the currently preferred term of policy makers and politicians, 'integration.' While integration can be used with the similar normative undertones and meaning of 'assimilation,' and is therefore rejected by some social scientists, NGO's and activists, Castles et al (2003) rest on a definition that attempts to stress the relative, culturally determined and two-way character of the process, and reflect the problems involved with the concept:

> *If refugees are able to participate in the host economy in ways commensurate*
> *with their skills and compatible with their values; if they attain a standard of*

living which satisfies culturally determined minimum requirements…; if the socio-cultural change they undergo permits them to maintain an identity of their own and adjust psychologically to their new situation; if standards of living and economic opportunities for members of the host society have not deteriorated due to the influx of refugees and is not worse than within the host population itself; and if the refugees do not encounter more discrimination than exists between groups previously settled within the host society: then refugees are truly integrated, (Kuhlman, 1991:7, cited in Castles et al, 2003:125).

However, Castles et al. (2003:127) emphasise that integration is not a singular linear process, but represents *"a constellation of factors significantly influences velocity, trajectory and outcomes, (Vertovec; 1999)."* Such factors revolve around the migrants, the place and position they migrated from and conditions of their migration, as well as a multitude of possible circumstances around the country of immigration. They involve structural factors but also the motivations, strategies and networks (agency) of individual and groups of migrants. Castles et al. (1999:128) offer a *"check-list"* of broad conditioning factors, they suggest could lead to an *"Integration Matrix"* to help identify specific needs and problems and develop migrant and refugee policies: *"Conditions of exit; Categories of entrant; Legal status; Characteristics of entrants; Characteristics of ethnic community; Conditions of receiving context."* The specific variable factors conditioning a migrant's integration can lead to *"highly-differentiated socio-economic outcomes,"* (ibid:129) to which could be added, subjective and psychological outcomes also. And particularly relevant to this study, Castles et al. (2003:126-7) also state that although short and long-term integration processes can be distinguished,

…integration starts from day one of arrival. Long-term outcomes may be influenced by early experiences. Individuals or groups with limited rights and opportunities may integrate in ways that lead to disadvantage and marginalisation… Asylum-seekers who are treated with suspicion and even confined to detention centres may find it hard to feel that they are full members of society when and if their refugee claims are recognised.

Policies designed to postpone settlement or integration are also considered potentially damaging to the long-term outcomes of asylum seekers by Joly (1996:95) reporting that French NGO's since laying down the national structures for supporting Chilean refugees, intended the same social rights serve future arrivals including asylum seekers, "*on the assumption that their settlement began with their arrival and not when they were to be granted status.*" Duke et al (1999:107) also reiterate this in reference to the removal of social welfare rights from in-country asylum seekers with the British 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act, arguing that such policies "*…have diverted the efforts of those concerned with refugee rights towards dealing with immediate needs for shelter rather than long-term strategies, undermining the process of long-term settlement…*"

3.1.4 What effects have reception policies had?

Obviously any assessment of the success of reception and settlement policies and practices must consider what the initial aims were, if any and so also involve what is understood by success and according to whom? Aims may also be mixed; governments designing or agreeing or throwing together policies for the reception of refugees may be aiming at enabling long-term 'integration' (however they interpret that) and settlement; meeting basic, immediate needs; and/or appeasing the perceived views of the polity by attempting to promote good 'race' or 'community'-relations; 'burden-sharing;' and/or deterring asylum claimants from coming or staying.

Korac (2003) stresses the differences in understandings and practicalities of 'integration,' and therefore indicators or measures of 'integration' depending on who defines it. Citing Robinson (1998:118) Korac (2003:52) suggests "*integration is a vague and 'chaotic' term,*" where in refugee studies literature, because of its development from refugee protection including social rights, integration takes on a functional meaning, whereas integration in the 'race-relations' literature involves the necessity for different cultures to co-exist, so involves issues of identity and belonging. However, the problem is not just conceptual but practical as policy makers defining integration differently has practical consequences for their policy 'objects' - refugees and asylum seekers (and other migrants). Korac (2003) stresses that research on reception and settlement policies have tended to take the same 'top-down' approach as policy makers, stressing structural and

organisational aspects of integration, using 'objective' measures such as successful employment, access to training, social services and support in community-building. Attempting to redress this balance, Korac (2003) argues that it is essential to consider refugees' subjective experiences of 'integration' and their exile, which are as important an indicator of 'successful' adaptation or integration as structural measures. Her in-depth interviews with refugees from former Yugoslavia in the Netherlands and Italy re-affirm Knudsen's (1991) critique of assistance programmes for refugees, treating them as having "*immature social identities*" and needing re-educating to be integrated, (Korac, 2003:54). As Castles et al (2001) stress, integration involves sets of inter-lapping processes as receiving societies are not one monolith but many different sectors and, Korac (2003:54) argues, social policy should reflect this complexity and also building "*bridging social capital*" (after Putnam, 2000) could provide strategies for broader social inclusion. Korac (2003) also argues that policy interventions should not treat refugees as having one common identity, but recognise their highly differentiated needs as social actors of many differences.

Korac (2003) found that the Dutch 'model' of integrating refugees, which involved a top-down, state-led, phased process of reception and integration that could last for years and involved separation of refugees in accommodation centres, left refugees often feeling detached from Dutch society despite their functional integration. Dutch policies concentrated on functional integration but were a one-way process not treating refugees as active participants in their integration, but as passive policy objects, and so many remained state-dependent. Despite their own efforts, many refugees felt informally socially excluded by members of Dutch society they came into contact with and so socially isolated. Although having their initial needs well met, many of the refugees in Korac's study felt they had been denied their autonomy and were compelled to comply. For instance a Bosnian Doctor, employed as such in the Netherlands, said,

> *…we live here a parallel existence, because we don't have real contact with Dutch society. We are neither accepted nor rejected… I do what I'm told to do, and everything is going according to 'integration' rules that we 'refugees' have to follow. We didn't have to integrate really, you see, we just had to do what we were told,* (Korac, 2003:56).

Even with citizenship, refugees felt uncertain about their status and Korac (2003) concluded that citizenship may have been perceived as yet another instrument of state control, rather than a guarantee of equality and full participation in Dutch society. In contrast, the minimal state support of refugees in Italy produced different problems. Initially refugees often had to sleep rough and concentrate all their efforts on meeting their basic needs for shelter and subsistence, so were forced to enter the labour market in low socio-economic positions that were difficult to move up from, and many felt they had not succeeded in gaining the security to plan their future. Those who found occupations suited to their skills spent many years getting to that position. Even after many years in Italy, refugees still held insecure legal statuses, but the majority felt socially integrated with Italians and 'at home' in the country. Korac (2003:60) states,

> *The lack of a state-organized attempt to meet the group needs of refugees in Rome forced them to rely on their personal skills and resources in finding their way in Italian society. During their first years in Rome, they spontaneously formed networks that served as an alternative self-help reception 'system'.*

These social networks were initially between inter-ethnic groups but quickly broadened when people had gained some means of survival, and not being mediated by professional social services like the Dutch system, they did not presume the same superiority of the receiving society culture. The cultures were not set in opposition and so building 'bridging social capital' was possible and refugees and the receiving society's adaptability to each other was strengthened. There was a sense of reciprocity among these refugees, "*their contacts with Italians were characterized by a mutual process of learning and shifting within which both communities can gain,*" (ibid: 61). Their perceptions of their losses were economic and of future certainty, but not of personal agency or social networks. Korac (2003:62) concludes that longer-term integration *is* affected by the first stages of reception and settlement, and that while provision of support towards functional integration is obviously important, so is the recognition and support of the agency of individuals in "*reconstructing their lives.*" The Dutch highly managed system, whilst providing many of the tools for functional integration, were experienced as "*…state measures that often do not correspond to their needs and integration goals, to which*

refugees, nonetheless, are required to conform because of the lack of power and 'voice' in the process of integration," (ibid:62).

Korac (2003:62) stresses the importance of considering refugees points of view on how policy instruments for their reception and settlement affect their integration, as well as functional 'indicators,' citing Harrell-Bond's (1999) contention that "*the way in which refugees are 'helped' may itself undermine their personal coping strategies."*

Bloch (2002) details four overarching factors which the literature suggests the settlement of refugees and asylum seekers depend upon: the policies of the country of asylum (legal system, citizenship status) and strategies of incorporating migrants (differential exclusion; multiculturalism); social networks; individual characteristics of migrants (language, education); and the circumstances of the migration. Bloch's (2002) survey research (with qualitative interviewing) into the settlement outcomes of three communities of 'spontaneous' refugees in Newham, London, found a complexity of macro and micro factors generally supporting these variables, though making it difficult to generalise about refugees' settlement experiences. She found further consequential factors that affected settlement, particularly lack of secure immigration status, which influenced people's attitudes to settling in Britain as well as their capacity to move on with their lives. Proficiency in English, initial reasons for migration to Britain (as opposed to elsewhere) and aspirations to return 'home' and factors such as the marginalisation of Somali women (who tended to be lone parents) by the host and their own communities were important reasons for not subjectively feeling settled or measuring settled using Robinson's (1986) typology of adaptation.

3.1.5 The role of RCOs and social networks

Bloch (2002) further stresses the importance of community organisations and the voluntary sector in assisting settlement, particularly at the time of her research in 1996 when there had been no special state provision of reception and settlement services for spontaneous asylum seekers and refugees who, until the 1996 AIA, were formally permitted virtually the same access to welfare services as nationals. As we have seen, the voluntary sector in all its forms has played a highly significant part in the reception,

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settlement and welfare of refugees throughout British (and most Western nations') history, and within that support landscape the increasing significance of Refugee Community Organisations, formerly known as Refugee Associations have become well documented, (Gold, 1992; Carey-Wood et al., 1995; Duke, 1996; Duke et al. 1999; Joly, 1996; Knox and Kushner, 1999; Griffiths, Sigona and Zetter, 2005). The role of RCOs in Europe and the US in supporting refugees and as self-help groups whilst immense is not unproblematic however, especially in their increasing incorporation within state reception and settlement policies overtly nurturing pluralist societies, (Gold, 1992; Korac, 2003; Kelly, 2003: Griffiths et al., 2005).

The importance of social networks whether formalised in the shape of RCOs or informally with kin, friends or contacts with *"co-ethnics,"* often discussed as a 'community' has frequently been shown to be of great importance to refugees in particular, preventing isolation, and bridging access to the host society, as is evident from accounts and the geographic clustering of people with the choice of where to live and through secondary migration from dispersal areas (Robinson, 2003; Moran, 2003). Robinson (2003:15) suggests being close to communities of *"fellow countrymen"* offers, *"…cultural and religious institutions, their stock of housing owned by co-ethnics, their employment opportunities, and their access to the security and warmth of ethnic-specific social networks."*

Griffiths et al (2005) question and problematise this long-standing straightforward assumption of the integrative role of RCO's and social networks, and social capital,

> *…emphasis on formal organisation in refugee communities, simplistic notions of community and the neglect of structurally embedded inequalities, are dominant in the literature on RCOs and are also key determinants of the policy and practice of refugee settlement in the UK,* (ibid:209).

From their theoretical analysis and recent comparative research of 40 RCOs in London, the West Midlands and the North West, exploring the impact of dispersal policy since the 1999 IAA, Griffiths et al (2005:207) emphasise the *"conflictual fields and differential power relations affecting refugee organisations,"* and criticise Putnam's, in their view,

functionalist and tautological account of social capital, *"It chimes in comfortably with neoliberal concerns to constrain welfare provision and to increase processes of self-reliance and 'participation' in civil society."*

Relating the proliferation and incorporation of RCOs into recent policies on refugee integration, to broader trends of welfare and the Third Way emphasis on *"...interlocked concepts such as social inclusion, citizenship, community and democracy have been incorporated within the broader discourses of participation and partnership that are now dominant within the public policy domain,"* (ibid:208).

3.2 The needs of forced migrants; refugees and asylum seekers

Recent research and theorising around people forced to migrate, asylum seekers and refugees has warned against or is aware of the dangers of essentializing and treatment of these people as a homogenous social group (Al-Ali, 2002; Malkki, 1995; Indra, 1999). Al-Ali, 2002:102 quotes Jambresic, Kirin and Povrzanovic (1996),

> *Treating refugees from the same country, or even a certain group of refugees as homogenous – not only when it comes to providing aid, but also in anthropological research – leads neither to efficient help for people in need nor to an accurate explanation of their problems and potential solutions.*

That said, academics also argue that despite the heterogeneity and differentiation within those forced to migrate, those fleeing (political) persecution have at least potentially, some specific or distinct needs on arrival in a country of exile, different from those migrating for different reasons and with a greater luxury of choice, (e.g. Joly, 1996; Duke, 1996). However conceptions and discourses around refugees have tended to stereotype them as exceptionally needy, vulnerable, powerless, passive victims (Harrell-Bond, 1986; 1999; Indra, 1993). From anthropological research with Hungarian refugees to the USA Harrell-Bond (1999: 146,144) charts the *"repackaging"* of refugees from *"When refugees were still 'people'"* after WW2 and during the Cold War, when refugees to the west were Europeans and not helpless, but to be resettled by integration into the job market. However with the international community particularly through UNHCR

following the modernization agenda of development, involved in providing humanitarian aid to 'Third World' refugees in refugee camps in neighbouring countries, Harrell-Bond (1999:147) found in her work and research in aid to refugees in Africa, "*…that the 'packaging' of refugees had dramatically altered. the documents I obtained from agencies emphasized images of helpless, starving masses who depend on agents of compassion to keep them alive.*"

Although UNHCR aimed to 'make' refugees self-sufficient, through the modernization lens involved agencies believed this was best achieved by putting refugees in camps and managing them, as they were incapable of managing themselves, through a set process towards integration and self-sufficiency. During this process humanitarians came to believe that refugees develop the "*dependency syndrome,*"

> *…a kind of working hypothesis has developed among humanitarians: 'The more you give, the more dependent people become'* (ibid:148).

Humanitarians believed they faced a dilemma; giving too much aid attracts people to cross borders for it, whereas giving too little threatens mass starvation; "*A delicate balance must be struck,*" (ibid: 148), (resonating with current policy rationales behind deterrent 'safety-net' support).

Harrell-Bond (1999) and Indra (1993) argue that as Mauss (1925) explored, the act of giving usually demands reciprocity, is not devoid of self-interest, and defines the power relationship between giver and receiver, "*The act of receiving places the recipient in a position of obligation, an inferior position **vis-à-vis** the benefactor until the give has been reciprocated,*" (Harrell-Bond, 1999:149).

The image of refugees as passive and powerless victims, reinforces the idea that outsiders are needed to help them, and according to Beristain and Dona (1997) conditions the way both humanitarian aid is organised and the interpersonal relations between the helpers and the helped. While acknowledging cultural norms of reciprocity refugees, particularly those who were long-term recipients of aid, tended to take on this role as helpless, "*to*

exhibit the deference of a subordinate" and as Hyndman (1996) found, quoting an aid worker, that the aid approach

> *…has generally encouraged its recipients to represent themselves as helpless victims of circumstance. Some Somalis have been representing themselves in this way for so long that, along with convincing the donors of its reality, they've also convinced themselves,* (cited in Harrell-Bond, 1999:150).

This analysis is not just relevant to assistance to refugees in the developing world but also to the welfare 'models' of Western receiving nations. Steen's (1993, cited in Harrell-Bond, 1999) study comparing the outcomes of the Danish policy of extended orientation and the UK's "*laissez-faire"* welfare approach with Tamil refugees, found in Britain the Tamils became economically successful "*Thatcher boys"* but in Denmark they had been de-skilled through the demand that they follow the set programme and, for instance, not seek employment until fluent in Danish. Harrell-Bond (1999:151) argues *"There is a great deal of evidence suggesting the iatrogenic effects of the welfare model which defines the roles that refugees are expected to play **vis-à-vis** their helpers (Harrell-Bond, 1986; Voutira and Harrell-Bond, 1995)"*.

Some academics have been particularly keen to dispel "*…the creation of 'the refugee' as a 'generic and essentialized figure' (Malkki, 1992), a political and legal artefact meant to exclude certain aspects pertaining to one's identity or to one's experience of persecution (Tuitt, 1996; Hathaway, 1988, 1991; Goodwin-Gill, 1983)",* (Callamard, 1999: 197). However, there is *some* general agreement concerning the at least potential distinctiveness of people who are refugees' needs compared with other migrants or social groups, albeit that these may be highly differentiated, for instance in terms of gender (Callamard, 1999; Agger, 1994; Crawley, 1997), age (Ahearn, Loughry and Ager, 1999; causes and process of migration (Kunz, 1981; Al-Rasheed, 1994; Joly, 1996; Bloch, 2002), experiences prompting migration (Watters, 1998), ability or disability (Roberts and Harris, 2002).

Often reported are the psycho-social needs relating to the experience of exile, particularly in terms of what has been lost in flight, (and gained or reinforced in exile). Callamard

(1999) finds this thread in personal accounts and life-stories and other types of research on refugees experiences, *"…the profound loss of individuality, self-esteem, and independence endured by refugees and fostered by the dynamics of relief assistance."*

Callamard (1999) states this *is* general to refugee populations as a whole, transcending national and historical boundaries, and cites the work of Hitchcox (1990) and others, using Goffman's (1961) study on asylums and Foucault's of prisons, to envisage the refugee camp as a 'controlling institution' with control working both ways,

> *…all individuals are constrained to behave as if they were dependent and helpless, which assists the perpetuation of an institution largely composed of workers whose role is to respond to people who have problems and are in need…Secondly, the majority of the Vietnamese, within their role as refugees are consenting participants in the process of control,* (Hitchcox, 1990:174, cited in Callamard, 1999:203).

Loss is a major theme in the literature on the experiences and needs of refugees in exile. The literature focuses on the loss of home (Povrzanovic Frykman, 2002; Al-Ali, 2002), loss of families and friends, loss and/or change of identities (e.g. to transnational ones, Koser, 2002), which may also include loss of former status, occupation, culture (O' Neill, 2001). Other needs that *may* be general to forced migrants are possibly as a result of what they *bring* to a country of exile, and the subsequent conditions and responses of receiving nations, which may also be the cause of specific needs related to their position in the receiving society. These may include both physical and mental health needs as a result (or not) of their traumatic experiences pre-migration and the conditions of life in exile, (Chung and Kagawasinger, 1993; Duke and Marshall, 1995; Hauff and Vaglum, 1995; Mghir et al., 1995 all cited in Duke, 1996),

The effects of war and persecution are compounded by adverse experiences in exile, such as social and cultural isolation, unemployment, accommodation problems, language difficulties and ongoing concern about friends and relatives who are still remaining in their home countries, (Duke, 1996: 472).

3.3 The social and political context of 1990s UK asylum policy

Following Castles' (2003:29) principles for an adequate sociology of forced migration (a historical understanding, recognition of embeddedness of specific topics in various levels and breadths of social relations and changes), an understanding of the social and historical context of British asylum legislations from the 1987 Immigration (Carriers Liabilities) Act, culminating in the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act and beyond, is essential to considering the specificities of the welfare arrangements of that seminal legislation. This understanding is already informed by the broader spatial (global/ regional) and philosophical factors explored so far, so this section will now consider the local situation from a closer national perspective (not to disembed it from its broader context).

From the less direct attempt by the Conservative government to control the number of people entering Britain to claim asylum with 1980s visa restrictions and the 1987 ICLA, (fining carriers for transporting undocumented passengers), through the first specifically targeted asylum legislations and a change of government, the five asylum and immigration acts (1993, 1996, 1999, 2002, 2004) have increased measures to restrict territorial entry, *and* access to welfare rights to these migrants. These legislations have generally followed trends in asylum policy throughout EU states, which also include moving from more permanent asylum towards temporary protection, and despite concurrent trends of shifts from centre-right to centre-left governments (Schuster, 2000). The 1993 Asylum and Immigration Appeals Act was the first primary legislation specifically addressing asylum in UK law, (Schuster and Solomos, 1999) and although extending the right of appeal to all asylum seekers (Hayter, 2000) and promoted as speeding up asylum decisions, it predominantly introduced restrictive measures, (Bloch, 2000; 2002). Fingerprinting asylum seekers, fast-tracking so called 'vexatious or frivolous cases' and asylum seekers travelling through 'safe' third countries, and limiting the time to appeal to 48 hours for those receiving a negative decision were some of these, (Hayter, 2000; Bloch, 2002). Also the separation of asylum seekers and refugees in eligibility to social rights was initiated as asylum seekers' rights to social housing were reduced, so reinstating the use of controlling access to welfare for forced migrants. After

the 1993 Act the refusal to grant refugee status rate increased dramatically from 14% in the six months prior to the Act to 72% after it, (Hayter, 2000).

The literature suggests a complex convergence of social and historical particularities influencing the specific character of asylum policies in the UK. To begin with the number of people arriving to claim asylum from the late 1980s to early 1990s increased dramatically (as in other EU states, although a tiny proportion of refugees worldwide). Between 1980-1988 the average number of applications per year was 4,000, in 1991 it was 44,800, and by 2000 it was 80,315 principle applicants, (Robinson et al. 2003; Griffiths et al. 2005). Cheaper airfares, global communications networks, continuing global refugee producing situations and colonial ties laying down migration paths are some of the commonly cited reasons for these increased asylum migrations.

With the Cold War ending these new refugees were primarily migrating from the developing world, and posed a new racialised image of 'the refugee,' - no longer white, European and fleeing a total oppressive regime, but black, immigrant, and undeserving, (Robinson, et al., 2003). Miles and Cleary (1993:57) argue that British state responses to refugee migration in the late 1980s and early 1990s was influenced by "*the evolution of an ideological conjunction of the idea of 'race' with immigration,*" predominantly since 1945 whereby only black and Asian people were constructed as 'immigrants', and this overrode any distinction between refugee and labour migrants. In the earlier 20th Century 'immigrants' while not usually black, were (usually Jewish or Irish) "*physically and culturally distinct from those defined as 'our own people,'*" (ibid: 57). Thus the political campaigns and responses of the 1980-90s were conditioned by this historical racialising of particular groups of migrants and not others, as posing a threat to Britain as a 'homogenous' nation.

Between the 1971 Immigration Act which, using *"racially defined categories"* (Spencer, 1997:143) prevented almost all non-white commonwealth citizens from entering and the 1988 Immigration Act, eroding the right of family reunion, British immigration policy effectively ended nearly all (particularly commonwealth) immigration for settlement, (Bloch, 2002). This 1988 Act prevented the entrance of primary migrants' dependents who might have recourse to public funds, continuing the welfare/immigration link begun

with the 1905 Aliens Act, and leaving asylum seekers the primary migrants through the 1990s, (Miles and Clearly, 1993; Bloch, 2002).

Robinson et al. (2003:4) point out that the new migrations of asylum seekers to Europe came at a time of "*sea change in attitudes towards international migration in general,*" with oil price scares, economic downturns, de-industrialisation, cheap labour was no longer considered desirable and, in the early 1990's in Britain, rises in unemployment, contributed to the perception of the need to control asylum migration. Castles (2003) also points to these new migrations coinciding with the longer term settling and emergence of multicultural societies from previous migrations. Although anti-discriminatory law was in place, and multi-culturalism official (Joppke, 1999) the right-leaning version of 'race relations' discourse and theory was also drawn on to justify restrictive responses to new asylum seeking migrants. Hayter (2000:55) quotes Thatcher's 1978 TV interview, prior to her 1979 election win, sympathising with those believing there was too much immigration, and were "*really rather afraid that this country might be rather swamped by people with a different culture.*" "*If you want good race relations… you have got to allay peoples' fears about numbers.*" This allusion to good 'race relations' and the 'numbers game,' has continued to be used by Conservative and Labour politicians in their justifications for attempting to restrict immigration and asylum seeking through immigration controls legislation. These forced migrants were increasingly considered within the 'immigration' and 'immigration control' context, rather than as refugees needing a safe country of refuge. Political and media discourses increasingly blurred distinctions between 'immigrants,' 'illegal immigrants,' 'illegals,' 'economic migrants', 'bogus asylum seekers' and 'refugees.' Kaye (1994) demonstrated that prior to the 1993 and 1996 Acts the Conservative government, coinciding with elections, led rhetorical campaigns to change public perceptions of refugees as 'bogus asylum seekers', demonising them as economic migrants, so justifying their tightening of immigration rules. Media 'campaigns' have assisted politicians in setting the agenda and conditioning public opinion in various ways, as "*a bridge between the voter and the government*" (Robinson, et al., 2003), to regard asylum seekers as a problem, particularly in terms of the numbers of them dishonestly attempting to access British welfare. Robinson et al. (2003) argue that the UK (and Western Europe) has been in the grip of a moral panic over these migrations.

The presumed 'assault' or threat on welfare that asylum seekers were posed to make, and the largely unsubstantiated assumption that people migrated as asylum seekers to access the welfare states of receiving countries (Cornelius and Tsuda, 2004; Geddes, 2003; Robinson and Segrott, 2002), also coincided with neo-liberal transformation of the welfare state, beginning with Conservative rule from 1979 and continuing with New Labour's third way, (Mynott, 2002; Bloch, 2000). The Conservatives sought to extend market principles within the welfare state, cut welfare expenditure, reduce welfare 'dependency,' enforce efficiency and increase means-testing on an ideology of individualism, consumerism and enterprise, and rejection of social citizenship (Bloch, 2000), in a welfare-state 'roll-back' or retrenchment. Dwyer (2005) points out that neo-liberals term this good governance; decentralisation, shifting from a redistributory to a regulatory state and from a public service ethos to market management and state-market cooperation. In such a climate, the withdrawal of social rights from demonised asylum seekers, and their necessary conceptual separation from 'genuine refugees' was in keeping with Conservative welfare policy generally.

The 1996 Asylum and Immigration Act further extended the links between immigration control and welfare, and internal controls, predominantly by withdrawing the right of 'in-country' applicants, on the grounds that they were less 'genuine' than 'at port' applicants, and those on-appeal against a negative decision to any welfare support. These were among a range of restrictive pre and post entry measures, including the so-called 'White List' of safe countries where *refoulement* was deemed acceptable, the extension of 'fast-track' procedures, and the introduction of employer sanctions making checking employees immigration status a legal duty and employing someone without permission to work a criminal offence, (Hayter, 2000). The right to work was withdrawn until asylum seekers had been resident for six months. When thousands became destitute as a result of the Act, the High Courts ruled that those single asylum seekers must be supported by local authorities under the 1948 National Assistance Act, (although with in-kind rather than cash assistance), and families under the 1989 Children Act. Zetter and Pearl (1999) stressed that the policy impact of the 1993 and 1996 Acts was to distinguish between asylum seekers and refugees in relation to social housing and benefits, as virtually all asylum seekers were excluded and living in temporary accommodation. Thus an ad hoc

system of welfare support was established with predominantly London and South East local authorities thrown with no warning or planning time into the responsibility for this provision to 80,000 asylum seekers in the London boroughs, by April 2000, (Robinson et al. 2003).

There has been plenty of research attesting to the negative impact of these measures and the responsibility by default of local authorities in the absence of state benefits for both destitute asylum seekers and the service providers (Mynott, 2002b). A study of local authority officers found there were wide varieties in provision and considerable uncertainty about entitlements (Rahilly, 1998, cited in Mynott, 2002b). Zetter and Pearl (1998) in their study of social housing for asylum seekers and refugees found housing and asylum legislation had created immense barriers for asylum seekers, unpredictable chaos and their marginalisation and exclusion. In some areas support workers reported, "*shocking levels of basic unmet need, from shoes and clothes falling apart, to serious medical conditions going untreated,*" (Webber, 1997:75, cited in Mynott, 2002b:110). A health worker spoke of increasing mental health problems resulting not from escaped traumatic experiences but from current living conditions, such as "*chronic depression and dependencies created by grinding poverty, homelessness and mistreatment in the UK,*" Savigar, (1998, cited in Mynott, 2002b:110). Duvell and Jordan (2000) and Sales and Hek's (2004) studies of social worker asylum teams, found workers felt their work fell well below and compromised their professional standards (see **3.6.1**). As well as the suffering of destitute asylum seekers, the chaotic and variable provision of ad hoc support and the dissonant and stressful position of service providers, the 'unintended consequences' of the 1996 AIA and still increasing number of asylum applicants did nothing to diminish growing contentious politicisation and moral panic over asylum.

Robinson et al (2003) demonstrate the spatial concentration of refugees and asylum seekers, from secondary migration of quota refugees and of spontaneous arrivals, in London throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and some clustering near the ports of Gatwick and Dover. This has been widely shown to result from gravitation to communities of social support from others of a similar ethnicity or country of origin, including assistance with basic needs orientation, integration and employment, as well as general employment opportunities and general ethnic diversity, (Jones, 1982; Carey-Wood et al, 1995; Duke et

al, 1999). In 1997 85% of all refugees and asylum seekers resident in the UK were living in London, concentrated in particular boroughs (Audit Commission 2000, and by April 2000 this included approximately 80,000 asylum seekers. The LGA stated that in March 2000 90% of all destitute asylum seekers were supported by London boroughs and the South East, including Dover. These boroughs were not fully funded by central government, paying the shortfalls themselves, and when housing shortages and law made finding suitable accommodation increasingly difficult, some boroughs began their own dispersals of some asylum seekers to regional LA's and others, significantly Kent County Council publicised its intention to raise local Community Charges, (Robinson et al. 2003). The issue of local 'burdens' and costs, combined with increasingly intense and hostile media coverage nationally and locally, as well as groups campaigning *for* forced migrants rights, was the backdrop to the newly elected New Labour, 1999 IAA.

3.4 The 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act

Despite its vociferous opposition, on grounds of inhumanity, to the 1996 AIA whilst in opposition, (Hayter, 2000) New Labour in government produced a legislation which far exceeded the withdrawal of social rights from asylum seekers and pre-entry restrictions of previous Conservative legislations. This Act has been described variously as *"a radical point of departure in UK asylum policy"* (Griffiths et al., 2005:41), *"a bold redrafting of the entire system"* (Robinson et al, 2003:123) and, *"The 1999 Act represents a watershed. Part VI of the Act, 'support for asylum-seekers', constitutes a qualitative leap in the link between welfare and immigration status,"* (Cohen, 2001:24).

Whilst Britain was late amongst other European states to introduce co-ordinated, centralised arrangements for the reception and dispersal of asylum seekers having previously used reactive, incremental, ad hoc, decentralised measures until 1999, the new systems were also not such a departure from previous reception responses of dispersal and voluntary sector implementation, (Griffiths et al, 2005). The Act also embodies marked continuities in its assumptions and principles with the Conservative's 1990s legislation. However the 1999 IAA is radically different in a number of ways important for this research. The main provisions were:

- Abolition of 'White List' of supposed safe countries (reinstated later)

- 'Asylum seeker' a legal category for the first time

- Increased measures to restrict entry and so reduce numbers of arriving asylum seekers: more Airport Liaison Officers, Carriers Liability extended to truck companies.

- Measures to accelerate the asylum decision-making process – aimed at 6 months (including appeals)

- One appeal only

- New centralised system of reception and welfare support removing all asylum seekers from mainstream welfare systems (benefits, housing), co-ordinated and operated by new Home Office agency, National Asylum Support Service (NASS), implemented by multi public, voluntary, private sector agencies mostly arranged into Consortia

- Cashless system of support (using vouchers) at 70% income support rates (removed later – April 2002)

- Destitute asylum seekers without accommodation dispersed to UK regions away from London and the South East on a no-choice basis

- Removal of any right to work for new asylum seekers

- Extension of powers of search and arrest and detention

The rationales behind this legislation were explained in the White Paper, *Fairer, Faster, Firmer: A Modern Approach to Immigration Control* (Home Office, 1998) and were based on the presumption that most asylum seekers were potentially fraudulent 'economic migrants' and not 'genuine refugees', therefore controlling their entry territorially and by introducing deterrent welfare measures, was imperative. This was presented as a newly *"Integrated Approach,"* (ibid: 20) combining asylum and immigration control, to replace the former *"piecemeal approach"* (ibid: 18). It was also presented as 'modernising' immigration control, in line with many aspects of New Labour's Third Way, for instance stressing the obligations of asylum seekers in return for the obligations of government towards them, (ibid: 36). It is important to explore those radical aspects relating to welfare arrangements of the 1999 IAA.

3.4.1 Controlling immigration by controlling welfare

3.4.1.1 Separation

The new support measures were presented as representing *"the best interest of genuine refugees"* (Home Office, 1998:36) by ensuring that *"genuine asylum seekers are not left destitute, but which minimise the attractions of the UK to economic migrants,"* (ibid: preface). One of the main aspects of this Act was the further separating out conceptually, by entitlement and to an extent physically of asylum seekers from recognised refugees and from the general population. The category of person, 'asylum seeker,' newly recognised legally and with increased suspicion was further removed from the morally 'pure' category of 'refugee' in a number of ways. Sales (2002:463) talks of this separation in policy and popular discourse, as that of the majority of asylum seekers as *"undeserving,"* while the minority recognised as refugees are the *"deserving."*

> *…the Government believes that it must start from the position that people who have not established their right to be in the UK should not have access to welfare provision on the same basis as those whose citizenship or status here gives them an entitlement to benefits when in need. Any support offered for asylum seekers should operate on a separate basis… as a last resort,* (Home Office, 1998:38).

Removing asylum seekers from entitlement to most mainstream welfare provision and cash support by providing it separately through centralised NASS funding and by physically removing new claimants by dispersal away from London and the South East served a number of purposes. From the White Paper, this was primarily designed as a deterrent to potential 'abusive' claimants (though evidence suggests this is a largely false premise), but not so inhumane as to deter 'genuine' refugees, thus as a form of internal control.

Also Geddes (2001; 2003:152) argues this type of legislation attempts to *"demarcate more tightly the 'community of legitimate receivers of welfare state benefits,'"* in the process of defining and redefining the distinctions between 'wanted' and 'unwanted' migrants in relation to *perceptions* around the implications they have for national,

particularly welfare resources. This process of clarifying the distinction between the illegitimate and legitimate 'community' is understood to reassure those within it (Geddes, 2001:143), especially in the face of general welfare state roll-back and insurance-based types. Thus the 1999 IAA was designed to appease those believing asylum seekers were denying 'legitimate' welfare receivers their entitlements. Sales (2002:465) states,

> *The absence of any provision in the 1999 Act for those granted refugee status demonstrates in the sharpest form the government's preoccupation with control in its asylum policy. The only reference to recognised refugees is that they must leave the NASS system within 14 days,*

However *since* the Act, the separation and demarcation was further emphasised by introducing for the first time the aim to resource and concentrate social policy on aiding the integration of those granted refugee status, (Home Office, 1999, although not by law until the 2002 NIAA). This emphasised a further aim of the legislation to delay and prevent settlement and integration of individuals prior to this recognition (as well as those rejected),

> *Differential processes of exclusion and inclusion underlie asylum and migration policy in the UK, as elsewhere in the EU (Boswell, 2003). The principle of non-integration in the reception phase (Joly, 1999) and the vast apparatus of deterrence wielded against asylum seekers necessarily sit uneasily alongside the aims of social inclusion and integration for refugees, which* **Integration Matters** *(Home Office, 2004) proposes,* (Griffiths et al. 2005:56).

Whilst not separating asylum seekers to the extent that some other EU states have done by containing them physically in reception and accommodation centres, the aim is effective separation by providing the barest tools for survival but not participation or inclusion,

The welfare-related dimension of the UK asylum system was designed to hinder the possibility for asylum seekers to live a 'normal social life' because to provide this opportunity could produce social integration and settlement. Vouchers and dispersal secure and reproduce a constant anormalisation of social life designed to hinder social integration and make it possible for the migration process to be reversed, (Geddes, 2001:143).

This separation, particularly through dispersal, was also designed to relieve the disproportionate 'burden' of costs (monetary and social) on local authorities supporting asylum seekers since the 1996 AIA, with their overspends and in some areas, notoriously Dover, experiencing social tensions (as some local people campaigned against asylum seekers in their area) (Robinson et al. 2003). As we have seen dispersal is not new to UK reception of refugees or immigrants. It has been part of assimilationist policy goals, to reduce social tensions and spread cost 'burdens', then as integration goals recognised that 'clustering' of minority ethnic communities not in 'ghettos' but 'enclaves' was considered to aid effective integration, (Griffiths et al, 2005:42). But Robinson et al (2003:166) argue that current dispersal premises are primarily assimilationist, using population engineering to reduce the social visibility of asylum seekers, "*appease a bigoted but vocal minority of the indigenous population,*" and maintain the 'purity' of social space,

…for the discrepant 'others' to be permitted access to space at all, they will be relegated to socially and spatially marginal places that are 'distant from the locales of the dominant majority'…

…dispersal is less about the prohibitive expense of clustering or putting too much strain upon local services than it is about soothing the fears of white voters who want to feel that immigration, and who is allowed to live in 'their' cities, is under control.(ibid:171).

3.4.1.2 *Minimising 'incentives': a bare safety net*

In order to ensure those in "*genuine hardship*" are not left destitute, "*The government is committed to providing such a safety net, but is determined to do so in a way which minimises the incentive for abuse by those who do not really need the support or who would make an unfounded asylum application in order to obtain the provision,*" (Home Office, 1998:39).

Thus NASS' safety net would comprise 70% of income support in vouchers, although the RC and other lobbyists won the only concessions on the bill, to give £10 cash and pay 100% income support to families with children, and no-choice accommodation including utilities as a 'last resort' if individuals could find nowhere else to stay. The Home Office were particularly concerned that *cash* benefits would act an incentive to 'abusive' claimants, thus the more expensive and operationally complex voucher system was instituted. The RC responded to the proposals,

> *…they will turn the current shambles into something much worse… the 'safety net' system set out is likely to hit asylum seekers badly and risks building up a massive problem of social exclusion. It appears that the government has chosen the harshest, most expensive and complicated system of support,* (RC, 1998).

Mynott (2000:319) criticises the use of 'community relations' terminology as a mask for the 'brutality' of the support measures,

> *This is truly an apartheid system for asylum seekers in the sense that it is separate and unequal. Its harshness has been deliberately constructed, driven by the desire to deter asylum claimants.*

Cohen (2001:24) states that the "*qualitative leap*" linking welfare with immigration controls is accomplished "*by reducing assistance to asylum-seekers to a form of Poor Law.*" As well as attempting to "*reassure 'legitimate welfare receivers,'*" (Geddes, 2001:143), this enforced poverty was also intended to 'anormalise' lives so that migration could be reversed and was a further instrument of control, in that such enforced

dependency gave little scope for travelling elsewhere or to participate in a 'normal social life'. The enforced poverty of asylum seekers in the NASS scheme has been subsequently verified in research (Refugee Council, 2002). Accepting NASS accommodation had an obvious built in monitoring and surveillance element to it, with RSLs or LAs obliged by law to give information about individuals, demanded by the Home Secretary, and residents absent for more than seven consecutive or fourteen overall days and nights would be evicted, (Cohen, 2002). The voucher system was found to further separate and stigmatise asylum seekers who found using them humiliating and degrading, (Oxfam, 2000).

3.4.2 The 'dispersed state:' agencies providing the safety net

Cohen (2001:19) stresses the contradiction of a supposed welfare system overtly designed to control immigration, the greater use with this Act of internal controls; "*control from within the state,*" not just of asylum seekers but by withdrawal of benefits to all "*persons subject to immigration control,*"

> *…the nexus places in a collusive position workers responsible for providing welfare. These workers are expected to withhold the very provisions for which their jobs exist. They are transformed into agents of immigration control,* (ibid: 20).

Another significant aspect of the 1999 IAA support arrangements was the design for their implementation. Although the VS have traditionally been highly involved in past reception and settlement programmes, (the RC and RA were first formed in the implementation of past programmes) and RCOs had proliferated since the 1980s, the implementation arrangements for this Act in some senses were radically different in their New Labour conception of Third Way modernisation of welfare. Welfare was to be delivered by multiple public, voluntary and private sector agencies co-ordinated in Consortia in dispersal regions, in 'co-operation' with NASS, including major roles for the five main refugee support agencies, as One Stop advice Shops and Reception Assistants. Sales (2002) argues that the 'Third Way's' retention of many aspects of neoliberalism, with continued private sector involvement and target setting in welfare provision,

incentives to cater for 'expensive' groups (like asylum seekers) that belie targets, are reduced. The emphasis on independence and social inclusion through work, and citizenship through participation immediately cast asylum seekers, denied the rights to work and participate, as the 'undeserving', (Sales, 2002).

The convergence of the 1999 IAA (and subsequent) support arrangements with New Labour's overall Third Way modernisation programme have been explored by various social scientists, notably Griffiths et al (2005) and Dwyer (2005), and are extremely pertinent to this research. Both explore the expectations that the support and dispersal arrangements aim to instil the working of 'partnerships' with consortia consisting of a wide range of agencies; central government, local authority, NGO, Voluntary, RCO and private sector interests. 'Partnerships' and 'participation' are rooted in a new 'managerialism' within public services (Clarke and Newman, 1997) since the 1980s, and based on the concept of varying 'partners' working together "*in the pursuit of widely shared goals*", (Ling, 2000:99). This Third Way arrangement is also aligned with New Labour's communitarian emphasis on active citizenship, participation, social inclusion and social cohesion, mixed economy welfare and greater involvement of civil society, although sitting at odds with the implementation of an exclusionary policy. Griffiths et al (2005:56) in the context of their research into the formal incorporation of RCOs in assisting to implement the 1999 IAA, point to criticisms of this 'partnership' transformation of service delivery, as "*…governmentality, which involves the incorporation of hard-to-reach groups 'into compliant collaborators in creating a more inclusive society'*", (Ling, 2000:90).

Dwyer (2005) also turns to governance theory to make sense of the arrangements of EU states, in devolving responsibility for forced migrants' welfare to an array of public, private and voluntary actors at both regional and local levels, which he refers to as the 'dispersed state' (Clarke and Newman, 1997) involved in complex networks of governance. Dwyer (2005) agrees with Jessop (1999) that this multi-level network form of governance, especially in relation to policy for deterring forced migrants, is not the divergence of power in different directions and levels some governance theories suggest, but that national governments still hold significant, if changed, power, "*Many of the*

'partners' involved in policy are subordinate to the aims and ambitions of national governments driving a particular policy agenda," (Dwyer, 2005:8)

Clarke and Glendinning (2002) question the development of 'networked governance' and the balances of power, especially theorising which suggests that state power is being 'hollowed out', arguing instead that these new forms of governance are a remaking of state power and extension through new means. Citing New Labour's 'compulsory partnerships' as,

> *an attempt to recruit **subordinated** partners into the project of 'modernising' government. Such subordinate roles certainly allow some autonomy and initiative… However this autonomy is bounded; is circumscribed by central direction and resource control; is subject to surveillance and evaluation; and is vulnerable to termination or takeover"* (Clarke and Glendinning, 2002:46).

They conclude that 'partnerships' are *"compound, contingent and potentially contradictory sites of power."*

The range of agencies and actors from varying sectors involved in implementing the NASS system are typical of New Labour's aims at 'modernised' and 'joined-up' networks of governance, but Dwyer (2005:16) citing Cohen's (2001; 2002) critiques, points to the "*symbiosis at the heart of such 'partnerships.'"* The contradictory positions whereby some agencies' independence and critical capacity have been compromised by their involvement mean some of these LA's and NGO's now 'need' NASS. However, Dwyer (2005) points out that the state is also in a position of compromised power in relation to the private sector. Dwyer's (2005) and Dwyer and Brown's (2005) research into the meeting of forced migrants' basic needs in Leeds (where the Yorkshire and Humberside Consortium operates), found a range of formal and informal welfare agencies and actors involved. The varying socio-legal statuses of these forced migrants significantly affected their welfare, whereby particularly those 'failed' asylum seekers were reliant on informal networks of support, RCOs, local charities and particularly other migrants for very basic needs. (Moran, 2003 also found this in her participative action research). However those still in receipt of NASS support experienced varying,

sometimes appalling, conditions as the regulation of private sector accommodators was poor. Dwyer (2005:27) concludes that, *"As the state erodes forced migrants' rights to public welfare the voluntary/informal sector is often left to pick up the pieces."*

> *Although nation states actively seek to mould and constrain the options available to forced migrants as they try to meet their basic needs no system of governance is total in its control. Nonetheless, the welfare rights of forced migrants are subject to the dual processes of separation and erosion. The setting up of localised networks of governance has done little to enhance the public welfare that forced migrants can call upon… Notions of need and entitlement have become secondary to issues of claim and contribution,* (ibid: 30, 31).

3.5 *Voluntary sector (and public service) involvement in the 'safety net'*

> *The government is particularly concerned to explore ways of harnessing the energy and expertise of voluntary and independent sector bodies in providing the safety net,* (Home Office, 1998:40).

As we have seen VS involvement in receiving refugees has a long history, however in this instance with newly centralised control and the support system designed as a deterrent, commentators, academics and campaigners have pointed to the contradictory positions not just of public service welfare workers involved in implementing internal controls (Gordon, 1985; Owers, 1994; Cohen, 2001; Humphries, 2002; Sales and Hek, 2004), but VS agencies implementing key aspects of the 1999 IAA. Most outspoken in this criticism is Cohen (2001; 2002; 2004), who also cited protests by asylum seekers and their supporters against specific VS organisations involvement, (Cohen, 2004). Although conceding the *"honourable if mistaken nature of these agencies' motives and the sincerity of the belief that they are assisting asylum seekers,"* Cohen (2002:142) argues that certain agencies are involved in *"a system which is directly antagonistic to the interests of refugees,"* (ibid:141). Cohen is specifically critical of those VS organisations, the biggest refugee support NGO's, directly and substantially funded to operate reception assistance and One Stop Shops, providing a range of services integral to the NASS system. Although he also finds the actions of non refugee-specific 'stakeholder' charities,

such as NACAB, Amnesty International and the Terrance Higgins Trust, compromising for collusion with NASS and the IND over aspects of asylum seeker support without consultation with asylum seekers themselves. Cohen (2002:150) criticises the government (not the RCOs) for their expectation of formal and informal support of asylum seekers from RCOs, arguing that it is "*intolerable that often financially impoverished refugee communities, are being expected to support 'their own.'*" Cohen (2002) argues that RSLs and LA's are compromised by accommodating asylum seekers without their choice, with the option of using 'hard to let' properties, being obliged to give NASS information about occupants, and with the likely task of evicting individuals no longer funded by NASS at the end of their claims. The compromising role of RAAs and OSSs, potentially involved dissuading asylum seekers from applying for NASS support, accommodating them in Emergency Accommodation, facilitating dispersal and potentially evicting or withdrawing support for individuals if their claims had expired. Cohen (2002) recognises the valuable contribution the VS makes in general, but condemns as *chutzpah,* the Home Office citing these benefits as reasons to use them in implementing the 1999 IAA, particularly the cost-cutting intent and expectation that they would provide services beyond NASS safety net, and the public purse,

- o *Volunteers…*
- o *Additional resources: once voluntary agencies are involved in the support arrangements, they will start to raise funds to provide additional services…*
- o *Expertise: the expertise in meeting the support needs of asylum seekers is almost exclusively based in the voluntary sector…*
- o *Networking capacity: a great strength of the voluntary sector agencies is their ability to draw in other organisations in the sector to provide additional resources or expertise…*
- o *Policy development:… a good record in developing imaginative responses…*

'Asylum Seekers' Support' (Home Office, 1999, cited in Cohen, 2002:143).

The argument Cohen (2002) forwarded was that by non-participation and non-cooperation with this legislation, such agencies would force it to fold, and the government to restore full benefits to asylum seekers, and the VS could take up its

traditional role as advocating on behalf of such vulnerable groups against state power. He suggests the position the VS agencies have taken on their involvement is fundamentally incompatible with his; that theirs is essentially facilitating and helpful to asylum seekers, who would otherwise be condemned to unsuitable private sector agencies the government would contract if they refused these roles. Instead, *"The voluntary sector, or part of it, is a designated poor law enforcer,"* (Cohen, 2002:141).

Cohen's views on the unethical collusion of the VS in the 1999 IAA are echoed, if less radically by many others recognising the contradictory position and likely compromises such VS agencies and workers might face in their new roles and what seemed like their general endorsement, through participation, of the overall system. The Audit Commission (2000:25), acknowledged the possible tensions among different Consortia stakeholders,

> *Differences in the values and cultural ethos of different stakeholders may also strain the partnership – some refugee community organisations may opt for a model driven by social welfare concerns, whereas housing providers' overriding objective may be simply to work within the system's financial constraints.*

The Home Office's early review of the dispersal and voucher systems found that there were tensions over VS chief concerns, roles and accountability, (the concern being the potential non-compliance of RAAs in deterrent measures),

> ***Voluntary sector organisations,*** *although not all, not demonstrating a clear understanding of their own role, with potential conflicts between acting as agents of NASS and providing an advisory role to the asylum seeker,* (Home Office, 2001:15)

The later operational review of NASS also expressed this conflict of interest within the Voluntary Sector and NASS itself, (Noble, Barnish, Finch and Griffith, 2003). There are elements of these tensions that are both general and specific. For instance in a Third Way welfare state, there are tensions generally for the VS' in agencies' increasing involvement in public service delivery. Badham and Eadie (2001:34) warn that agencies struggle to manage the tensions of maintaining their values, independence, and creativity with

contracts for service delivery that have increasing control over their activities, threatening their lobbying functions and their *"empowering services with, and on behalf of, disadvantaged and marginalised groups."* Although this new position could give VS agencies opportunities to positively influence policy and practice to better serve groups they represent, their ability to retain their independence and integrity and bring about radical change are questioned despite government Compacts (Home Office, 1998; 2001) assuring independence (Badham and Eadie, 2002).

There are also tensions within general welfare delivery for public sector agencies, in managing different aspects of their roles, government and policy priorities as well as in such agencies specific involvement with delivering asylum legislation. The role of social workers despite its former explicit stand on anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice has increasingly been *"drawn into a disciplinary and surveillance role in policing the poor, to the extent of having now been 'tamed', (Jones and Novak, 1999)"* and is naïve about its *"contradictory positioning,"* (Humphries, 2002:126). Social work has been increasingly regulated and coerced to comply with political and economic objectives and its anti-discriminatory practice is diluted by discourses of managerialism and 'competence', (Humphries, 2002). Sales and Hek (2002:59) also stress that *"tensions between care and control are endemic to social work (Jones 1998; Jordan 1997; Parton 1997; Thompson 2000)"* generally, but social work involvement in the care and control of recent internal immigration control particularly of refugees and asylum seekers adds a new dimension to this. This includes the split in the stance of care from control in the treatment by government (and media) of 'genuine refugees' and 'bogus asylum seekers' respectively.

But how were these specific (and general) contradictions and tensions experienced and lived out 'on the ground' by those agencies, providing a minimal standard of welfare? What did delivering welfare under these conditions involve in practice for workers, and how did they understand their position and roles?

3.6 *Experiencing a contradictory position in practice: implementing policy*

3.6.1 *'Picking up the pieces' after the 1996 AIA*

While many public service agencies are increasingly involved in internally controlling immigration through welfare state access, social workers have been landed a particularly contentious role. While typically currently involved in "*investigation, rationing, gatekeeping and surveillance,*" in a separation of practices from ethics, social workers have unreflectively enforced "*inhuman policies,*" when their expected activities are, "*…tracking movements, checking on status, deciding on eligibility for and administering poor relief, and ultimately withdrawing relief and accommodation from those seen as 'undeserving,'*" (Humphries, 2004:38).

These roles were particularly thrust upon social services departments when they were suddenly landed, by default, with the responsibility of the welfare of 'in-country' asylum seekers after their entitlements to mainstream benefits were withdrawn by the 1996 AIA. Without planning time or expertise social services were compelled to set up ad-hoc 'Asylum Teams' to monitor and oversee a reduced and deterrent-driven 'welfare,' including in-kind support. These teams also became involved in the Interim Arrangements for the 1999 IAA, operating a 'voluntary dispersal' and the voucher system, and have been involved in different ways in the 1999 IAA with increasing compromises demanded by subsequent legislation. Such roles placed social workers in highly contradictory positions, and their understandings of the dilemmas of their practices have been explored by two pieces of interview research with London Asylum Teams in the wake of the 1996 AIA. Duvell and Jordan (2000) argued these teams were pioneers of New Labour's general 'tough love' welfare agenda, but asked of the Asylum Team workers '*How Low Can You Go?*' in enforcing and operating 'welfare' far below acceptable standards for UK citizens.

Both this and Sales and Hek's (2004) study found the teams and workers were forced to balance various tensions, the latter discussed in terms of care and control, in more extreme ways than with other client groups. The control elements involved assessing eligibility for entitlement in ways that generated suspicion rather than trust, involved

interrogation and was often based on arbitrary criteria, and often ruled over the 'care' they could offer, describing their work as more *"quantitative rather than qualitative"* (Sales and Hek, 2004:67). Thus the care and control tensions bore out as attempting to balance the defining of need while controlling resources, the latter being dominant. Sales and Hek (2004) found tensions between the social workers' professional values and their job of excluding the 'undeserving' from support, while Duvell and Jordan (2000) stressed tensions between professional values and personal aspirations and the deterrence-style 'support' and shortcomings of their roles and practice. Both studies found the teams were caught between the twin pressures of state, or the supposed interests of the wider society and their clientele, who were sometimes very vulnerable with acute needs or, some social workers believed, exaggerated their adversity to gain services (Duvell and Jordan, 2000:15), or were over-demanding (Sales and Hek, 2004). Sales and Hek, (2004) found there was a particular tension and need to balance, but with limited success, empathy in response to clients' needs and detachment in order to assess eligibility.

Such tensions provoked immense personal stress and some guilt in the workers in both studies over the shortcomings of their work and the support they provided, (which one worker described more as crisis aid to a developing world disaster, Duvell and Jordan, 2000) especially those with stronger personal commitment (Sales and Hek, 2004) to this client group. The researchers found workers used various strategies for dealing with the tensions and stress of their roles. One strategy, in both studies was the differentiation of the 'deserving' and undeserving,' especially as official eligibility criteria could be vague, workers could use arbitrary and informal judgements in a *"moral surveillance"* (Sales and Hek, 2004:71) over asylum seekers' lives, such as whether they smoked cigarettes, were thought demanding or aggressive (ibid), or their appearance suggested they were homeless (Duvell and Jordan, 2000). Whilst professing their commitment to this client group, workers could resort to stereotyping and creating distance from them, defining their cultural practices as problems or deficiencies, (Duvell and Jordan, 2000). In both studies workers distanced themselves from the state or political issues they felt they had no control over, so would blame the Home Office for poor quality support (Duvell and Jordan, 2000) or be *"up front"* about the little they had to offer, so managing the expectations of clients and reducing their demand on first meeting (Sales and Hek, 2004:70). The ad hoc nature of their existence, and changeability of policy, meant their

often arbitrary decisions of eligibility left asylum seekers with very variable services within and across teams, (Duvell and Jordan, 2000). Managers in Sales and Hek's (2004) study took pride and found it easier to make 'hard decisions', drawing on notions of their wider responsibility to guarding the purse strings of the LA, than lower level front-line workers.

Another coping strategy especially for front-line workers was to "*turn a blind eye to discrepancies,*" suggest they gave clients the benefit of the doubt, and did not "*police*" clients, thereby justifying their work in terms of traditional social work values and resistance to the enforcement authorities (Home Office and managers), which Duvell and Jordan (2000:18-19) term, "*banditry.*" Some workers with a particular commitment to asylum seekers tried to avoid by deferring, eligibility decisions and also spoke of "*doing a bit more*" than the minimum for clients, and spoke of wishing to work in the VS because they felt there would be less conflict of interests, (Sales and Hek, 2004:73). In both studies social workers used their initiative to refer clients on whose needs they could not meet to RCOs, although they tended to view RCO members as over-demanding and their advocacy as obstacles to the smooth-running of their services. In Duvell and Jordan's (2000:24) study some social workers used clients' demands for putting pressure on upwards in arguing for increased resources and power, and one worker took gathered evidence to management to stop a "*horrific*" practice. Sales and Hek (2004) made recommendations for improving the practices of the Asylum teams, including the building of partnerships with RCOs, although recognising the increasing tendency for such groups to be drawn into policy implementation and away from their campaigning role. They concede these strategies might enhance services for asylum seekers but do not eliminate the basic contradiction of care and control in social services' role implementing restrictive asylum policies. Also these elements of resistance did not amount to collective or co-ordinated action to resist implementing policy altogether. In some ways their work echoed the guilt and unease of the social workers generally, but

>…*taking to the extreme the tendency of individual staff and teams to become trapped in a downward spiral of compromise between client need and resource scarcity – always pressed, rushed and conscious of their shortcomings, but never*

able to draw a firm line of where falling standards had sunk to unacceptably low levels, (Duvell and Jordan, 2000:19).

Duvell and Jordan (2000:3) thus asked at what point social workers would refuse, "*to do the 'dirty work' of social policy, even when this involves intentional and systematic deprivation by official agencies of the means of dignified existence.*"

This echoes Cohen's (2001) exhortation for public service and VS providers to boycott the 1999 IAA and subsequent legislation, raising the issue of what the most appropriate action should be; reform from 'within' or revolution and rebellion, by refusing to operate such roles. Duvell and Jordan's (2000:30) fears before that legislation were that social services would be unable to be the buffer they once were between "*unpopular but vulnerable groups,*" like asylum seekers and the state as New Labour increasingly turned such agencies "*into part of the technocratic force to implement its programme.*" Involved agencies would be providing "*…intentionally deterrent facilities where conditions are deliberately made more unpleasant than those endured by the poorest asylum seeker who can find a relative or friend to offer support,*" (ibid: 28).

These interview studies have given many insights into how the 1996 AIA policy, or in this case the lack of it, was experienced and practiced 'on the ground' by those delivering (by picking up the pieces from) it and the sorts of tensions, dilemmas and compromises in practice of front-line public service workers placed in the contradictory position of delivering a welfare more concerned with exclusion than inclusion in the clash of welfare with immigration control.

3.6.2 *General dilemmas of 'street-level bureaucrats'*

Although these dilemmas 'on the ground' reflect the particular contradictions at the broader political and social level of asylum, control and welfare at this time and place, some of these dilemmas and practices are also typical of the delivery of public services *generally.* Lipsky (1980:xii) has argued that to gain an understanding of public policy it is essential to study the daily practices and experiences of front-line or 'street-level'

workers in their relations and encounters with the 'public,' because policy is not so much made in the offices of those writing it, but

> *…in important ways it is actually made in the crowded offices and daily encounters of street-level workers… the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively **become** the public policies they carry out….*

Lipsky (1980:4) developed a theory and detailed analysis, grounded in observations of what happens in practice between front-line public service workers and their clients, suggesting that because they experience, *"analytically similar work conditions,"* many such workers may be understood generically as *"street-level bureaucrats,"* and public service agencies as *"street-level bureaucracies."* Although Lipsky's (1980) study was conducted in and often refers to the specific time, place, social and political context of USA public services and workers in the 1970s, it has relevance across time and space where those *"analytically similar work conditions"* exist. Although Lipsky's (1980) analysis is based in generically similar small-scale practices and interactions between street-level bureaucrats and clients, he does not deny the structuring effect specific political and policy agendas have on the work of street-level bureaucracies, or of different models for public service delivery. However, a street-level bureaucrat is any public service worker who interacts directly with, in his analysis, citizens, and who has substantial discretion in carrying out their work. Lipsky (1980:4) includes workers as diverse as teachers, police officers, social workers and judges, arguing that the ways in which they determine eligibility for and oversee the delivery of government *"benefits and sanctions"* have considerable impact on people's lives and in this work they mediate the relationship between the state and the *"citizen"*.

Lipsky (1980) argues that although most street-level bureaucrats aspire and are trained to respond to the individual needs of the people they serve, the conditions of their work make it impossible to do so. These conditions are the necessity for processing large numbers of people, inadequate resources, demand increasing to meet supply, ambiguous, vague or conflicting goal expectations of street-level bureaucracies and policies which are hard to measure, and that clients are involuntary so their preferences are not

prioritised. Street-level bureaucrats develop routines and practices to cope with the pressures and uncertainties and attempt to do a good job in some way. Although significant discretion is necessary to provide humane and responsive services to unique individuals, because of the other conditions or structure of their work, street-level bureaucrats tend to use it in ways which are dehumanising. With the conflict between processing large numbers of people equitably *and* being responsive to individuals, they develop routines and simplifications to ration services by limiting access and demand, control clients, husband worker resources and manage the consequences. They attempt to salvage their service ideals by modifying their conceptions of their jobs to lower their objectives and modify their conceptions of their clients and differentiate between them, often in ways consistent with prevailing social prejudices, so that they can give adequate service to the 'worthy,' and make their lack of achievement more acceptable with the 'unworthy'. Lipsky (1980:191) states, as the "*central contradiction of social services,"*

> *The impulse to provide fully, openly, and responsively for citizens' service needs exists alongside the need to restrict, control, and rationalize service inadequacies or limitations.*

Lipsky (1980:xiii) thus argues under these work conditions,

> *At best street-level bureaucrats invent benign-modes of mass processing that more or less permit them to deal with the public fairly, appropriately and successfully. At worst they give in to favouritism, stereotyping, and routinizing – all of which serve private or agency purposes.*

In a later work, Smith and Lipsky (1993:115-116), extend the concept of street-level bureaucracy to the voluntary sector, contending that workers in USA government contracted *"non-profit"* agencies delivering welfare are *"The New Street-Level Bureaucrats"* where they,

> *…interact directly with clients and perform their jobs despite limited resources… work in agencies with ambiguous and conflicting goals, perform tasks which are hard to measure, and are undisciplined by client and consumer*

preferences…service providers in the nonprofit sector manage scarce resources by coping with their jobs in such a way as to render them not simply implementers… but 'makers' of public policy.

Whilst there are considerable differences in and across current British welfare services, where the conditions of work he states are present, Lipsky's (1980) analysis gives many insights that could illuminate and apply to the dilemmas and contradictions of street-level bureaucrats and bureaucracies generally, including public and VS workers and agencies implementing restricted welfare to non-citizens. Lipsky (1980) has largely removed the political content of policy from his analysis, which as shown can provoke considerable conflict and contradiction for service providers, but it suggests that *some* dilemmas and contradictions are part of, in some ways, typical structuring of welfare service provision. When the political denial or restriction of the social rights of many migrants subject to immigration control, meant policy intended explicitly to *not* respond fully and openly to asylum seekers needs, the proposition that the agencies and workers involved in implementing this could be considered as much *"makers"* of policy, appears to put them in a more deeply compromising position. Morris' (2002) analysis of the civic stratification of social rights also suggests that there is room for manoeuvre when formal social rights are put into practice, as the interpretation or informal practices of policy by practitioners implementing it 'on the ground' may either expand or contract migrants' rights. Both Lipsky's (1980) observations on street-level bureaucracy and Morris' (2002) theorising of civic stratification are therefore useful tools to help understand the general and specific character and practices of VS street-level bureaucrats implementing a welfare 'safety net' explicitly designed as an instrument of control.

3.7 *Framing and justifying the research*

Particularly since the 1999 IAA in the UK, there has been an explosion of research interest in issues around asylum, forced migration and migration generally, (in line with similar European and transnational interest). It is not possible to do this justice here, except for a brief summary aiming to identify spaces for this piece of research. A great deal of this 21st century research has been understandably policy based (Castles, 2003), and particularly generated by NGO's involved with or concerned to boost the diminished

social rights of asylum seekers by the 1999 IAA. This includes attempts to overturn specific aspects of the legislation (Oxfam, 2000), aims to research the impact, and publicise negative effects that aspects of the legislation has had on forced migrants lives, such as NASS failings (Dunstan, 2002; RC, 2002), and the impact on and activities of service providers (RC, 2004). Most include promoting possibilities and recommendations for 'good practice,' (Wilson, 2001; HACT, 2003) and justify the necessity for funding to fill service gaps, (Stanley, 2001), or a combination of these. With the onset of dispersal, there has been a concern to map burgeoning regional statutory and voluntary service provision and support (Subhra, 2002). Many of these have been concerned to consult forced migrants on their experience and views, in the hope that policy may have *some* 'bottom-up' influence and to make their voices heard, above negative louder, objectifying discourses, (Macaskill and Petrie, 2000). NGO based research also investigates the experiences of particular groups, or 'communities' (Roberts and Harris, 2002; RC, 2005; Amnesty, 2001; Sigona, 2003).

There has also been a growth in Home Office research, in line with New Labour's emphasis on 'evidence-based policy,' which many of the 'big names' in forced migration research have contributed to, (for example Castles et al, 2003; Robinson, 2003; ; Koser and Pinkerton, 2001). However, they have done so with ambivalence over constraints and policy directed, or co-opted research, and concerns that the Home Office might ignore the content of their research, and with a set policy agenda, use it to tick their 'evidence-based' legitimacy box. These researchers have expressed fears that their participation may lend legitimacy to harsh and inhumane policy.   Home Office emphasis on quantitative research and a concern that demand for one-page summaries and recommendations, simplifies complexity, are also concerns of researchers in their relations with the Home Office. (Castles et al 2002; Castles, S., Cohen, R.., Dona, G., 2005 Conference Proceedings). These dilemmas echo those of VS and other agencies over what the most ethical position is, to work from within or without.

There has been particular concern to do research which consults, previously un-consulted forced migrants on their experiences of policy, and other aspects of their lives in exile, attempting to amplify their, previously unheard, voices. This includes participative action research seeking to include people who are forced migrants in the research

process, working 'with' rather than 'for' in their empowerment, renewal and reconstruction of their lives, towards praxis and innovative and creative local practices, and against their objectification, (O'Neill, 2001; O' Neill and Tobolewska, 2001; Moran; 2003),

> *Listening to the voices of peoples seeking asylum encourages us to engage with ethics, with people similar to our 'selves', within a moral order and conscience based on thinking and feeling and compassion. Thus, precluding the possibility of objectifying, classifying and categorising as faceless, nameless, less than our 'selves', and may inspire praxis instead of adopting a 'bystander' role,* (O' Neill, 2001:18)

There has also been a proliferation of academic and doctoral research using different methodologies and theoretical stances to explore many aspects of asylum policy, forced migrants experiences and the experiences and transformations of 'host' communities (East, 2001; Shildrick, 2001), as is also evident with the growth of research and information networks (ICAR), undoubtedly with much 'work in progress'. This includes a little ethnographic research (Lewis- in process).

From identification of the broader philosophical and global themes and contradictions of exclusion and inclusion, universalism and particularism, partialism and impartialism, sovereignty and human rights, welfare and control which are implicit in the debate, controversy and politicisation around asylum and forced migration, and the devising of ('Firm but fair', 'tough but tender') policies designed to control 'asylum seekers' without jeopardising basic human rights of 'refugees,' we have come to the role of UK social care agencies involvement in this welfare as control. Such agencies are in the contradictory position at the nexus of welfare and immigration control, especially since the 1999 IAA "*qualitative leap*" (Cohen, 2001) in this conjuncture. This potentially compromising position has been recognised (Cohen et al, 2002; Hayes and Humphries, 2004) and the experiences and practices of social care workers investigated using semi-structured interview research, with statutory sector social work agencies 'picking up the pieces' from the 1996 AIA (Duvell and Jordan, 2000; Sales and Hek, 2004), giving some illuminating insights into some of the dilemmas their position threw up. However, since

the 1999 IAA, following New Labour's model of 'mixed economy' Third Way welfare, voluntary sector agencies agreed to provide integral sections of the welfare as control 'safety net, ' as well as statutory social care agencies. In some ways, as we have seen, this was a continuation of their historical involvement and gathered expertise in the Reception and settlement of refugees, however, with the premises and provisions of the 1999 IAA, their new position implicated them more in the enforcement of control, separation and exclusion of asylum seekers than the facilitation of their settlement, inclusion and integration. Cohen (2002) in particular, has highlighted the contradictory, compromising and in his understanding, collusive position of those VS agencies, particularly, offering a Reception service with "*intentionally deterrent facilities"* (Duvell and Jordan, 2000:28). Although there were many small regional VS agencies in dispersal consortia in receipt of some government funding to provide OSS and other services, the five bigger RSA's in agreeing to run Reception services, would be involved in activities that might be detrimental to the welfare of asylum seekers, such as controlling access to and eviction from the 'safety net'. Critics argued that the receipt of a large proportion of their budget from the Home Office, particularly the two agencies who would be solely RAA's (Migrant Helpline and Refugee Arrivals Project), jeopardised their ethical integrity and independence, so their ability to fight for forced migrants' rights and protect their welfare, as they became part of "*the technocratic force to implement its programme,"* (Duvell and Jordan, 2000:30). The RSA agencies defended their position as a compromise worth taking to prevent the government using private sector agencies with less concern or expertise in the welfare of asylum seekers, and by being involved allow their reform from 'within'. Some critics argued a joint VS and public sector boycott would have forced the collapse of the legislation (Cohen, 2002), and a revolt from 'without' was most ethical.

As VS agencies they were in a somewhat different contradictory positioning to the statutory social care agencies in the studies above, in that although they had received *some* state funding previously they were not procedurally accountable nor *part* of the state. Also, as VS agencies, they had formed to protect the social rights of forced migrants and defend their interests through campaigning and lobbying (although each of the five RAA's had different trajectories and specialities). It could thus be argued that their new positioning was *more* or differently contradictory than the social services

teams. A research study exploring the specific position of these (or other) VS agencies and their workers has not been done. Also, whilst important and useful, interview studies even when conducted in the context of the setting, are not able to offer the same insights of an ethnography where the researcher becomes immersed in and observes the everyday world of a setting over a period of time, getting a 'feel' for the daily life, the patterns, uncertainties and shapes of the setting. An ethnography allows a researcher to observe the details of what actors actually do in practice; practices which expert interviewees take for granted and accounts of which have a presentational 'gloss,' or use 'institutional discourse,' (Smith, 2005). Travers (1999) argues that detailed observation, in his case ethnomethodology, of practices and attention to how actors understand their everyday actions and practical problems particularly offers insight into highly politicised settings, such as immigration courts. It would seem that an ethnographic study of the everyday world over a period of time of a VS organisation in the contradictory position identified, involving observation and gathering insiders' accounts could generate some 'rich' data to help explore the lived experience of and what being a NASS RAA involves in daily practice.

Also lacking in the previous interview studies, were the accounts of the service users. Although Duvell and Jordan (2000) had interviewed asylum seekers, these did not feature in their article. Sales and Hek (2004) had interviewed RCO members advocating for asylum seekers but not the service users themselves. Although much recent research has included accounts of asylum seekers experience of service provision, there has been less ethnographic research with people in this position. To explore the welfare as control policy in practice at its Reception stage, it is essential to consider the lived experiences of the people, the subjects, who are the objects of the policy. How did asylum seekers journeying through Reception provided by a VS agency, experience and understand their situation and this welfare 'safety net'? As Dwyer (2005:32) has said, qualitative research with forced migrants makes it, "…*possible to highlight how the 'public issues' of migration and welfare policy structure the 'private troubles' (Mills, 1959) of forced migrants who arrive at our borders."*

Also, as Lipsky (1980) pointed out, service delivery is not a one-way process. Service users, if involuntary and powerless in the process, **are** active participants in lived out

policy. Ethnography would allow observation of how service providers and users interacted in the practice of, implementation or 'making' of policy. Also "*listening to the voices*" of people labelled 'asylum seekers' could, ethically, encourage an understanding of people in this position as people "*similar to our 'selves'*" and discourage their objectification, (O' Neill, 2001).

From the literature and evidence presented it would seem there was a space, and a justification for a sociological ethnography with a VS organisation in the contradictory position of implementing a Reception service, a stage of the 'safety net' welfare as control policy of the 1999 IAA and subsequent legislation, exploring both the lived experiences of the workers and the RAA, and the lived experiences of asylum seekers in Reception. Questions that might be addressed by this research include: How was this contradictory position experienced and understood, in practice? *Did* the organisation and workers experience their position and practices as contradictory or compromising? What was involved in the 'messy' making of policy in practice? Was, and how was this welfare experienced as control? How did people seeking asylum experience Reception? Whilst the general problematic and research puzzle has been identified before entering the field, further questions and issues would be generated by ethnographic data gathering in the setting. A full explanation of the methodology used is now necessary.

4 Methodology

This chapter explains and describes firstly, the philosophical and theoretical assumptions underlying and guiding my methodological choices and design and secondly, the reasons behind and actual practice of specific research methods of data collection and analysis. I use to an extent a *"natural history"* style suggested by Silverman (2000:236), which describes the *actual* interactive process of my research, without cleaning up too neatly in retrospect the inevitable 'messiness' involved, thus including any *"false leads and dead-ends,"* trials and errors, highs and lows. It seems not only unnecessary and awkward to write in the passive voice, but positively constructive in the interests of reflexivity to use the first person. I use this less formal style to clarify the development of my thinking about and 'doing' the research, which should give the reader a better position from which to assess my methodological process.

4.1 Philosophical and theoretical assumptions

In this section I will 'spell out' the philosophical and theoretical assumptions that have informed and guided my choices of research design and methodology. Having stated my broad position, I will explain how I came to this and how I understand it to deal with essential wider sociological debates, before describing the position in detail. I will then explain how and what I have drawn from other sociologists also working from this broad philosophical position, to inform my research methodology. This may appear to be an eclectic 'magpie' mix of theories, but I will attempt to show their relevance, mutual compatibility and coherence within the overall philosophical frame.

4.1.1 *Developing a philosophical position*

Broadly speaking my research is based on critical realist philosophical premises. Although developed primarily by philosopher of social science, Roy Bhaskar, critical realism is *"not a homogenous movement in social science"* (Danermark et al, 1997:1) and is *"a 'broad church'"* (Lopez and Potter, 2001:5). As with any social science 'paradigm', some social scientists whose diverse practices are premised on or fit with the philosophy do not or will not associate with the label. However generally, critical realism begins from the ontological position that there is a (social) reality beyond our knowledge of it,

that epistemologically our knowing of it will always be conceptually mediated, but nevertheless may be "*more or less truthlike,*" (Danermark et al, 1997:10). The 'critical' element is a combination including its critique of positivism, as social reality includes the unobservable deeper reality of 'generative mechanisms' (or social structures), and the inherently emancipatory critique of underlying injustices revealed with this level of reality.

An early reason for leaning towards the ontological position of critical realism was the 'commonsense' hunch I had that the lived experience of people claiming asylum in the UK and those involved in the system for receiving them, reverberates with the constraining and enabling nature of social structures beyond their individual agency. When considering the constraints on the agency of individuals legally labelled 'asylum seeker' and informally labelled and racialised as 'foreign scrounger' compared to my own as a white, middle class British citizen, my commonsense reasoning was to consider a position which could accept the 'reality' of social structures.

This hunch was corroborated by various sociological arguments, including Porter's (1993:598): "By ignoring the possible constraining nature of social structures, commentators are in danger of giving consent, through silence, to their oppressive effects." And Mac an Ghaill's (1999:13, 34) in relation to recent postmodern or "*differentialist*" theories in the sociology of 'race' and ethnicity,

> *…in which highly complex theories are being developed that fail to connect with individuals' and social groups' lived experience…*
> *The differentialist emphasis on the proliferation of identities and the dispersal of power may serve to underplay materially structured asymmetrical relations of power…*

Castles' (2003) principles for an adequate new "*sociology of forced migration*" also comprehensively articulated some of my basic lines of thinking. Arguing that whilst it is essential to do local small-scale research and "*vital to investigate the **human agency** of the forced migrants and of the sending and receiving communities*" (ibid: 30), researchers also need to "*…take a **holistic approach**, linking their specific research topic*

to broader aspects of forced migration and its embeddedness in social relations at various spatial levels," (ibid: 29).

Castles (2003:27) confirmed my hunch that an in-depth case study of *"receiving"* forced migrants in one organisation would need to be contextualised within wider social relations or structural forces, because,

> *…to generalise from micro-studies of diversity can lead to a false impression of a fragmented social world. Rather it is necessary to relate such studies to broader theoretical explanations of the structural causes of forced migration and the structural determinants of the patterns of incorporation of forced migrants in various types of society.*

Castles (2003:23) cites a Frankfurt School principle when proposing that the varying levels of analysis should be mutually informing,

> *… The micro- and macro-levels have to be linked through an analysis of the complex processes that mediate between them. Ethnographic and cultural studies approaches may find that change is experienced at the local and personal levels, yet they need to be linked to broader analyses of institutions and structures… there can be no local studies without an understanding of the global context and no global theorization without a basis in local research.*

Castles propositions helped solve the dilemma I had with wishing to investigate the agency and lived experiences of individuals in a specific local organisation in a specific situation ethnographically but also not wishing to *"ignore the constraining nature of social structures,"* to some extent perhaps 'determining' or 'causing' aspects of that situation, (Porter, 1993:598). Although finding the notion of social structure problematic, Smith (1988:90) also argued from her unique Marxist feminist perspective, that a purely hermeneutic or interpretive ethnography treating the *"everyday world"* as *"a discrete phenomenon"* is also problematic:

In constituting the everyday world as an object of sociological examination, we cut it off methodologically from the ways in which it is actually embedded in a socially organized context larger than may be directly known in that mode.

Of course, as is intrinsic to these contentions, the basis to any sociological study necessitates awareness and engagement with the ongoing structure/agency debates and the relationships between these levels of analysis and 'reality'. This leads back to a more detailed discussion of a critical realist position.

4.1.2 *Explaining Critical realism*

There has been a significant growth recently of literature on critical realism as it has been posed as a developed and better alternative to a fading postmodernism in social science and its philosophy (e.g. Lopez and Potter, 2001). However, only a 'bare' summary of my reading of the highly complex position is necessary to clarify my methodology. From Roy Bhaskar's initial critique of positivism, he and others developed critical realism as a dialectical combination of his 'transcendental realism' and 'critical naturalism'.

Critical realism is more ontology than epistemology, asking *"What properties do societies and people possess that might make them possible objects for knowledge?"* (Bhaskar, 1978:13, cited in Danermark et al., 1997:5) and answering, *"the world is structured, differentiated, stratified and changing"* (Danermark et al, 1997:5). Reality exists independently of our knowledge of it and consists of the **real** (deep generative mechanisms and structures), the **actual** (events happen whether or not we experience them), and the **empirical** (experienced events).

Critical realism criticises social science tendencies to conflate structure and agency in the over-determination of agents by structures, or denying the real existence or power of structures separate from agency, or by their 'central' conflation (e.g. Giddens theory of structuration), which denies possible influence between them.

Societies can be understood relationally as emergent products of human behaviour… people do not create society. For it always pre-exists them and is a necessary condition for their activity… [Individuals] *reproduce or transform*

[society] *which would not exist unless they did so. Society does not exist independently of human activity (the error of reification). But it is not the product of it (the error of voluntarism)…Neither can, however, be identified with, reduced to, explained in terms of, or reconstructed from the other,* (Bhaskar, 1998:36).

Critical realism "*claims to be able to combine and reconcile **ontological realism, epistemological relativism** and **judgemental rationality**,*" (Archer et al, 1998:xi). There exists an external world independent of human consciousness *and* socially determined knowledge of it. Social reality is concept and people dependent, but not concept or people exhaustive, (Bhaskar 2001:28), that is, there is a *social* reality beyond human agency and beyond our knowledge of it. Also, "*all knowledge is fallible and open to adjustment. But – not all knowledge by far is **equally** fallible*" it can be "*more or less truthlike,*" (Danermark et al, 1997:15, 10). Whereas natural science involves a single hermeneutic (its objects are socially defined but naturally produced), social science involves "*double hermeneutics*":

 "*we interpret the interpretations of other people*"(ibid:200); " *the objects of social science are both socially defined and **socially produced**… but they are nevertheless just as real,*" (ibid:31).

Danermark et al (1997:201) suggest several meanings for 'critical' including, after Bhaskar, critique of positivism's 'flat empiricism' which denied the transcendent (deeper unobservable) level of reality that realism proposed. Bhaskar also criticised social science tendencies to conflate structure and agency, proposing instead a transformational model of social ontology, stressing their separateness but mutual dependence. 'Critical' realism criticises positivist social science's universalist claims to truth by stressing its transitive, social, thus limited, character. 'Critical' realism has emancipatory potential because revealing underlying 'generative mechanisms' at the social level, power differentials can be clearly seen, criticised and social solutions found. Also 'critical' realist reasoning might surpass every-day thinking but is still often mixed up with "*myths, illusions and pure ignorance*" (p201), but social scientific practice could reveal this and so allow critical reflection.

4.1.3 *Methodological implications of a critical realist position*

According to Danermark et al (1997:73), "*There is no such thing as the method of critical realism.*" Because critical realism is "*ontologically bold and epistemologically cautious,*" (Outhwaite, 1987:34), no particular methodology is privileged except that "*ontological commitments… are inescapable and to be taken seriously*" (p118-9). Therefore "*it is the nature of the object that determines the form of its possible science,*" Bhaskar (1998:3)*.*

Danermark et al (1997:204) suggest "*critical methodological pluralism*" as a working procedure, which is based on the notion and consequences of reality having ontological depth, but shows "*a humble spirit*" towards arriving at knowledge of a specific phenomenon, so does not exclude any method except that "*the methods must suit the object of the investigation and the purpose of it,*" (ibid: 26).

Therefore, because the social world is a highly complex, "*messy and ambiguous*", "*differentiated*" "*concrete open system,*" (Sayer, 2000:5) of interacting necessary and contingent structures, mechanisms, relations and practices which could not possibly or desirably be separated out for testing as variables as in experimentation, qualitative '*naturalistic*' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995) or "*intensive*" research is best suited to the complexity of the 'objects' or 'subjects' of social science, although if considered suitable, "*extensive*" methods are not ruled out, (Sayer, 1993).

On similar principles, because the social (and social science) world is concept-dependent, it is essential that the starting point to building scientific theories from scientific concepts must be a systematic exploration and "*contemplated analysis*" of everyday concepts and every day knowledge and how it has been formed and used, if social scientific theories are to be valid, (Danermark et al, 1997: 34-5). However, while actors' social meanings are intrinsic to the social world, if *explanation* is an aim, collecting and repeating social actors' everyday interpretations and explanations of social phenomena is not enough alone, unless purely registering these is the aim. In contradiction to interpretivist approaches such as ethnomethodology, Danermark et al (1997:37) argue there would be no point in social science if commonsense explanations were enough to explain the causes of social phenomena,

> *…an interpretation of the 'second order' does not constitute a social scientific explanation either. It is not enough just to build on various social agents' own descriptions and understandings of themselves and of existence…*

Exploring the mutual relationship between the material dimension of the social, including social practices (with probable power asymmetries) and people's concepts and notions, is also essential. However, because the deeper dimension of reality is unobservable, observation in 'natural' settings and study of everyday concepts is not enough alone, and theorising is usually considered an essential aspect of critical realist methodology. Conceptualisation by means of abstraction (sometimes conceived as 'thought operation') whereby possible generative mechanisms are separated out in thought to assess their possible influence is thus an aim, (Danermark et al., 1997).

4.1.4 *Critical realist reasoning and theorising*

Sociologists commonly reason and theorise, re-describing reality in a conceptual framework aiming to reach deeper explanations for events without explicitly stating their critical realism. Thus social science that accepts different levels of social reality involves reaching beyond empirical phenomena, to ask 'transfactual' questions, postulating what must exist, or in critical realist terms, what 'generative mechanisms' must exist to make the factual event possible. Danermark et al. (1997: 73) argue that *"All science should have generalizing claims";* not empiricist extrapolation from small to larger populations but of, *"more or less universal preconditions for an object to be what it is,"* (ibid: 77).

Danermark et al. (1997) suggest different types of complementary reasoning are necessary to attempt to reach explanations including deduction, induction, abduction and retroduction, the latter two being most important for critical realism. Abduction involves asking what new meaning is given by interpreting something using one of several possible conceptual frameworks, uses imagination and aims at "better knowledge", not definitive truths. Retroduction uses various strategies to ask what conditions (structures, mechanisms, relations) are necessary without which something could not exist, and which are contingent to the phenomenon's existence.

Theories are abstractions that cannot be directly tested against objective facts but should not be arbitrary either but founded on experience of concrete reality. Moving between abstract, relevant theorising and observation of reality without empiricism is core to sociological procedure. With critical realism, conceptualisation strives to discern properties that are decisive for social phenomena to be what they are and not something else and are not like empirical categories, they distinguish mechanisms and structures often using existing concepts. Theoretical 'verification' is essential but very different from positivist testing; a good concept is neither arbitrary nor purely based on observation, it "*has 'punch'…should be sharp and forceful… functions in practice…provides deeper insight…explanatory power*," (Danermark et al., 1997:122). This 'punch' will be revealed when used in practice to analyse reality. Both middle-range (Merton,1967) (deductive theory verification) and grounded theories (Glaser and Strauss 1967) (inductive theory generation) have an empiricist bias, whereas using 'general' theories abductively and retroductively alongside concrete research provides more access to deep, structural reality. Although 'general abstract' theories describe macro social processes or structures, they are not 'totalising,' nor are they reducible to testable hypotheses but evaluated in terms of the fruitfulness of their interpretative framework, explanatory power and generation of new, deeper knowledge, (Danermark et al., 1997)

Methodological soundness involves open-minded rather than dogmatic application of complementary theories and concepts to empirical research, without succumbing to unprincipled eclecticism. Theories should be approached as general interpretative frameworks to approach specific, context-dependent concrete research interests, not as ready-made empirically tested products to aid predictions. Their productivity depends on their ability to capture *real* structures or fundamental mechanisms, to integrate other central theoretical concepts, their creativity and logical consistency. They are tested and modified by use in research practice, discussion and empirical study, (Danermark et al., 1997).

4.1.6 *Critique of & my 'take' on critical realism*

Critical realism as an ontology with epistemological implications is not immune from criticism itself; for instance, for not moving far enough from positivism in its commitment to naturalism of sorts. Critical realists, when placed within the 'critical' sociological tradition have been accused by ethnomethodogist Travers (2001:114) of an unfounded arrogance as, "*The key epistemological assumption… is that the analyst has a superior insight into the nature of human happiness and well-being, and how to achieve this, than most ordinary members of society.*"

This is disputable as critical realism is based on an *ontological* position that there is a deeper reality not always visible in the everyday world, knowledge of which will always be fallible to a degree. However, there does seem to be a lack of recognition of the superior expertise of everyday subjects in their *actual* settings and the value of detailed and 'rich' description of these in their own right, potentially illuminating previously hidden settings from previously hidden perspectives, regardless of explanatory potential. Even within realism there is criticism that however conceptualised there are no such realities as social 'structures,' these are always 'reifications' of, for instance,

> *…a taxonomic category… refers to a whole cluster of different practices. These practices have power in the world… but not the abstract collection of them,* (Harre, 2001:36).

However, I accept and will use this broad ontological position to guide my epistemology and methodology, though wary of any naïve realism (Hammersley, 1992), which licences my use of a wide range of valuable theories as tools, and suggests an ethnographic approach would best suit my topic. It is instructive to refer to some inspiring social scientists' methodologies, which broadly (and arguably) fall within a critical realist approach, to reach an informed approach for this study. I will briefly discuss the methodologies of Dorothy Smith (Institutional Ethnography), Michael Burawoy (Extended Case Method) and Pierre Bourdieu (Understanding), explaining how I have interpreted and used them to inform my methodology and version of critical realist ethnography.

4.1.7 *Institutional Ethnography*

The 'creator' of Institutional Ethnography, Dorothy Smith (1987;1990;1999;2005), calls it "*an alternative sociology…**for** people,*" not a theory or methodology, typical of "*mainstream sociology,*" **about** people, which objectifies them through its "*theory-governed discourse,*" (Smith, 2005:1). Although not doing Institutional Ethnography, I draw on some aspects of Smith's work as providing some valuable insights to inform this study.

Although Smith may well be disinclined to label herself critical realist, her 'sociology' falls within the metatheory in several ways, and outside it in others. She is more concerned with ontology than epistemology, although she describes hers as "*modest*" (Smith, 2005:52). Her conception of "*how the social is real*"(ibid), involves just the everyday actualities of people and their activities*,* which are however co-ordinated relationally with the doings or "*work*" of others, "*elsewhere and elsewhen*", "*translocally*" beyond and mostly invisible from the everyday particular, but "*mapping of the social in its institutional forms*"(ibid) is possible. This social is 'dialogic,' based on 'the material,' but language, texts and discourse play a key role in the co-ordination of activities, that is the social.

Smith's approach differs from critical realism in her criticism of conceiving social structure as having agency over people, when it suffers from "'*underdetermination' of meaning,*"(Smith, 2005:55); that is, a metaphor with no determinate referent, or a " '*blob-ontology;' that is for every such concept there is taken to be a something out there corresponding to it,*"(p56). But, she argues, the solution to not reifying the social in theoretical terms abstracted from people's actual lives and activities is not instead to look for the social in the individual, but "*is to be located in how people's activities are **co-ordinated**"(p58), and, after Marx, concepts should "*express actual social relations*"(p56). Abstract sociological theorising objectifies 'subjects' and their socially co-ordinated activities by situating "*the knower outside the account and represents people as objects*" (p53).

Smith's (2005) development of "Institutional Ethnography" from the "feminist research strategy" for "*The Everyday World As Problematic*" (1987) is a curious hybrid taking

from such diverse sources as Marx, Mead, and Foucault. To summarise, the aim is to map *"indexically"* the wider social and ruling relations in which everyday subjects participate as experts but unknowingly, beyond the everyday, from a *"standpoint,"* in the everyday world, which is *"…a point of entry into discovering the social… a site for the knower that is open to anyone… that does not subordinate the knowing subject to objectified forms of knowledge"* (ibid: 10).

Smith (2005:13) conceptualises *"ruling relations"* not as modes of domination but, *"forms of consciousness and organisation that are objectified in the sense that they are constituted externally to particular people and places"* (unforeseen by Marx) as the later development of capitalism became 'corporate,' so modes of consciousness were no longer tied to particular individuals. These are accessible in the language "as social" forms of *"activated"* texts and discourses.

The *"institutional"* is understood as *"functional complexes"* embedded in ruling relations where many social relations intersect around a specific function (e.g. education or asylum). The ethnographic *"problematic"* begins from the actualities of everyday lives which focus the exploration and explication of just how they are *"hooked into a larger fabric not directly observable from within the everyday"* (ibid: 39); how the social is implicit within the wider institutional relations. As well as that relevant to the particular, this exploration moves into the *general*, so explicitly articulating the generalised and generalising character of such institutions in contemporary society will be present in any institutional ethnography.

I will use Smith's conceptualisation of the social and institutional ethnographic strategy in so far as starting in the everyday and recognising the expertise of the participants in my local setting, and from their standpoint trying to map the social and ruling relations they participate in. However, I maintain that her conception of *actual* social and ruling relations could also be interpreted as social 'structure'. Despite Smith's extremely careful, ingenious way of dealing with the structure/agency problem (attempting not to abstract beyond the actual in her conceptualisations, after Marx), I am not entirely convinced of her success. Her denial of any social agency external to people's activities but of social relations extended beyond them seems very close to suggesting structural agency at times. For instance, she insists that social relations *"co-ordinating"* and

"*organising*" people's activities is different from *determining* them (*"The larger relations of class do not appear as external determinants but rather as social relations coordinating women's time…"*). Also the difference between "*the actual properties of the everyday/everynight worlds of our contemporary societies that are never self-subsisting but always tied in multiple ways to complexes of relations beyond them*" (Smith, 2005: 38) or "*Research is then projected beyond the local to discover the institutional order and its organization that **governs** the local setting*"(ibid:41, my emphasis), and a deeper, real structure of social relations constraining and enabling individuals' activities, is not entirely clear, especially as Smith emphasises the generalised character of such complexes of relations. These could refer to the same 'things' just conceptualised differently and more or less (or equally) fallibly. In this case it is a matter of making a rationalised decision between the two or a combination of them. The aims of Institutional Ethnography and critical realism differ in that the former aims to *explore* and *map* wider social relations, whereas the latter aims at *explanation* of the local particular in terms of the deeper structural.

Before stating my position, I will first describe another research approach developed by Burawoy et al (1991; 2000), known as the "*extended case method,*" offering another strategy for understanding the local particular ethnographically *and* in terms of the wider or deeper social beyond or beneath it. Smith (2005:35-8) contrasts Institutional Ethnography with Burawoy's strategy, arguing his relating the local to the global by moving from ethnography to theory is precisely what IE is *not* doing and is explicitly aiming to avoid, as another example of 'objectifying' sociology. However the extended case method is closer to the critical realism described above.

4.1.8 *Burawoy's 'Extended Case Method'*

Michael Burawoy (and colleagues, 1991; 2000) has developed from working with and through the influence of the "introversion" of the Chicago School and the "extroversion" of the Manchester School of anthropology, an approach to doing "*Global Ethnography,*" using his version of the "extended case method" of the latter. Arguing that because globalization theses all encompass an emphasis on "*recomposition of time and space*", the ethnographer, whose task it is to engage in the space and time of others, has "*a privileged insight into the lived experience of globalization,*" (Burawoy et al., 2000:4).

He proposes a four-part 'extension' from the local, outwards, each with an attendant power problematic.

Firstly, the observer extends into the world of the participant (as with all participant-observation), but problematically "*the relation of domination…distorts the mutuality of exchange*" (ibid:27). Secondly, observations are extended over time and space, where situations have influence on actions and beliefs, and an aim is to understand successions of situations as a *social process*, though this could lead to the silencing of some agents at the expense of others. Thirdly, most importantly, is the extension from such micro processes to macro forces, where this link is a "'*structured' one in which the part is shaped by its relation to the whole…external forces*" (ibid: 27), the danger here is "*objectification*" of these determining extralocal forces. This leads to the fourth, as the third is only possible by extension to theory, not that 'induced' or discovered 'from the ground' but

> …*existing theory is extended to accommodate lacunae or anomalies. We try to constitute the field as a challenge to some theory we want to improve,* (ibid: 27).

Although "*We cannot see the field… without a lens, and we can only improve the lens by experimenting with it in the world*"(ibid: 28), there is a danger of normalization, trying to make the world studied conform to the framework we observe it through, thus theories must be exposed to continual critique. So Burawoy et al (2000: xvi) claim "*…ethnography's concern with concrete, lived experience can sharpen the abstractions of globalization theories into more precise and meaningful conceptual tools.* "

Burawoy (et al, 2000) argues that any one case will concentrate on only one or two of the above, and in *Global Ethnography* it is the third "*extension from micro to macro, from local to extralocal, from processes to forces,*"(p29). But they problematise the concept of forces and in an attempt to counter their objectification (appearing natural and inevitable), they consider global forces constituted distantly, "*The focus of the ethnography is then on the way global domination is resisted, avoided, and negotiated,*" (ibid:29). Also forces are seen as the product of contingent social processes and "*examined as the product of flows of people, things, and ideas, that is, the global connections between sites,*" (ibid: 29). Thirdly, global forces and connections are

considered as *"imaginations,"* thus *"challenging the mythology of an inexorable, runaway world,"* (ibid:29).

Smith (2005:37-8) distances Institutional Ethnography from Burawoy's Extended Case Method, arguing that her extension into social relations beyond the local never leaves ethnography for theory,

> *Carrying ethnography beyond the locally observable is made possible both by the approach to work organization through the work knowledges of participants… and through innovative methods of incorporating the coordinating functions of text into ethnographic practice… Translocal forms of coordinating people's work are explored as they are to be found in the actual ways in which coordination is locally accomplished.*

Smith agrees with Burawoy that his method is 'objectifying' in precisely the way she is trying to avoid: Institutional Ethnography

> *… has no prior interpretative commitment such as that which follows from concepts such as 'global domination' and 'resistance'… extended social relations… are not assumed to be malign… it is consciously directed toward introducing another form of organizing knowledge than those obliterating the presence of subjects as knowers situated in their own lives. As inquiry develops, the scope of the institutional ethnography pushes the boundaries of conventional divisions between micro and macro, sociology and political economy, without deserting its ethnographic commitment,* (ibid: 36).

Smith (2005:38) insists,

> *Institutional ethnography does not have a pregiven theoretical destination; indeed, it doesn't have a theoretical destination at all. Those dimensions of 'the system' that for Burawoy emerge at the level of the 'wider structures' of 'states, economies, legal orders, and the like'…are explored ethnographically rather than theoretically.*

However, Burawoy (2000:40) is not convinced of Smith's denial of theory,

> *When one includes the injunction to participatory research, this looks like the extended case method except that it claims to have no theoretical premises. Looking at Smith's empirical studies, on the other hand, I find them saturated with Marxism.*

My methodology aims to take something from both of these approaches. It is possible that Smith would argue that their ontological grounds are mutually exclusive. Both, however, aim to explore the everyday worlds of people ethnographically without sealing these worlds off from the wider social reality in which they "*participate,*" by which their activities are "*coordinated*" or that constrain and enable them. Smith's notion of that social reality does not conceive of any structural entities beyond complexes of relations or "institutions", whereas Burawoy conceptualises using theory of a deeper level of reality closer to Bhaskar's critical realism. I aim to try to retain Smith's commitment to taking a standpoint with the people I work with in their everyday setting, so not "*obliterating the presence of subjects as knowers situated in their own lives,*" (Smith, 2005:36). However, I accept the need for conceptualising and theorising the non-observable but nevertheless real social level as 'structures' that constrain and enable people in their activities, as well as the necessity to contextualise the setting of my case study temporally and spatially, globally, as Castles (2003) argued was necessary. My methodology is therefore closer to the Extended Case Method, although I will use theory in a less bold way than Burawoy and his colleagues, as a conceptual tool to aid understanding of possible structural influences implicit but not immediately observable or visible within the everyday world of this refugee agency.

4.1.9 *Pierre Bourdieu – 'Understanding'*

I have also gained inspiration from Pierre Bourdieu (et al)'s "*The Weight of the World"* (1999), Bourdieu being another sociologist who can be understood as operating with a critical realist ontology of social reality. Bourdieu and his colleagues' methodology in "*The Weight of the World",* 'Understanding', as Bourdieu calls it, is extraordinarily sensitive to both the social and the psychological, intrinsic within individuals' accounts of their everyday worlds. The narratives of the individuals Bourdieu and his colleagues

interview, the "*stories from below,*" as Grass (2002) put it, are immensely rich, evocative and telling of the lived experience and suffering accompanying their specific social positions. Bourdieu's extensive contribution to sociology (and beyond) has included much theoretically and conceptually innovative work, which encompasses his concern to overcome the opposition between structuralism and methodological individualism (structure and agency). His various theories of capitals, explored for instance in *The Logic of Practice* (1980) and *Distinction* (1979), describe a relational view of society where different positions that people occupy within a 'field' (of practices) are in a continuous state of antagonistic relations. In an attempt to transcend the opposition of structure and agency, Bourdieu developed the concept of *habitus* whereby the social is embodied in the individual in the form of a set of dispositions enabling practices appropriate to a person's specific objective position within the class structure of a society, (Callinicos, 1999). *Habitus* is not a phenomenon individuals are conscious of, but these dispositions are almost hard-wired into a person's physical nature or psychology; "*a kind of tacit competence implicit in actors' practical ability to cope with a wide range of situations in ways that are predictable...*" (Callinicos, 1999: 293). Without explicitly stating so, Bourdieu's (1999) conceptualisations of society as such, obviously inform and infuse his understanding of the individuals (and their stories) he and his colleagues interview for *Weight of the World.*

Like Smith and Burawoy, Bourdieu tries to describe and understand the everyday experiences and worlds of individuals (the microcosm) in terms of the broader social arrangements of society (the macrocosm). Bourdieu (1999:5) talks about representing or making, "*a place within the space of points of view for social categories that are particularly exposed to this ordinary suffering...*" Individuals' telling of their points of view, describe a social trajectory typical of their specific and antagonistic positions in social space, as they have been brought together (in reality, in housing projects and the workplace, for example, and in the layout of the text by the sociologist) in juxtaposition. "*All kinds of ordinary suffering (la petite misere)*" or "*positional suffering*" are experienced by people in specific social positions because of their antagonistic relations *relative* to others, and not just in terms of "*the 'real' suffering of material poverty (la grande misere)*," (ibid:4). Bourdieu insists that what he is doing is not relativism, but is based in "*the very reality of the social world*" (ibid: 4), whereby,

…so-called 'difficult' spots ('housing projects' or schools today) are, first of all, **difficult to describe and think about***, and that simplistic and one-sided images (notably those found in the press) must be replaced by a complex and multi-layered representation capable of articulating the same realities but in terms that are different and, sometimes, irreconcilable,* (ibid:3).

By re-presenting these multiple and different points of view together, Bourdieu also aims to resist objectifying his subjects by not using a single, dominant or "*quasi-divine"* point of view (ibid:3). However, he also stresses the importance of the sociological narrative and analysis that accompanies each interview, where the interviewer firmly and reflexively interprets the personal in terms of the social. As the translator (Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson) explains in her Preface,

The Weight of the World *presents a sociology that constructs the emblematic from the idiosyncratic… the texts in this work are less interviews than short ethnographies where the personal leads to the sociological and where, by design, the interviewer-ethnographer enters openly into the sociological equation,* (ibid:ix).

Bourdieu and his colleagues thus attempt to highlight the socially representative elements of an individual's personal story, in terms of their position or category or 'case', in this case as 'teacher' or 'shopkeeper' or 'school girl'.

I have found inspiration for my own research in the rich and moving accounts of the individuals presented in this volume tapped by Bourdieu's exceptionally careful, sensitive but sociologically purposeful methodology, which he describes in a final 'chapter', as *Understanding*. I have *not* explored or used in any detail Bourdieu's theories of social capital or of habitus (or doxa, and his many other concepts), and so have not adopted (nor necessarily rejected) his version of social reality. However, my methodology *is* informed to an extent, by Bourdieu's critical realist epistemology and his *Understanding* of the social emblematic of an individual's social position, immanent within their personal or idiosyncratic lived experience and recounting of it. Bourdieu et al aimed to reduce as far as possible the "*symbolic violence"* possible in the interviewer/ interviewee relationship, which can be typically asymmetrical especially if the

interviewer holds a higher place in the social hierarchy of types of capital. They did this by using "*active and methodical listening,*" the interviewer submitting to the interviewee's story, trying to use interviewers close in social space to the interviewee, or in imitation of this, "*founded on the knowledge of the objective conditions common to an entire category",* (ibid:609). Bourdieu (1999:613) also described their interviews as a "*Spiritual Exercise",* in that the interviewers aimed to put themselves mentally in the place of the interviewee, "*in order to understand them as **necessarily what they are",*** not in the phenomenological sense but,

> *…to give oneself a **generic and genetic comprehension** of who these individuals are, based on a (theoretical or practical) grasp of the social conditions of which they are the product: this means a grasp of the circumstances of life and the social mechanisms that affect the entire category to which any individual belongs… and a grasp of the social conditions, inseparably psychological and social, associated with a given position and trajectory in social space,* (ibid:613).

Although Bourdieu is obviously referring to a specific theoretical understanding of "*position"* in social space and "*category"* to which an individual belongs, this intent and approach when gaining the accounts of his interviewees was useful in my ethnography and interviews with differently positioned workers, and individuals who could be conceived as occupying different social categories. Bourdieu's method of attempting to understand before, during and after the interview process the social conditions which have conditioned that individual's lived experience and account of it, to direct the interview to bring such an understanding out and be able to 'read' what is representative or *emblematic* of the general category or position of the individual, was an enabling guide for this research. As mentioned in Chapter 2, although 'asylum seeker' is a socially and legally constructed category to which a complex human individual cannot be reduced, ascription to this category has real and constraining (possibly some enabling) effects on the lived experience of a person so-labelled. Likewise, the difficult and contradictory positioning of organisations and agencies, and differently positioned agents working within these, in relation to government agencies and policy, and their clients, also had real constraining (potentially enabling) effects on workers I observed and interviewed.

Therefore Bourdieu's understanding the lived experience spoken of and demonstrated in the interview as representative of the specific social conditions contributing to them and that person being who they were, was useful. But also his careful and sensitive methodological approach to gaining interviewees accounts by "*non-violence"* and not objectifying "*the individual to a specimen in a display case,"* but instead employing "*participant objectification,"*(ibid:2), were informative guides of the method I aimed to emulate. There was unavoidable social distance between myself and my interviewees, but Bourdieu suggests ways of reducing this as far as possible, so that it is possible for the researcher to gain access ('non-violently') to the deeper social mechanisms affecting them socially and psychologically,

> *…to bring to light these things buried deep within the people who experience them – people who are both unaware of these things and, in another sense, know them better than anyone.*
>
> *Like a midwife, the sociologist can help them in this work provided the sociologist has a deeper understanding both of the conditions of existence of which they are the product and of the social effects that can be exercised by the research relationship…This craft is a real 'disposition to pursue truth'… which disposes one to improvise on the spot, in the urgency of the interview, strategies of self-presentation and adaptive responses, encouragement and opportune questions, etc., so as to help respondents deliver up their truth or, rather, to be delivered of it.* (ibid: 621).

As with Smith and Burawoy, Bourdieu proposes an arguably critical realist methodology for exploring the deeper and broader social mechanisms in the local everyday lived experiences of individuals. Again, in this research I have gained inspiration from, taken and attempted to use *some* aspects, aims and practical methods Bourdieu has suggested are important to produce the incredibly rich, poignant but also sociologically telling accounts he and his colleagues and interviewees have in describing their ordinary and everyday *social* suffering.

4.2 Methods

This section will explain how I have applied my philosophical and methodological position as rationales for practice, describing the decisions and processes of the actual methods I used in 'doing' the research.

4.2.1 Research Design

"The methods must suit the object of the investigation and the purpose of it," (Danermark et al, 1997: 26). Investigating the seemingly contradictory position of welfare agencies implementing deterrent asylum policies suggested an "intensive" ethnographic case study with an organisation in this position. Immersing myself over time in the everyday world of a VS RSA, gathering data from observation, interviews/insider-accounts and documents allowed insight into people's everyday lived experience, practices, concepts, understandings and relations from their standpoints as deliverers, 'receivers' and bystanders/compensators of government policy. By extending from this case study in this local setting to the wider and deeper social relations, processes, mechanisms and structures implicit within it, which co-ordinate peoples activities, which they participate in, reproduce and transform and that constrain and enable them, more 'general', global insights should be possible.

4.3 Research process

I will endeavour to 'tell it how it was,' as a 'natural history' describing and explaining my thought, decision and research process reflexively. The research process could be summarised as two-fold. Firstly to reach a point of detailed description of the everyday setting, including what actually happens and 'members'' accounts and interpretations of what happens. From here, to abstract (extend) to reasoning to try to establish what necessary (and contingent) conditions are implicit within the setting for it to be the way it is and not another way. So to produce an explanation (in terms of structures and social relations), of reasons why the situation may be the way it is, which will be fallible but aims to be more rather than less 'truthlike.'

4.3.1 *Sampling: Selecting the 'case'*

4.3.1.1 *Process*

Having identified the broad research puzzle of humanitarian and welfare agencies involved in supporting asylum seekers implementing deterrent government policies I began researching the different types of agencies implicated. From reading the literature, attending conferences, networking and talking with practitioners, I began 'mapping' the government's arrangement of public, private and voluntary sector agencies into 'consortia' for covering the new 1999 support arrangements. I began ambitiously, hoping to do ethnography with up to four different types of agencies providing support to asylum seekers from different positions to or 'collusion' with the government and differently involved in the 1999 Act.

With the dual purpose of gaining better understanding of the field and issues and starting the process of gaining access for ethnography, I interviewed three local social services 'asylum team' managers and two voluntary sector agency managers, operating in Shires towns and cities, and one in a NE 'dispersal' region. These gave some interesting findings into aspects of their contradictory and, some felt, marginalised positions, relations with their clients and interpretation of policy, raising similar and added issues to Duvell and Jordan, 2000 and Sales and Hek, 2004. They also gave me valuable interview experience. When none of these led to further access for ethnographic research, with the social services agencies expressing reluctance to be, as they saw it, closely scrutinised, I contacted a voluntary sector agency suggested by my university's social work department who accepted their students on placements. In response the RAP contact expressed interest but requested I wait six months because they were short-staffed. I began to recognise the benefits of doing a single case study over an extended period, with an organisation in such an emblematic position to my research interests. I would be able to become far more immersed in the everyday world of the 'deliverers' and 'receivers' of state welfare reception policies since the IAA 1999, focussing on the specificities and contradictions of the position of a VS agency within the NASS system. Practically of course, it made more sense to do in-depth ethnography with one agency than more fleeting comparisons with several, especially as gaining access had been time consuming

enough as it was. After much chasing, an initial interview and them willingly granting me access I decided to select RAP as my single 'case.'

4.3.1.2 *Rationale*

The benefits of a single case study were obviously partially pragmatic, giving focus and simplicity alongside ease of travel. It also made good ethnographic sense to "*make a lot out of a little*" (Silverman, 2000:102), and "*trade-off*" breadth for depth (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:40), as well as allowing longitudinal investigation. The case for selecting RAP (and them 'selecting' me) specifically was very strong pragmatically and theoretically. It was geographically close, relatively small and its various sites covered a discrete geographical area. I quickly struck up a good relationship with my welcoming 'gatekeeper' and over time gained good access 'within.'

As a purposive or theoretical sample RAP's "*relevance to the wider universe*" was very significant, so providing excellent grounds for generalisation; it would allow "*meticulous view of particular units*" and "*encapsulate a relevant range of units in relation to the wider universe*" and also had "*pivotal significance*" in relation to my research questions and puzzle (Mason, 1996:92). RAP could hardly have had more "*pivotal significance*" or theoretical representativeness in relation to my research 'puzzle' concerning the 'tensions' and 'contradictions' identified: It was set up as a humanitarian voluntary agency to address the needs of vulnerable newly-arrived refugees; it currently was in 'grant agreement' to the Home Office to implement a Reception Service, the first and an integral stage of the new NASS system; RAP was one of five categorically similar refugee support agencies implementing similar NASS services, and of those, one of two primarily providing a Reception service; worked closely with NASS daily; provided 'front-line' services to asylum seekers, including accommodation.

4.3.2 *Sampling within the case*

One benefit of purposive sampling is the flexibility and adaptiveness it allows,

> *Theoretical or purposive sampling is a set of procedures where the researcher manipulates their analysis, theory, and sampling activities **interactively** during*

> *the research process, to a much greater extent than in statistical sampling,*
> (Mason, 1996:100).

Access to several months of ethnography with RAP gave access to many further relevant *"processes, types, categories, cases… examples,"* (ibid:92) including; processing of asylum seekers through a Reception service; the daily work and types of dilemmas this involved; ways in which new pieces of legislation were received, understood and incorporated into daily work and changed work over time; a range of types of worker and people seeking asylum with different experiences and understandings of the systems of welfare support; different sites with different purposes.

Thus, sampling *within* this case interactively and responsively to data arising from the field and in relation to my initial queries became as important as selecting the case itself .The rationale behind such 'sampling within' should reflect the research purposes and aim to be as transparent, rigorous and systematic as possible, although practicality and availability play a part,

> *Decisions must be made about where to observe and when, who to talk to and what to ask, as well as about what to record and how… There are three major dimensions along which sampling within cases occurs: time, people, and context,*
> (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:45, 46).

4.3.2.1 *Sampling Time*

Making decisions about 'time' involved choices about the overall time spent with RAP; proportions of time spent 'doing' different kinds of data gathering and writing up; 'sampling' different times significant within the organisation and to different agents. Initially my RAP manager gatekeeper, agreed access to approximately six weeks, but it soon became clear that she was willing to accommodate my presence for as long as suited my purposes. Overall over the course of eight months, I spent fifty-five full or part days with RAP, between mid-November 2002 and mid-July 2003 (the preliminary interview with another manager in October 2002, some phone calls on non-visiting days and continued phone/email contact after I left). For the first four months I visited RAP on

average two to three days a week, during the last four less often, as I spent more time on transcription and data analysis.

Deciding which 'times' were important for observation was an interactive process of discerning times important within the setting for the organisation as a whole or different individuals, those important or interesting to observe for my initial or newly arising research queries, and those convenient to the organisation and myself, or to which I was granted access. I aimed to cover as comprehensive a range of routine and extraordinary times as possible, but was unable for mainly practical reasons to 'sample' all times (I predominantly sampled office hours, not early mornings, "out-of-hours," evenings or nights). The boundaries defining 'time' and 'context' are blurred, as times were mainly significant for the types of activity or event they represented, (e.g. dispersals every morning, meetings on Wednesday afternoons, clothes distribution on Friday).

4.3.2.2 *Sampling People*

I chose people mainly for their accounts (from snatched informal conversations to recorded semi-structured interviews), but also to 'shadow' and observe (though this was more contingent than choosing). Again, choosing people was a complex, interactive, inductive process developing over time, where choices included a combination of convenience, suggestion, analytic and purposive, opportunist, pragmatic, personal. Altogether aiming to be comprehensive, systematic but analytically relevant and follow hunches and interests.

Convenience and suggestion were predominant early on as I familiarised myself with (and became familiar within) the setting, who played which roles where and when. As my access was to the organisation, my initial access to individuals' accounts was with RAP workers. Gradually I attempted to select workers using several criteria where, "…*the process is inextricably linked with the development of analytical ideas and the collection of data,*" such as informal and formal "*member and observer-identified categories*" (Lofland in Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:51).

I prioritised the accounts of workers in each 'type' of role; those with a differing *range* of perspectives or understandings; or those I had identified as somehow interesting or

pertinent (for example, long-term RAP workers for their perspectives on changes in work over time, through different legislations).

Of course I did not just 'choose' people or have instant access to their accounts, they also chose me. Developing relationships of trust with people over time was essential, and peoples' willingness to talk with me varied. Most workers were very open, though some were happy to chat informally, but reluctant to do a recorded interview. Other factors also restricted my choice, such as workers' workloads, autonomy over their time, spatial or geographical accessibility. For example, managers had the autonomy to programme an interview into their diaries, whereas front-line workers jobs were less predictable, but their greater spatial accessibility allowed for more quick informal chats and observation.

Access to RAP, over time, began to give me potential access to groups of people other than RAP workers, as I had hoped. I had not predicted however, the many individuals and agencies integral, incidental or independent in or around the support system RAP co-ordinated. I therefore also 'sampled' individuals from this wider network (for example, hotel workers, taxi-drivers, and health visitors), using criteria such as their different perspectives on and experience with RAP, government policy, and asylum seekers. Vitally, access to RAP also gave me access to asylum seekers and their accounts of their experiences of the support system, gradually over time, building trust. Access involved observation, quick informal chats to recorded interviews and time spent 'being' with people. This process involved different ethical considerations, such as not having *their* informed consent for observation, using data from brief chats, and peoples' relative powerlessness and vulnerable positions. Practical issues (particularly language and gender) also limited the number and range of people I 'sampled.' Again I made a trade-off of breadth for depth, valuing the deeper relationships and rich accounts from a group of four English speaking African women, one of whom recorded two interviews and shared many aspects of her life with me.

4.3.2.3 *Sampling Context*

Again sampling contexts was an interactive process involving opportunistic, pragmatic and purposive decisions, aiming at accessing comprehensive but analytically important contexts. As a researcher I was in a relatively more privileged position than most

workers, clients and others, having access to viewing most areas. Hammersley and Atkinson (1995) refer to 'socially constructed' contexts as well as geographical ones, such as Goffman's 'backstage' and 'frontstage' regions. Contexts could also be defined in terms of the events or activities occurring in them, as well as the standpoint or viewpoint of different individuals within them (e.g. clients, workers, and volunteers) and their varying access to the contexts.

I tried to sample all the different types of RAP's geographical sites, or those that I had identified as relevant to my developing research interests, and as many contexts I could access for relevant activities or types of work occurring (meetings, advice sessions, dispersals, etc). I endeavoured also to gain as 'deep' a 'backstage' access, where I could observe and listen for valuable insight, as well 'frontstage' (e.g. informal moans between workers, clients' 'backstage' conversations).

My sampling of contexts was limited by several factors. Obviously the human limitation of not being able to be everywhere at once or to cover every aspect of the setting was one. I was also not granted access to all areas such as high-level managerial meetings with NASS, or some 'backstage' conversations between clients. Ethical sensitivity limited my 'sampling' of contexts for good reasons, such as clients' need for privacy and confidentiality.

4.4 *Ethical Considerations*

The ethics of qualitative research, particularly in-depth ethnography with an organisation and many participants with diverse interests, involved in a politically sensitive and contentious social 'area' with a particularly powerless and vulnerable group, were inevitably complex and demanded renegotiation throughout the research process, resolving difficult dilemmas by thinking in "*complex and sophisticated ways,*" (Mason 1996:166). There were ethical considerations for the research as a whole and specific to each method. Overall considerations involved attempting good ethical practice with the organisation as a whole, responsibilities negotiated with my initial gatekeeper, responsibilities in my relationships with each individual involved, wider political responsibility, and academic sociological responsibilities. In doing this I aimed to adhere to the BSA (2005) Statement of Ethical Practice guidelines.

4.4.1 *Informed consent*

"*As far as possible participation…should be based on the freely given informed consent of those studied,*" (BSA 2005). I initially obtained informed consent, including the freedom to withdraw at any time and consent to my ways of using data, from the whole organisation via my manager gatekeeper, explaining my research in writing and verbally. I gave my gatekeeper a written draft informed consent form, for the organisation to alter as they chose, including terms of publication. Before starting with the organisation, I sent a briefing about myself and my research to each of the Team Leaders, for them to disseminate among their teams, so attempting to feed as much informed consent as possible throughout the organisation including to lower level workers. In the field I then used frequent written and verbal renegotiation throughout the research with individual participants. Gaining full further informed consent for each piece of observation and brief informal conversations was not always possible. Overall consent obtained from RAP management, had been fed down to lower-level workers to an extent, but informing was an ongoing process by managers to workers, workers to 'satellite' workers and clients and myself to all of these. I was careful in as many small-scale situations as possible (such as advice sessions between workers and clients) to ensure participants' informed consent to my observation and offer them the right of withdrawal. This was not possible in more generalised settings (such as Reception areas) on every occasion, and every client's consent, particularly, was practically not obtainable. I was very aware of the asymmetrical power balance of my position, and made every effort not to abuse this.

4.4.2 *Relations*

Developing relationships of trust with workers and clients was essential for obtaining the necessary qualitative data, and involved ethical issues of power and boundaries. Awareness and strategies against abusing my power as researcher with both workers and clients were essential and differed with each and each individual. Relationships with some participants became close and issues needed resolving around boundaries and consent for using all conversations as data. My privileged position as researcher visiting all sites gave me greater power than workers seeing RAP from one. The extremes of clients' powerlessness (not homogenising or 'victim' stereotyping, accepting each as active subjects, but recognising the general constraints on many) made it crucial for me

not to abuse my power in a situation where they had few rights, the restrictions of extreme poverty, an inability to move or 'hide' from me, lack of autonomy, psychological and physical vulnerability from possible recent trauma and current conditions and difficulties. Balancing appropriate care and humanity with research agendas was essential in not provoking individuals in distress, and not intruding on clients' already minimal privacy. Conflicting loyalties to different individuals, their interests and my research interests needed frequent negotiation. This included reaching the necessary intellectual distance from my feelings of loyalty to the organisation as a whole, to individual participants, to my gatekeeper and conflicting interests between participants, to gather and use my data well whilst retaining ethical integrity.

4.4.3 Anonymity, confidentiality, privacy

Ensuring participants' anonymity and feasible levels of confidentiality was important. I used some informed consent forms, assuring individuals anonymity, for those less part of the organisation (asylum seekers and volunteers) and reassured people verbally. This included commitments to the whole organisation and separately to individuals. The distinctiveness of the organisation on several dimensions (for example role, geography) made it impossible and nonsensical to anonymise the organisation, but I have done everything possible to ensure individuals anonymity. I have attempted to alter all identifiers that do not distort the data unacceptably (BSA 2005); e.g. name, precise job title and character. However some potential 'identifiers' were integral to the sense of the data so could not be changed; e.g. role (manager), citizenship status (asylum seeker), gender, country of origin. I have largely used role titles to suggest workers' positions in the organisation, such as Project Worker (PW) or Senior Manager (SM). Confidentiality was the fundamental ethical consideration in using documents and in ensuring clients rights to confidentiality were not breached. This restricted my access to, for instance, examining the production and consumption of clients' files and database 'contact episodes', which would have been interesting. It was ethically essential to adhere to strict confidentiality *within* the organisation and setting for insiders' protection. Ethical sensitivity with informants' privacy and confidentiality rights also stretches to anyone generalised about from their data (Mason 1996:166).

4.5 *Doing ethnography*

4.5.1 *Observation*

As in most ethnography, observation was central to gaining insight into how asylum support policy works in practice, 'on the ground' and how Reception was delivered and received in the everyday practices, activities, work, processes, interactions and discourses of this 'natural' social setting.   Observation involved using all of my senses to experience, notice and record such actual happenings from where I sat or stood, trying to take nothing for granted *and* to record how the actors involved understood them. I wrote timed and dated notes where possible while observing or soon afterwards, recording sights, talk, interactions, description, my understanding of a situation and others' explanations.

'Sampling' where and when I observed was based on a combination of extensive and purposive grounds. For theoretical and practical reasons I spent most time with RAP workers who interacted directly with 'clients', from where I could more easily 'blend in' and take notes. From my observer's position I also tried as much as is possible to place myself, in and experience the settings from, the different positions (or 'standpoints') of different actors involved (e.g. noticing the very different views/experiences of the waiting room or 'reception' with a client, a project-worker and a security worker). Smith's (2005:228) conception of taking the subject's 'standpoint,' "*A methodological starting point in the local particularities of bodily existence. Designed to establish a subject position from which to begin research,*" is highly specific to Institutional Ethnography, but the principle of observing a setting from different actors' or subjects' positions within it, as far as possible from their subjective experience of it, is what I intended to follow,

> *The people who are living the situation know it from the inside. Theirs is the moment of recognition that something chafes. Of course, the people involved are not all located in the same way towards what happens... Different people in a situation will have different experiences of it, Campbell* & Gregor, (2002:48).

4.5.1.2 *Researcher role*

> *While ethnographers may adopt a variety of roles, the usual aim throughout is to maintain a more or less marginal position, thereby providing access to participant perspectives but at the same time minimizing the dangers of over-rapport… The ethnographer needs to be intellectually poised between familiarity and strangeness…* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:112).

Understanding and being explicit about my role and effects within the setting, producing data, interpreting peoples' interpretations is essential for reflexivity. Mason (1996:64) urges the complex selection of one's role on the complete participant to complete observer continuum, though you may "*…not take a 'once and for all' decision about this, but in fact that you move between a variety of roles in any one research project for both intellectual and practical reasons.*"

As a complete novice within a novel setting, recognising the people within it as experts (Smith, 1987), though deciding to participate in a few specific activities, my participation was marginal except as researcher. This position as a *"'marginal' reflexive ethnographer", "simultaneous insider outsider",* or *"acceptable incompetent"* had benefits, keeping*: "some part held back, some social and intellectual 'distance'"* because in this space "*the analytic work of the ethnographer gets done,*" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:112,110,115).

Although I will have affected each setting I observed, it is very difficult to know exactly how, and I aimed to become as unobtrusive and 'part of the scenery' as possible, where appropriate. This was easiest in the larger, busy, chaotic offices, and especially over time, actors seemed to ignore me as I had requested, becoming "*part of the family*" as one worker said.

My minimal participation in RAP's work, (and personally with workers and clients), was intended to serve a variety of purposes; giving *something* in return for being given such open, friendly access; developing trust and relations; experiencing RAP work to a limited extent for an 'insider's'/participant's experience (e.g. doing clothes distribution involved

experiencing having to make difficult decisions about how to share out limited resources fairly, and trying to run a bureaucratic system humanely).

4.5.2 *Interviews*

4.5.2.1 *Why?*

My purposes for gathering informants' insider accounts as part of the ethnography could be categorised as *"literal," "interpretive"* and *"reflexive,"* (Mason, 1996:77), or for *"'information' and 'perspective' analyses,"* and *"advocacy,"* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:124). In all such 'double hermeneutics,' my own interpretation of informants' interpretations is inevitable and should be made as explicit as possible.

As experts in their fields or lives, I primarily needed informants' accounts to help me make sense of phenomena I was ignorant about, *"for what they tell us about the phenomena to which they refer"* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:124). However, insiders' accounts, though expert, relevant and presumed to be honest, are not directly mappable onto phenomena they refer to, and are among many possible interpretations, so were also useful,

> *…as evidence about their perspectives, and…about the larger cultures and subcultures to which they belong…*(Thus) *Separating the question of the truth or falsity of people's beliefs from the analysis of those beliefs as social phenomena allows us to treat participant's knowledge as both resource and topic… in principled ways,* (ibid:126).

In researching an organisation hearing differently positioned perspectives (e.g. managers and workers) and formal/informal ('frontstage/backstage') accounts of the same event was essential for informing a 'holistic' picture. Also I treated informants accounts as both *"idiosyncratic"* and *"emblematic"* (Bourdieu et al. 1999:ix), hoping to try to see and understand phenomena, as far as is possible, as insiders' interpreted and experienced them in the social situation, for insight into (and separation of) both their idiosyncratic story and the *general* social conditions manifest in/underlying their position as "project-worker" or "asylum seeker". Bourdieu's (1999:613) interview methodology or

"*Understanding*" informed my aims, in that "W*ithout trying to cancel the social distance separating*" interviewer from interviewee,

> *Attempting to situate oneself in the place the interviewees occupy in the social space in order to understand them…based on a (theoretical or practical) grasp of the social conditions of which they are a product: this means a grasp of the circumstances of life and the social mechanisms that affect the entire category to which an individual belongs …a grasp of the conditions, inseparably psychological and social, associated with a given position and trajectory in social space…*

Also as asylum seekers (and refugee support workers) voices are so rarely heard through the cacophony of public discourse, a further intention in gathering accounts was to

…amplify the voices of those on the social margins; and…therefore seek ways of representing insider accounts in rhetorically powerful ways. Here the ethnographer's task approaches advocacy, (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:124).

Related to this was my overall intention to illuminate a hidden social area heavily shrouded in myth and illusion.

4.5.2.2 *How?*

My interviews ranged *"from spontaneous, informal conversations in places that are being used for other purposes, to formally arranged meetings in bounded settings,"* and from *"unsolicited"* to *"solicited insider accounts,"* as typical in ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995:139). The former, intrinsic to and inseparable from 'observation,' the latter resembling 'interviews' more, this included conversations initiated by myself or informants, grabbed with actors busy in a setting; longer informal conversations one-to-one or with several informants; pre-arranged, private, recorded 'semi-structured' interviews using pre-written questions.

Ethnographic interviews are more like, but never just, conversations because the ethnographer must retain the control necessary to follow her research agenda, so my

interviewing was more "*reflexive*" than standardized; designed flexibly and interactively with ongoing observations and research interests, in sensitivity to the individual/s and settings involved, trying to actively listen to what is said "*to assess how it relates to the research focus and how it may reflect the circumstances of the interview,*" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:153).

I developed my interviewing style progressively with experience. For semi-structured interviews, I used 'directive' and 'non-directive' questions encouraging interviewees to express themselves as they chose, generating further un-scripted questions and unsolicited talk, while also addressing my research agenda. I developed interviews in a range of ways including asking more questions focussed more around research issues the more I knew, adding questions previously missed, using questions specific to an individual and standardised to their position (client/manager). The benefits of a quiet and private place for freedom to think and speak, developing trust, using tape-recording, and giving respondents typed questions contributed to the quality of the data produced. Interviewing the same person twice (or more) allowed discussion of changes and comparisons over time.

Interviewing clients involved some issues different than interviewing workers, including negotiating practical and ethical barriers to access. Practical barriers included language, the brief and purposive nature of clients' visits to RAP sites being non-conducive to relationship-building, finding a sufficiently private, non-intrusive venue and explaining who I was, renegotiating access and informed consent with each individual. Ethical issues essentially included necessary sensitivity to the potentially vulnerable position of people newly arrived and newly claiming asylum, and having sometimes endured months in Emergency Accommodation, as well as the fact that people were already frequently questioned and interrogated through their asylum and NASS processes. Their position meant they could feel guarded or concerned to say 'the right thing.' So sensitivity around the acute power imbalance in our respective positions and their presence with RAP out of necessity, **not** choice, meant it was vital to exercise particular care to ensure confidentiality and to gain fully informed consent. Gender and cultural issues sometimes made building trust relationships with male clients problematic.

4.5.2.3 Who?

My 'sampling' rationale for interviewing clients was fundamentally based on these provisos and opportunity, which explains the relatively small number of English-speaking women I interviewed in-depth on tape, although in developing more of a 'case study' approach with each, I came to see this as a benefit. I also gathered the accounts of many others in long and short informal conversations in communal areas, particularly the EA where RAP's third office was based and people had more time and freedom to talk.

In practice the accounts I elicited represented a broad spectrum of RAP and 'satellite' workers accounts and some 'rich' accounts of clients. I intentionally targeted 'operations' (front-line) workers and managers, more than human 'resources' workers. Also those with most available time and those most at ease with tape-recording weighted my selection. Those with least time, autonomy and most unpredictable work were the special needs team. Those most reluctant to do recorded interviews tended to be workers who expressed a fear of being disloyal to the organisation, although they were mostly happy to chat at length informally.

4.5.3 *Documents*

The two main reasons for studying documents as a third ethnographic method were "*literal*" and "*interpretive;*" I used them as time-saving sources of information and in regards to "*factors relevant to or speaking of their context, production and consumption*", (Mason 1996:77). I occasionally used them as corroboration or to complement to my own documentary data from observing and insider accounts, so developing a fuller description. The use of documents, their context, production and consumption were fundamental and integral to the social setting; intrinsic tools in the daily work of the organisation, and signified extraordinary constraining and enabling significance in the lives of people claiming asylum. I approached all documents aware of their social production, so problematising their literal reading, but saw no good reasons to doubt their overall reliability and accuracy. As the most efficient way of sourcing *certain* types of information, without disturbing workers, I used documents for a broader overall picture, and as a practical 'field' guide or map (for example, map of organisational hierarchy, see Appendix). I also considered documents in terms of their integral use and

meaning within particular contexts, how and why they were produced and consumed, by and for whom.

4.6 *Data generated*

- o From **observation** across 3 office sites and 4 EA's over the 8 month research period, I generated 8 notebooks of handwritten field-notes, including notes from informal conversations and 'non-taped' interview notes

- o I generated data from interviews with a variety of participants using differing formats (see Table 1, p137). The total number of ALL interviews I conducted, including interviewing a person twice, taped and non-taped, fully and partially transcribed, and not used, was **42**. All of the interviews were used for data analysis in some way, except those of the two Volunteers (**V**) and two Resources Workers (**RW**), as it became clear they were peripheral to the developing data analysis. Those interviews taped but partially transcribed, I listened to thoroughly, and then transcribed the sections relevant to the already generated themes from the fully transcribed interviews.

- o I also had numerous other long and short more informal conversations with asylum seekers, RAP workers, Refugee Support Workers (interpreters), Volunteers and Satellite Agency Workers, which I recorded by note taking during or shortly after conversations.

- o I gathered numerous documents

I have aimed to indicate in the data chapters which sources different data came from by using **int.** (interview) and **obs.** (observation) alongside the evidence

Table 1. A representation of the number and status of interviews conducted

Title of Interviewee	No. Persons Interviewed	No. Persons Interviewed Twice	Taped	Non-taped - Hand Written	Transcribed Fully	Transcribed Partially
AS	4	2	6		6	
ED	1		1		1	
SM	4	1	5		3	
TL	4	1	3	2	1	2
PW	6	1	4	3	2	2
AW	3		3		2	1
YPA	1		1		1	
V	2		2			
RW	2		2			
CC	1			1		
IC	1			1		
SVSW	1			1		
HW	1			1		
ET	2			2		
EAW	4			4		
TOTALS	**37**	**5**	**27**	**15**	**16**	**5**

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4.7 _Data Analysis_

I attempted to maintain throughout my research process, including data analysis, overall ontological and epistemological coherence. My research purpose was firstly to *describe* in as much detail possible (from my viewpoint) how I found the social world of asylum seekers' welfare support policy in the practices and understandings of people delivering it and people taking it up. What was it actually like? What actually happened? How did the people involved understand and interpret it from their different positions in the setting?

How was it different and similar to my previously held ideas and my readings of 'the' literature? From here, with this 'picture' of these everyday actualities held always in mind, I intended to attempt to find some reasons *why* welfare supporting asylum seekers was this way and not any other way, what was 'idiosyncratic' or contingent about the situation and what was 'emblematic' or the necessary (structural and relational) conditions making it so? (i.e. to reach some kind of explanation using retroductive reasoning).

Therefore, broadly in line with critical realism, I intended to dialectically and interactively analyse data alongside data generation and theorising. The purpose of analysing the mass of data generated from hours of observation, numerous insider accounts and 'reading' documents was to try to discern any meanings they held, what they might 'say to' the wider social area in which they were embedded, to the research questions produced before, during and after fieldwork; e.g. How is policy experienced on the ground by those involved in its frontline delivery and take-up? Are the seeming contradictions evident in the everyday practices? If so, how were they manifest? Also, experiencing and immersing myself in this everyday world, were my initial questions designed from reading and a few pilot interviews meaningful to the 'reality'? What new puzzles needed focussing on? Was changing or rethinking the research focus necessary? These are questions to address *during* not just after the fieldwork, where ideally a researcher should be progressively focussing in line with simultaneous analysis as she goes along,

> *Ethnographic research should have a characteristic 'funnel' structure, being progressively focused over its course. Over time the research problem needs to be developed or transformed, and eventually its scope is clarified and delimited and its internal structure explored. In this sense, it is frequently well into the course of inquiry that one discovers what the research is **really** about…* (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995:206)

My intention to analyse the data throughout the research process with the aim of progressively focussing my fieldwork was more difficult than I had expected; *"This commitment to a dialectical interaction between data collection and data analysis is not easy to sustain in practice"* (ibid: 206). This was partially for the practical reasons that

the amount of time and energy spent 'in the field' left little time or energy for consecutive intensive data analysis. Also, I believe that I erred in the pull towards 'naturalism' that many ethnographers feel, and can hinder this dialectical, reflexive process. Therefore I did the main bulk of the data analysis after leaving the field.

4.7.1 *Process*

This process involved transcribing taped interviews, carefully reading through all data identifying recurrent themes and patterns and coding the data (loosely similar to 'grounded' research) inductively, and dialectically in relation to my research questions. Initially this process involved generating a huge number of categories, where these themes tended towards the mundane and were based more in everyday descriptive concepts, including those of the individuals involved. However, gradually with more distance, imagination and the application of other theorists' conceptual frameworks (for example, Lipsky's theory of street-level bureaucracy) I began generating more analytical, 'sociological' themes and concepts to make sense of the data, attempting to view the setting in novel ways that might provide new insight (i.e. abductively). Analysing the themes raised inductively in relation to those addressed in the literature reviewed prior to and following the fieldwork, I was able to 'extend' further to consider where this particular setting fitted in wider social relations and what deeper structural realities influenced why it was the way it was.

4.7.2 *Reliability, validity, generalisation*

Data analysis is a creative process in qualitative research, which has been criticised as "*a mysterious process about which little can be said… One must simply wait on the theoretical muse,*" but Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:209) argue that using one's imagination is legitimate, not just in the "**emergenc**e *of analytical ideas, but is equally important in devising ways of **developing and testing** these.*" Though creativity and imagination are useful and important, so are transparent and systematic "*strategies*", aiding the overall rigour and 'reliability' of qualitative data analysis. Reliability in the sense it is applied to quantitative research is not applicable or sensible in relation to qualitative research; 'standardised' methods or measurement are inappropriate, however it is still essential, to find a way to ensure your explanation and analysis are sound and

convincing, and why it is better or more appropriate than others, (Mason, 1996:145). This involves ensuring in research practice and then demonstrating that the analysis and explanation have been systematically and transparently constructed and all processes have been rigorous,

> *ensuring that your data generation and analysis have been not only appropriate to the research questions, but also thorough, careful, honest and accurate (as distinct from true or correct…)…The presentation of your analysis must therefore include an explanation of why it is that the audience should believe it to be reliable and accurate,* (ibid:146).

Demonstrating how the research is 'general' is also essential in production of a rigorous data analysis but with qualitative ethnographic research this does not involve ensuring your sample is representative. However, as Danermark et al. (1997:73) stated "*all science should have generalizing claims*" but in critical realism this involves the ability to demonstrate "*the more or less universal preconditions for an object to be what it is*" (ibid:77). With this study, the single case study of an organisation, the individuals involved with it, their interactions, actions and work in the specific position it was in, are *demonstrative* of the underlying conditions that make it that way.

However, although a unique organisation, in several important ways RAP *was* representative of the "*wider universe*" (Mason, 1996) of which it was an example. It was one of only two UK VS agencies that were solely RAAs in Grant Agreement to NASS and one of five offering some Reception service. Thus it was highly representative of the contradictory position in question. Also, as one of the two agencies operating predominantly as RAAs, a large number of all people who claim asylum in the UK, (especially those who were destitute) particularly (but not only) those arriving at London airports, were processed through *this* agency initially. For these reasons it is possible to generalise (in the sense of extrapolation to the wider universe) from these findings to make more general statements on asylum support, and on those supporting and supported. I will visit the strengths and weaknesses of the research methodology in the conclusion. In order to make sense of the data chapters, it is important to set the scene by giving a profile of the organisation, describing for instance, its history, remit, organisational structure and workers roles.

5 Setting the scene – a profile of the organisation

5.1 Overall purpose/role

5.1.1 History

Refugee Arrivals Project was started in 1988 as the numbers of people seeking refuge in the UK had begun to increase, and RCOs and members of Refugee Action recognised the difficulties people had when arriving at Heathrow, often traumatised, bewildered and frightened, knowing no one or nothing about what to do next. A RAP manager told this history, *"When I arrived myself in 1982 I was give by Immigration a piece of paper… and 'Off you go!' That might have been OK for a few people who have money… speak the language… have friends or relatives…waiting for them… but most people don't have all these luxuries. So it's the trauma of getting from Heathrow Airport to anywhere! … 'People are getting lost, are sleeping rough'… all sorts of terrible stories."* A steering group including these RCOs raised a small fund of £2500 from them, the ALG and UNHCR to set up the project to assist new arrivals. The co-ordinator from RA and two workers started working from a back office in RA, before they accessed a *"very small"* office at Heathrow. When the numbers of arrivals increased *"suddenly to around 30,000 a year"* in 1990, the section of the Home Office dealing with the voluntary sector gave RAP funds to recruit seven project workers. By 1999, RAP still only consisted of 12 full time staff, but in 2001 it had grown to 48, having accepted the Home Office grant to run its Reception Service. In 2003 when the research period ended, RAP employed 65 full-time staff.

5.1.2 Remit and responsibilities

At RAP's inception there was no asylum or refugee specific legislation, only the generalised 1971 Immigration Act, therefore new arrivals were entitled to mainstream welfare support. RAP's initial remit therefore involved providing advice and guidance on UK welfare systems, and assisting newly arrived refugees in accessing them. This included finding them accommodation with Homeless Person Units, private landlords, or local authorities. RAP's remit changed gradually over the years as asylum seekers access to mainstream welfare support was restricted by the 1993 and 1996 legislations, until it was drastically changed operationally from April 2000 by the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. When RAP, like the other five major voluntary sector refugee support

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agencies, agreed to become a "key player" in delivering the Home Office's new welfare support system co-ordinated by NASS, they officially became a "reception assistant." During the research period therefore, RAP's primary remit was to facilitate access to NASS support for destitute new asylum claimants, predominantly new arrivals from the London airports and those claiming asylum in the 'shires.' This involved making an initial needs assessment and referring on where necessary, providing an advice service, giving assistance in making an application to NASS for support, finding local temporary Emergency Accommodation where necessary and facilitating dispersal to more permanent accommodation in 'the regions.' RAP's Home Office responsibilities also involved supporting the "*Stansted Afghanis*" the group of asylum seekers who had hijacked a plane at Stansted airport in February 2000. The organisation addressed other areas of their clients needs through various differently funded projects.

5.1.3 Publicly stated aims and objectives

RAP's 'object' as stated in their Constitution was

…to provide relief for refugees and their families who are needy or distressed either at or near points of entry to the UK or because of their arrival or expected departure from such ports. The word 'refugee' means someone with a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality or membership of a particular social group, or political opinion, and who no longer enjoys the protection of his or her country of origin or previous permanent residence; it includes those known as displaced persons or asylum seekers, (RAP, Memorandum of Association in line with the Companies Act, 1985, amended in 1998)

As though to emphasise a lack of change to its purpose, the Grant Agreement of 31st March 2000 between NASS and RAP stated that RAP's initial aim when "*formed in 1988"* had been "*to provide short-term support to those new arrivals to assist them in finding accommodation and in gaining access to welfare benefits,"* (ibid: 2). This document also stated that the Grant Agreement between NASS and RAP, "*for the maintenance and operation of a Reception Service for newly arrived asylum seekers at London's airports… provides a broad but well-defined framework in which Refugee Arrivals Project may exercise independent discretion,"* (RAP, 2000:2).

The Grant Agreement continued to list RAP's responsibilities as a Reception Assistant, a Service Specification, constraining terms and conditions and guidance on operating procedures standards and Performance Indicators and Quality Control. RAP's annual review for 2001-2002 gives a less formal statement of value, "*Despite a complex and changing environment we remain deeply committed to providing quality services at the point of reception*".

5.2 Positioning of organisation

To understand the context in which RAP was operating, it is important to describe and explain its relationships with other agencies; its 'positioning' within the field and systems of refugee support. This section will clarify RAP's position in relation to the government, within the voluntary sector and to the other agencies they worked with.

5.2.1 Relationship to government

From RAP's beginnings in 1988 it received *some* funding from 'government'. Initially this was from the ALG, then from 1990 from various sections of the Home Office and London Borough Grants. Before 2000 RAP received a proportion of its funding from the Home Office's Race and Equality Unit, whose responsibility was '*race relations policy*' and promotion of '*equal opportunities.*' RAP's work was affected by the asylum legislations of 1993 and 1996, but following the 1999 Act its relationship with the Home Office changed significantly when connections shifted to the IND as RAP agreed to assist in implementing sections 95 and 98 of this legislation.

Operationally from April 2000, RAP entered into a Grant Agreement with the new NASS who from then on gave RAP the majority of its funding to "*provide a Reception Assistant Service.*" NASS was one of seven sections of the "Asylum support, casework and appeals," which was one of the seven sections of the IND. NASS' aim was to "*provide an effective support system to asylum seekers who qualify until a decision is made on their claim,*" their role (as the IND website states) "*is embedded in Home Office Aim 6: To regulate entry to, and settlement in, the UK…To provide…fair and fast programmes for dealing with…those seeking refuge or asylum.*" Thus RAP became a "*funded stakeholder*" of NASS "*to enable us to deliver aspects of asylum support.*"

As the letter from NASS accompanying the Grant Agreement to the then CE of RAP said, *"This Agreement reflects the principles set out in the 'Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary Sector in England,'"* which, the Prime Minister states in his introductory message, *"provides a framework which will help guide our relationship at every level."* Not legally binding, this Compact was developed to promote government's partnership with the voluntary and community sector whose *"vital role in society as the nation's 'third sector', working alongside the state and the market"* and because they *"have a number of complementary functions and shared values."* In it the government undertakes *"To recognise and support the independence of the sector…independent of any funding relationship."*

<u>*5.2.2 Relationship to others within the voluntary sector*</u>

Throughout its history RAP has had working relationships with other community and voluntary sector groups and organisations involved in supporting refugees. Local Community Organisations and the bigger Refugee Action (set up in 1982 to aid refugee resettlement in the UK) were instrumental in its inception, and it's Board of Trustees and 'other members' were primarily made up of representatives from RCOs and larger refugee support organisations such as The Refugee Council. RAP also forged links with specialist agencies, such as the MF to facilitate referral of their clients, or to share expertise and ideas.

During the research period and since its acceptance of its role as NASS Reception Assistant implementing the 1999 Act, RAP has had close relationships with the other five agencies taking on the same or similar responsibilities delivering the Reception or One Stop Services. These six agencies were all positioned similarly in relation to NASS and the Home Office as *"funded stakeholders,"* delivering key aspects of the new asylum support system, and had established two groups in order to liaise on their new comparable roles. These were the Asylum Support Voluntary Action Group (ASVAG), whose independence were questioned by Cohen (2002) as it was established by the Home Office and included representatives from IND, and the Inter-Agency Partnership (IAP). The IAP consisted of the six *"stakeholder"* agencies: the Refugee Council, the Welsh Refugee Council, the Scottish Refugee Council, Refugee Action, Migrant Helpline and Refugee Arrivals Project.

The IAP worked fairly closely together, on policy issues related to their similar roles, sharing advice and information and discussing ways of influencing NASS on the direction of policy and particularly issues relating to its practical implementation. The IAP produced a monthly newsletter to inform and advise workers in the individual agencies of events and changes from high-level decision making to procedural information, and in working protectively for their clients. The IAP had some joint lobbying power with NASS and the IND over at least the procedural level of policy implementation, and sometimes worked together to challenge aspects of policy. They also worked *with* the Home Office to get a grasp of policy changes and to implement them effectively.

5.2.3 *Funding status and affiliations*

RAP called itself "*an independent, not-for-profit organisation.*" It was first registered as a charitable company under The Companies Act 1985, by the Charity Commission in 1991, amended in 1997 and 2002. During the research period 2002-2003 the vast majority (98%) of RAP's funding came from the Home Office, as restricted funds to provide NASS' Reception Service. A small amount of funding came from other public bodies; London Borough Grants (local government), the Community Fund and from charitable Trusts for specific projects operating from RAP: Lloyds TSB Foundation, Save the Children Fund and Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund as well as some donations. There was a vast increase in NASS funding and expenditure from nearly £6m at the end March 2002 to over £13m by the end of March 2003. RAP's annual review 2002-3 sites "*exponential growth in terms of its turnover, its staffing and its facilities*" over the previous three years as NASS Reception Assistant. The Trustees Report reviewing their activities also sited, "*The steep rise in referrals during 2002/3…the result of conflicts in Zimbabwe and Iraq in particular…required a rapid response by way of increased staffing and procurement of client and office accommodation… continuing dispersal problems and increasing average length of stay… Infra-structure improvements to support the enlarged and more complex operation included three new bespoke databases, and significant… IT investment.*"
The review identified various financial risks, primarily their reliance on NASS funding especially mentioning the effects of NASS reducing funding due to reduced client numbers.

5.2.4 *Operational Relationship with other agencies*

RAP was also positioned within a broad network of 'other' agencies with whom staff and workers cooperated to varying degrees and in varying ways, in their operations. Of course, these had changed over time and in relation to their changes in work. Before the 1999 Act, the organisation would have worked most closely with HPUs, Local Authorities and benefits agencies around London, after it RAP had minimal contact with these, except HPUs when asylum seekers moved out of NASS support, having gained a leav–to-remain status. One of the most important of their relationships since taking on their NASS role was that with private sector managers and workers of the EA they procured locally and with whom they worked very closely on a daily basis, in the management of moving asylum seekers in and out and between EA s. EA workers often provided more than just accommodation, but sometimes distributed asylum seekers subsistence allowances if entitled. RAP's relationship with EA providers could be one of balancing interests. RAP also worked closely with private sector agency, Wackenhut, who ran the coach service taking asylum seekers to their dispersal regions and relied heavily upon the local taxi firm. Their drivers drove many times daily between all sites, transporting clients, documents and other items. Most of these relationships were functional and friendly.

5.3 *Organisational structure*

When RAP was formed in 1988 it consisted of a Director and two workers. RAP grew gradually over the next ten years, increasing numbers of Project Workers and administrative staff to deal with an increasing caseload of clients. By 1998 RAP employed 16 full-time staff, including 7.5 Project Workers. Throughout this time, RAP's structure was fairly horizontal, and all workers worked together in the same offices. To operate its NASS Reception Service between 2000-2002, RAP recruited significant numbers of staff, increasing to 65 full-time and many part-time and voluntary workers. With this increase, the hierarchical layers also increased. As RAP grew, it re-structured work teams to try to address changing workloads and tasks across new sites, and the governance of the organisation shifted from a Management Committee to Board of Trustees in 2001. The governance of RAP, determined by the constitution written in 1988 and revised in 1998, necessarily consisted of three equal groups of Trustees aimed at ensuring proper representation of the interests of refugees. Therefore five trustees were from RCOs controlled by refugees, five from organisations

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providing services for refugees but not necessarily controlled by them, and five were independent trustees bringing different skills. Other members were predominantly RCOs. The previous Chief Executive retired at the end of 2000, by which time the new (and current) Executive Director was in post and had taken responsibility for the massive new recruitment, which included a new Resources or Facilities section to the organisation.

5.3.1 Current Structure

Three weeks prior to the research period, RAP had restructured significantly again, further differentiating roles following a chaotic period of adjustment to sharply increased numbers of clients and the political environment. It was just beginning to settle into its new structure, designed to aid this adjustment and encourage specialisation (see *appendix*). During the research period, RAP's operational side was structured into four teams managed by a Team Leader, with a Senior Project Worker and approximately 15 Project workers. Two teams worked at RAP's Central Office, facilitating NASS applications and giving standardised advice to asylum seekers who had arrived the previous day. They were known as the NASS teams and I have called their workers NTPWs. There was also a new Support Services Team based at Central Office, to whom clients with special and complex needs were referred. The two further teams ran Reception at Heathrow and what was known as their 'on-going support service' at Rosehill EA. Many interpreters, also known as RSWs, worked full and part-time for the organisation, doing administration and other work.

5.3.2 Additional services

Prior to their NASS role, RAP had fundraised to set up a befriending service (BfS), which had become integral to the organisation and its work, and although independently funded, this group worked very closely with RAP. The BfS team worked from Central Office and co-ordinated over a 100 volunteers in a well-established and structured befriending service to identified RAP clients and other refugees and asylum seekers.

There was also on the Heathrow site a Young Persons' Advisor, whose role was also separately funded to assist unaccompanied young asylum seekers, under 18.

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RAP had progressively expanded geographically also to accommodate their NASS role. During the research period RAP worked from three offices and accommodated clients in 6 or 7 hotels and hostels around Hounslow and west London. The three office sites served different functions, so different (as well as similar) work was carried out at each. In 2000-1, they had been called, "Reception Service, Helpdesk & Head Office", but were no longer or not popularly termed as such. It is useful to give a brief description of each main site, the work carried out, and the teams of workers operating there.

5.3.3.1 *Heathrow*

During the research period, RAP's Heathrow office, was and still is in the Queen's building of Terminal 1. It was a small open-plan office with a separate meeting room and a very small waiting room with sofas for about 6 people, so often clients spilled out into the corridor where airport personnel walked and worked. The door with small window between the waiting room and office was security coded, was usually closed, sometimes wedged open. Clients were "received" at Heathrow, and all new clients had to register here. Most arrived or were fetched from the airport terminals having been referred by Immigration on arrival. On a client's arrival, RAP staff would check their documentation to ensure they were registered an asylum seeker, explain their support options then phone to the Central Allocations Team ("database boys") to get them allocated or "booked in" to EA and with NASS if necessary, register them with RAP and arrange taxis to their EA. One team, team leader and administrator would work at Heathrow, as well as the Young Person's Adviser, with the Team Leader in the furthest corner, but with optimal view of proceedings, trying not to get involved in individual casework.

5.3.3.2 *Central Office*

Newly acquired in 2000, this big two-storey office facility was behind a multi-storey office housing the Probation Service among others. Towards the beginning of the research period, RAP procured the top floor of this block opposite them where the "Facilities" section and Executive Director moved and they had a meeting room. There was a small reception area and a waiting room, lined with hard chairs with a TV. The main office spaces for workers were separated from this area with security coded doors,

as was the large cubicled area each with a networked computer for one-to-one or small group advice work, with the resident Project Worker. Upstairs were two big areas with the older casework files and several offices, a meeting room and kitchen off it. After the move of "Facilities" from this upper floor, the Senior Operational Managers and Team Leaders moved to these offices. All of the management occurred here, and this was where clients came for their main routine advice session (up to 72 hours after arrival), completion of their NASS application and could "walk-in" for other advice or queries, by appointment. The SMT, Facilities staff, two NASS teams, the Support Services Team, Amigos and the CAT team worked here.

5.3.3.3 *Rosehill* (a pseudonym)

Rosehill 'hotel' was more a hostel, able to accommodate several hundred people. It was RAP's most longstanding EA provision and RAP had an office, in the front lower area of this, their biggest EA. RAP's office consisted of a big open plan room, with several screened off desked work areas, a small kitchen, three cubicles, two rooms off it where the clothes distribution occurred, and a waiting room leading into the main reception area of the 'hotel'. This was the most run-down office, (as was the 'hotel') with two sides as windows onto the outside entrance area of the 'hotel', 'netted' to obscure the view in from outside. The office was used to give advice and assistance to clients living in the hotel, distribute petty cash, give routine advice to clients about their dispersal and facilitate their actual leaving for dispersal from the car park in front of the building. One team of Project Workers and their Team Leader worked here, with several Refugee Support Workers.

5.3.3.4 *Emergency Accommodations*

During the research period RAP had a small office, manned by two Project Workers at one of the other four largest 'hostels' to give general advice and assistance, and dispersal advice for residents. They also began an 'outreach' service to clients once a week at two of the other large EAs to assist and advise those residents.

5.3.4 *RAP's identity and workers*

RAP strongly promoted itself as an organisation "*run by refugees, for refugees,"* both officially in its promotional literature, and by individual workers keen to stress RAP's

"unique" character. As mentioned, a third of the management committee were necessarily RCO representatives and also, as many workers reiterated, *most* paid workers for RAP were refugees or even asylum seekers themselves. However, the percentage had dropped with the new recruitments since 2000, as many of these were recruited more on a skills basis, such as in business, language or advice work. Workers who were refugees were still represented throughout the hierarchy, although the Executive Director was a white British woman, and they were most numerously represented among the Project Workers and Interpreters.

This high percentage of staff who were refugees gave the organisation a strong identity in several ways. It was often said that this gave staff an understanding and empathy with their clients not possible from a person without the experience of such forced migration. Indeed, a few workers still experienced the uncertainty and fears of unsure immigration status. Also, the sheer number of languages spoken and understood (38 in all) gave staff the resources they needed for effective communication with their clients. The organisation never had to use an agency for interpretation as they had all the languages they needed at least a phone call away, but usually with someone physically present. Another benefit often sited by individual workers was the incredible cultural diversity of the organisation. Even workers critical of the organisation, said they loved working in such a *"multi-cultural"* environment. On a daily basis, workers brought food from their own cultures to share with fellow workers, and work would be organised around important religious festivals such as Ramadan.

Another frequently stated facet of RAP's identity, as one manager put it, "W*orking as a team, a **family**, is the 'culture' of this organisation"*. Workers often spoke of RAP as a family and of its friendliness. This close-knit long term culture explained in some ways the organisation's very low staff turnover. Several of those workers joining RAP early in its existence still worked there, and many others had not moved on for several years. This was considered a mixed blessing; some suggesting that the organisation was so special nobody wanted to leave, others suggesting that workers could not move on because, as refugees themselves, they could not easily get jobs elsewhere. There was certainly a high degree of very highly qualified and trained workers not necessarily utilising these skills in their RAP position, as is typical of many people with refugee status. There was a fairly balanced proportion of genders among workers.

5.3.5 Clients

People assisted by RAP were known as 'clients'. This was the demographic nature of RAP's clientele, according to their 2005 website:

During 2002/3 RAP helped over 9,800 individuals. A large proportion of asylum seekers come from Afghanistan, Iraq and Zimbabwe. Other common nationalities are Iranians, Congolese and Somalis to mention a few. Over 21% of our clients are under 18. The bulk (37%) are aged 25 to 34 and are single. More than half (3588) are women, over a quarter of whom are under 18. Every week, RAP places between 100 and 120 asylum seekers in low cost accommodation in West London 55% of our clients stay with RAP for over 4 weeks. The majority of our referrals come through Gatwick and Heathrow airports. A small number (just over 100) come through Luton and Stansted.

RAP only worked with people with the immigration status of "asylum seeker," and occasionally, additionally, with those who had gained ELR or refugee status (for instance those still in EA when gaining 'status'). By far the greatest number of these had arrived at Heathrow and claimed asylum on arrival. Since 2000 RAP also worked with "in-country" claimants who had made themselves known in the 'shires.' They also assisted those newly released from immigration detention, in need of NASS support. NASS also referred all single people living in London who had claimed asylum before the 1999 Act, then lost their rights to Income Support when losing their claim but needed RAP support while they appealed. Many RAP clients did not stay in EA but lived with a "sponsor" (friend or relative willing to accommodate them) and claimed only NASS "subsistence" payments. These were known in RAP as "walk-in" or "subs-only" clients.

5.3.5.1 Typical path of 'client' through RAP

Reception

All clients on arrival/referral/application for NASS support required to register at Heathrow office, received a RAP reference number and if needing accommodation were "booked in" with NASS by phone or fax. Many arrived at airports and were collected by or taken to RAP Heathrow, where possible options explained to them. Documentation checked. Should only accept those with ARC or SAL 26 indicating asylum application registered by Immigration. Occasionally those without were accepted if "in-country" and sent to local ASU next day for registration.

If needing accommodation allocated according to availability, needs, gender, family make-up, etc, by Central Allocations Team at RAP Rosehill. Transported by taxi to relevant EA.

NASS application

RAP required by NASS to give set "advice" session and lodge application for NASS support 72 hours after first registration with RAP. Target not always met. Clients summonsed by note under door of EA room to be ready for transportation in am to RAP's Head Office. Interpretation arranged if necessary. Given standardised advice on options etc, fill in NASS application form with Project Worker, two photos taken at office. Asked if needed clothes, usually assessed for special needs (e.g. "Were you tortured?"). Procedures explained. NASS app. sent

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Dispersal

Clients would then stay in EA (or with sponsor) until NASS dispersal. They would be notified by general notice of new dispersal allocations pinned up or by notes under doors that they would be dispersed to general region or city allocated, were required to attend RAP dispersal advice session at Rosehill & given "dispersal pack" of information. People given between 1 day-2 weeks notice. Then required to come to Rosehill on allotted day for collection by Wackenhut coach.

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6 Policy in practice: implementing the 'safety net' system at reception

> *I think the service **we** offer... Is as fair as it possibly can be, in the system that*
> *we're in and the problem that we have as an organisation, is we've got our*
> *hands completely tied... because our funding doesn't allow... Pretty much, they*
> *do say, 'Jump!' and you say, 'How high?' and that's it...* (**TL, int.**)

When RAP signed a Grant Agreement with NASS in March 2000 to become one of five key stakeholders and one of two primarily Reception Assistants to new asylum claimants, implementing parts of the 1999 IAA, they were, by most accounts, placing themselves in a contradictory position. Formed to provide "*relief for refugees... in conditions of need, hardship or distress at or near ports of entry to the United Kingdom*" (RAP, 1998), RAP were committed as a NASS Reception Assistant to provide such people with a 'safety net' "*to ensure that genuine asylum seekers cannot be left destitute*" in "*a way which minimises the incentive for abuse.*" The potential conflicts of interest in this role of welfare support provision designed as a deterrent were recognised by the Home Office (1999; 2001) themselves. Critics of this "*apartheid system*" (Mynott, 2000), accused agencies like RAP of, despite honourable motives, in fact implementing a system "*directly antagonistic to the interests of refugees*" and becoming "*a designated poor law enforcer*" (Cohen, 2002: 141). By accepting Home Office funds to operate a system designed to control migrants' access to welfare, and control immigration internally, agencies like RAP compromise their independence to defend migrants rights, instead becoming "*a junior partner of the state*" (Cohen, 2002: 142), part of New Labour's "*technocratic force to implement its programme,*" (Duvell and Jordan, 2000:30), and internal immigration control officers, guarding the borders of the welfare state (Geddes, 2003).

By either the tentative or strong account of their contradictory position, it might be supposed that the implementing of such policy in daily practice could generate tensions, dilemmas and necessitate compromises for RAP and its workers. Fulfilling their RAA role controlling asylum seekers' access to NASS support, overseeing a minimal 'safety net' welfare in Emergency Accommodation and facilitating peoples' dispersal, might clash with the objectives of the organisation and presumed desire of its workers to relieve need, hardship and distress of asylum seekers at this point of entry. How did agencies such as RAP understand their position and pathway to it? What did

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implementing a Reception service fulfilling the 1999 IAA involve in practice, 'on the ground' for a VS agency in this position? From identification of this broad contradictory 'puzzle', questions raised by it and themes grounded in the data, this chapter will explore and describe the everyday lived experience 'on the ground,' of RAP and differently positioned RAP workers putting this policy into practice. Where relevant, I have used Lipsky's (1980) generic analysis of the dilemmas facing street-level bureaucrats and Morris's (2002) argument that the informal practices involved in the delivery of the formal social rights of civic status may contribute to civic gain or deficit in their actual exercise.

It is important to remember the complexity and broader context of RAP's position and the multitude of different influences (idiosyncratic *and* emblematic), which might constrain and enable RAP's practices and this everyday world in conjunction with their position as a NASS RAA. These include RAP's unique history, identity, geography and trajectory of relations with the Home Office, their shared characteristics and position with the other IAP agencies and their important but transient role in the wider 'safety net' dispersal system. This local London organisation at the nexus of welfare and immigration policy for forced migrants in 2002-2003 was also conditioned by the widely diverse people with agency presenting daily for a multitude of reasons and global causes with a variety of complex and simple needs, and local, national, regional and global social and political events and policy changes.

Since April 2000 RAP became directly accountable to and obliged to work closely with NASS to implement the 1999 IAA and subsequent policy. This relationship, central to RAP's practices, will be explored before describing some of the changes to the organisation, its work and 'processing' of clients, precipitated by it. The chapter will then investigate RAP's practices controlling access at and within the 'borders' of the safety net welfare system.

6.1 An 'agent' or 'partner' of NASS?

"You, RAP, are an agent of NASS," an Amigos volunteer said accusingly during a training session with RAP's support team leader. *"For certain, yes. In a way, yes,"* he replied. This accusation suggests an imbalance of power with RAP working as a puppet to NASS' purposes, subjugating their own values and control to fulfil NASS' aims,

with little independence or autonomy. However some RAP SMs spoke ambivalently of their relationship with NASS as a 'partnership,' and the government had described 'stakeholders,' consortia members and VS agencies like RAP as 'partners' in policy implementation. Defining 'partnership' is obviously problematic, however it implies at least "*a degree of trust, equality or reciprocity*" rather than a top-down command or market-style contract, (Glendinning et al. 2002:3). 'Partnership' is also considered as joint-working between otherwise independent agencies, cooperating towards a common goal, planning and implementing a joint programme where information, risks and rewards are shared, (Audit Commission, 1998:8, cited in ibid). The character of RAP's relationship with NASS is crucial to understanding how government policy was transformed into practice by both agencies, **and** RAP's contradictory positioning. Permeating most aspects of RAP's work, it permeates each chapter; however this section considers explicitly how RAP workers understood their organisation's relationship with NASS, and the consequences for the organisation, its workers and their daily work of entering into Grant Agreement with NASS.

6.1.1 'Soul searching'

RAP managers, in particular, were well aware of the tensions of their new position implementing parts of the 1999 IAA, and criticisms (like Cohen's, 2001) of VS agencies like themselves for doing so. In describing the process they gave RAP's justifications for playing its role,

> *With the 2000 legislation, the voluntary sector agencies did a lot of soul searching, but the overwhelming feeling was that we should be in… We can offer other services. Group 4 would not have that interest. There was some criticism of our involvement and there will be a lot again.* **(SM, int.)**

This was the most widespread justification across the VS for their involvement, that at least such agencies with their commitment to the interests of refugees, would be more likely to protect those interests than a private sector agency which the government would contract if they refused,

> *We believe by getting involved, the voluntary sectors will make a **difference** that otherwise would not be there…even under these circumstances, we are making*

a difference to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees, and if we are not... doing it, there will be other people, like Group 4, and we have no confidence that they would be qualified or suitable to do this kind of work. **(SM, int.)**

The obvious ethical dilemmas of the VS agencies was, for RAP, intensified by the fact that its original purpose had been to provide services at reception for newly arrived forced migrants, "*We are very much a creature of our history really*" **(SM).** As evident from the title, RAP had always been a reception agency, predominantly funded by various sections of the Home Office,

> *This is the symptom of RAP's creation and the work we are in. We will never really overcome that because what we do, really is pretty much government responsibility, nobody else will give us the money to do that type of work... We've been government funded for as long as I can remember... the reception* ***function****... it's seen as part of government responsibility to basically provide these services.* **(SM, int.)**

For RAP then to refuse to implement the 1999 IAA would have condemned them to redundancy or a complete change of purpose and new funding sources. Aware of the contradictions and ethical criticisms of their involvement, RAP workers defended their co-operation with the Home Office from an alternative ethical stance,

> *It's very difficult for the voluntary sector, because our principles are still the same – that we provide services to clients. It's a* ***moral duty*** *to provide this to clients.* **(SM)**

A TL, acknowledging the compromises, gave a reformist ethical justification mixed with personal pragmatism in defence of RAP's involvement,

> *Well, they're getting fair treatment with****in*** *the legislation, but I think the legislation stinks! … It does and it doesn't* (create dilemmas for her personally)… *in order to change the system, you have to work within it… I mean, I know a lot of people who don't, they'd rather be militant and go out, but you know you're never gonna get* ***anywhere*** *unless you work within the system, and we work within the system and my* ***job*** *is to work within the system… and*

I'd rather we were doing it, this reception, than the Home Office, cos we're a bit more compassionate. At least we can say, "I've tried"… and I've got a mortgage to pay as well. I have to be realistic! **(TL, int.)**

6.1.2 The unintended consequences of policy

Karim, an SM, talked of RAP's changing relationship with NASS as the practical realities of policy implementation began to unfold, suggesting that 'partnership' became a less accurate way of representing the relationship,

*We were approached by the government, the voluntary sector, saying "This is what we want to do, do you think you can work with us on this?" And when we looked at it initially we said, "Yeah" and we proposed a way of doing it, and fortunately it was by and large accepted. So… the run up to NASS has been quite a reasonable, I would say, strong really, er…partnership, in trying to sort of draw the principles and guidelines and the basic elements of this relationship. But since its implementation, really two problems arise, one of them, **practical** implementation problems that the policies have… NASS have found it more difficult to implement than they hoped to and that causes frustrations for us and for them as well.* **(SM, int.)**

The failings of NASS for the first two years at least of their operating the support system since April 2000 are well publicised (Dunstan, 2002), many being reported in the Home Office's own operational reviews (2001; 2003). These were widely accepted to be the result of inadequately planned policies, rushed through with insufficient preparation time for agencies involved, in response to political pressure to 'get tough' on asylum. All agencies involved in the system felt the effects of (and in some cases contributed to) the failings of the NASS system, (Home Office, 2003), RAP (and the other RAAs and OSSs) included.

*Most of the difficulties are because the whole concept is, again not very well thought through…or it was underestimated, the difficulty. The **idea** of centrally planning the arrival, reception, information, decision, accommodation for 70,000 asylum seekers from all over the world, with needs and what have you…it just speaks for itself really! It's a **mad** concept! So, in a way really, the*

civil service, or NASS have been given, right from the beginning, an impossible job! (**SM, int.**)

Several factors of failing in the NASS system significantly affected RAP initially and during the research period and transformed its work. The most considerable of these was the failure of NASS to disperse people from the care of RAAs and EA in the seven days initially allocated. There were many reasons for this, including NASS' inability to procure sufficient accommodation from reluctant LA's in dispersal regions, no previous consideration of people arriving with varied special support needs, increasing numbers of arrivals and the fundamental serious bureaucratic and operational inefficiencies of NASS, (Home Office, 2001). Judith, an SM, described the situation:

> *As the numbers had increased, the amount of paperwork that NASS had to complete was becoming bigger and bigger and bigger. They didn't have systems in place because it was meant to be, "You enter, you fill the form in, that's assessed, validated, we find you accommodation, you move on". There was no capacity for "You come in. OK, you're disabled, you're in a wheelchair, so how do we deal with that?" Everybody was feeling like a cog in a wheel – you came in at A and you went out at Z. It started to break down around October of 2000.*

Karim explained the dispersal system designed to *"intelligently"* disperse people to 'cluster' regions according to their language or religion,

> *Somewhere they can fit it. That has… never worked really from the first week of implementation. It just collapsed and basically people are sent to, by and large, wherever there is somewhere to send them to.*

And some reasons for and consequences of this

> *It's not necessarily because of us or them, it's the other forces, especially for example, the role of local authorities. They are NASS's problem but they have not helped the implementation process… One of the main problems with the operation is lack of dispersal, finding suitable accommodation for people to walk into so they are not clogged up in centres like us. That's **really** one of the **key** problems and finding a solution has not been easy for them… And once you*

have all that backlog, that bottleneck of people, then you start having all the
other problems arising from large numbers of people staying all in one place.

RAP's planned RAA role changed almost immediately from overseeing the swift transition of asylum seekers from arrival to dispersal, to accommodating and providing welfare support to hundreds of people at a time for long periods, many with special and complex needs. RAP was forced to adapt and transform itself in order to continue servicing NASS, assist clients in new ways and to control the growing chaos. Karim insisted, however, that they had good pragmatic working relationships with individual NASS workers and, in a sense, they and NASS were "dumped" in this together, trying to make as best sense possible of unrealistic government aims,

> *We are working in a partnership. We try as much as possible to share with them*
> *information, ideas, support them in trying to reach conclusions that are*
> *balanced and… workable… Sometimes it's possible, sometimes you hit a sort of*
> *policy wall… and we do understand that it's not really their decision, the*
> *officials*

6.1.3 'Bending over backwards' – Flexibility and uncertainty

Despite Karim's description of RAP in 'partnership,' RAP had to adapt to their Grant Agreement with NASS by becoming increasingly flexible, in response both to NASS' inflexibility and both organisations' attempts to respond to increasingly frequent policy changes from above, and changing global movements. Another SM said,

> *They just keep extending the Grant. We don't have to go through a tendering*
> *process, in which case they could give a contract to Wackenhut or Sodhexho.*
> *We have moved so far away from the original agreement, because we want to*
> *make it work. We're much more flexible, (***SM, int).***

This SM, Judith, suggested their increasing flexibility, and juggling of interests, was less than 'partnership,'

> *What's the point in having liaison when there is total disregard for any advice*
> *we give, but asylum seekers suffer… It is liaison in name rather than deed… It's*

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always us bending over backwards… It is a big bureaucracy, everything takes a long time to filter through and simple changes take months to realise. They have a top-down approach… We tried to maintain a good relationship with NASS. As one of the first voluntary sector agencies, we did our damnedest to make things work… but people [NASS staff] *are coming and going and you feel like you are training people all the time. It's quite frustrating and it's like you are banging your head against a brick wall* (**SM, obs).**

Karim was sympathetic to the difficulties of NASS workers',

Fantastically *difficult job to do, because they are basically caught between the politicians, who made the decisions without concentration (if I may say!) and the voluntary sector, who will always be advocating and challenging these policies, and them in the middle really, trying to enforce something that is probably not easy to enforce… I totally sympathise and empathise with them in terms of the difficulties of their jobs.*

However, he also acknowledged the movement RAP had to make in the face of NASS' immovability,

Our strength has really been, flexible and responsive to demands for change, and what have you by the government. This government department would have the highest level of policy change in any time, in any area… So it's really cumbersome and it's not responsive, and it's very difficult to follow through and finish something before something else starts, and then priorities shift and change very, very often and therefore we really get… frustrations… The government's gone into overdrive about asylum seekers and refugee policy… it's a competition between Ann Widdecombe really! And that does not help NASS because they are always completely diverted, whenever there's new policies, new procedures to implement.

The knock-on effects for RAP were significant. Their need to be this flexible was translated into major changes in work, and also bred a high level of uncertainty throughout the organisation. Although uncertainty was generic to RAP's work ("*You never know who's going to walk through the door,*" **TL,** int.), this had become

compounded by policy making, the NASS system and inefficiency. One example of RAP's complex position was when the increase in Zimbabwean asylum seekers fleeing the Mugabe regime during 2001, was compounded with NASS inability to disperse and a growing backlog of people in RAP's EA. By summer 2001 large numbers of asylum seekers were sleeping on airport concourses, in effect queuing for RAP's EA. Eventually it was only an international sporting event that provoked the government to act, via NASS and demand RAP *"clear the concourses"* (**TL,** int) for the arrival of these more revered guests. Only then was RAP funded to procure a large, squalid hostel some distance from their main sites in order to accommodate these people, and subsequently for a large recruitment of staff (just prior to the research period). Then the Government imposed a visa restriction on November 8th 2002, immediately prior to which the numbers of Zimbabweans dramatically rose and afterwards dramatically fell,

> *…they have to hire a certain number of project workers to meet the need but then you might not have any clients coming through… Like we had all them Zimbabweans, all we were dealing with was Zimbabweans, the British government imposed a visa restriction on people fleeing Zimbabwe, so we didn't have any! So then all these project workers don't have anything to do, or as much to do, there's always stuff to do so then like, as a defensive measure you might get in more… let more walk-in's come in and then you might have a commotion in somewhere else, like if we go into Iraq we're gonna get loads from Iraq, but then you've developed the walk-in service, so it's just this constant juggling of… of needs, that your hands are tied by the government* (**BfSW,** int).

The problems of planning in such a relationship and environment are also illustrated by RAP's attempts to plan for Induction Centres, the 2002 NIAA model for a more standardised, controlled Reception. At an end of year meeting (2002, obs), the SMT tried to explain the situation to staff on RAP's proposed involvement in running an IC. The ED joked about the constantly mixed messages they had from NASS, over *"The elusive Induction Centre"* concluding, *"We feel let down. We were geared up to working and then everything went quiet,"* confirming later that RAP were now *"Out of the loop!"* Karim told the meeting,

> *There have been consultation meetings, but there isn't a process agreement or a firm offer. We expect this soon but we don't know when, where or how. They have not opened a full dialogue with RAP.*

An SM then spoke of how NASS demands were affecting his procurement of EA,

> *So that's the nebulous future, it is indeterminate to say the least… NASS have been hammering very strongly on value for money… Bearing in mind things change on an hourly basis, in case things won't happen when NASS say, we've got our eyes on a number of other hotels… We're geared up to business as usual, in a fluid position that is very flexible. We have to be flexible as things change.*

While RAP managers, obviously more expert on process and practicalities, were understanding of NASS problems attempting to keep up with policy makers, and supportive of different levels of NASS workers, attempting to 'train' them, it was evident that the relationship was more top-down than 'partnership;' RAP used all its flexibility to accommodate NASS, but NASS could strike RAP 'out of the loop'.

6.1.4 Working as a 'front-line' 'agent of NASS'

RAP acted as the 'front-line' face of NASS as, although in theory it was possible for asylum seekers to contact NASS by phone themselves, in practice this was virtually impossible, and visiting in person *was* impossible. Lipsky (1980:185) described street-level bureaucrats as "*absorbing conflict in their buffer roles,*" protecting the state from 'citizen,' who blames the worker or agency for services received,

> *Street-level bureaucrats mediate between citizens and the state in that clients' inability to obtain benefits or services and inequities of distribution may be understood by clients as personal malfeasance of street-level bureaucrats or administrative agency disarray,* (ibid:184).

Most levels of RAP worker had daily contact with similar level NASS workers. The uncertainties stemming from NASS management of policy and change, fed down to

RAP's 'front-line' workers working directly with clients. After the introduction of S55 of the 2002 NIAA an SM, Judith, explained her role,

> *On a weekly basis a lot of it is dealing with, particularly recently, there has been so much hourly change with the legislation, you know… One minute you do it one way, the next minute you do it another. It's about…as I'm not doing all that form filling* [NASS applications] *I need to know intimately in order to inform the staff. I'm actually doing it on a daily basis. So it's really important that the information that comes in is disseminated as quickly and simply as possible so that people understand what they are doing on the ground with clients, as they walk in.*

Such acute changes typically fed what was PWs' general experience of uncertainty working with NASS, with frequent procedural changes, but also NASS structural and staff changes. Two RAP PWs described their daily operational relationship with NASS workers, mediating for clients, as their main working problem,

> *…because the rules are changing, because… We are working under NASS, at the Home Office…it's all the uncertainty…One day they say we should do **this**, and the other day the Home Office… NASS, change their mind and then they say, "No, you have to do it like **this.**" I wish they could co-operate with us. I don't think they are co-operating **fully** with these organisations… and if you are an asylum seeker and you have a problem, probably it will take… four or five or six hours before you can get a response from NASS…* **(PW, int.)**

> *Dealing with NASS – it's very difficult to deal with them…It's very hard to get hold, they keep changing the numbers, and the sections… and anyone who hasn't decide on the case it seems like they don't want to touch it or take any decisions, nobody takes decisions, nobody gives you decisions immediately they say, oh blah, blah, blah… you have to do this, so I find it very difficult to deal with NASS… passing you on, sometimes you spend a whole day just passing from one number to another.* **(PW,int.)**

6.1.5 An ambivalent relationship

SMs gave contradictory messages concerning the degree of independence, autonomy and actually interactive 'partnership' RAP had in relationship with NASS, suggesting the disjuncture between word and deed, intentions and actual practice redolent of the differences between the aims and practices of NASS' dispersal regime. SMs' statements suggest 'front-stage' presentational claims of managers defending their position, but hint at a masked and more complex 'back-stage' reality,

> *Government agrees that we have a very valuable role to play and we are allowed the freedom and inventiveness to play that role in terms of practicalities with this new legislation...*

> *I think, we are the, pretty much, the masters of our own decisions and...NASS officials, for example, especially operationally, really they are not masters of their own decisions. They always have to check and be guided by... So there's a different culture...* (**SM, int.**)

> *Obviously the Home Office has the **major** influence because they're very much funding our service and they **specify** what services we provide. They don't specify the **way** in which we provide the services though!* (But)... *The stuff that comes from NASS! I mean it's by the tonne! You know, all the guidance,* (**ED, int).**

Karim admitted,

> *...there is quite a lot of anxiety both internally and externally that our reliance on funding from NASS may, in some cases, jeopardise our independence... Of course, we don't think it **does** but we... as an organisation we constitutionally and otherwise we feel really strongly that to do this work, without compromising our...er charitable principles, as such...nor have really the funders or Home Office asked us to do so...But it's nevertheless very politically, very difficult time for everyone... and if you want to be in this kind of work, you will have to get your hands dirty sometimes, I'm afraid.*

Karim's awareness of the potential compromises RAP might be making as 'an agent of NASS,' and his suggestion that working for the Home Office might involve doing some things they would prefer not to, was followed by the statement suggesting these were sacrifices worth making as they were still able to make a positive difference to refugees' lives (p5). The ambivalence of RAP's position seems clear, and 'agent' a more apt description of their relationship with NASS than 'partner.'

However, to explore the character of RAP's relationship to NASS further it is necessary to go beyond the accounts of workers, to consider how it played out in daily practice. This will aid understanding of how government policy was transformed into practice by RAP via NASS and an understanding of their relationship should become deeper by considering some of the ways that RAP changed and adapted to their new role, such as bureaucratising.

6.2. Bureaucratisation

> *The decisions of street-level bureaucrats, the routines they establish, and the devices they invent to cope with uncertainties and work pressures, effectively **become** the public policies they carry out,* (Lipsky, 1980:xii).

Lipsky (1980) argues that the official and unofficial methods street-level bureaucracies and bureaucrats develop to manage and respond to the complexities and uncertainties of their tasks, may have significant effects on the character of the policy they are implementing or 'making'. With street-level bureaucracies "*Routines and simplifications aid the management of complexity; environmental structuring limits the complexity to be managed,*" (Lipsky, 1980:83).

RAP's assumption of their NASS RAA role meant it transformed by bureaucratising in several ways. The organisation transformed massively in size, structure, geography and character very rapidly between April 2000 and October 2002. During that period RAP grew from 15 to over 60 staff, transforming from a horizontally to a hierarchically organised structure with new ED recruiting down the new layers of management and a whole new 'resources' section, so that from "*a very **simple** set up*" RAP became "*…much more differentiated… more layers in the hierarchy… more strands, specialisms working through it,*" (**ED**, int).

From two offices and one 'hotel', RAP procured another large office, spreading storeys and buildings during the research period and variably up to seven more EA's to accommodate and manage the increases and fluctuations in long-staying clients. Some, particularly long-serving refugee workers, felt that RAP's intrinsic character and identity changed, that some new workers were recruited more for their job skills than their commitment to refugees, "*maybe people who are working for wrong reasons… that is just a job for them,*" and in the growth, bureaucratisation, new hierarchy and spatial arrangement of the organisation, "*Metaphorically, even **symbolically** we are… trying to create more distance between the clients and the staff…*"

However, others felt that, especially the latest recruitment and restructuring in place since October 2002, which required the new teams to stop previous rotation of sites but to specialise, had been a change for the better, enabling control over chaos and workers to work *to* their job descriptions rather than down, in crisis-management,

> *General purpose rotating around the different sites and being a jack-of-all-trades and master-of-none, there was no consequence of error. If you did something wrong it didn't matter because somebody else was going to be coming into your seat next week*
> (**ED,** int)

A long-serving SM confessed,

> *Adapting to the growth has not been easy. We were very small and have now grown to over fifty people, over four legislations… terrible legislations, each one worse than the one before it.*

And the ED also stressed that the changes related to external requirements,

> *I'm sure there are people who say it's much too structured and it's not like the old days… particularly the people who are very **committed** to the way things were because it was a tremendously good team and… did **fantastic** things! …but of course… it doesn't mean that because things have changed that that's been rubbished. It's just that the world has changed and moved on, particularly in what the Home Office wants us to do.*

6.2.1 *The bureaucratisation of work*

Functioning as a Reception Assistant for NASS, not only initiated fundamental structural change to the organisation, but from workers' accounts, their work had also become more bureaucratic, and this was also observable.

6.2.1.1 *Routinisation*

> *"Routines could be structured to maximize the achievement of agency objectives. Or they could be structured to maximize responsiveness to clients."*
> Lipsky (1980:86)

The development of routines in order to control the unpredictability and uncertainties of work, especially in street-level bureaucracies, is, as Lipsky (1980) acknowledged, almost synonymous with bureaucratisation and not unusual in any work environment. However, he problematises the contradictory structuring of routinisation, where agency objectives, client preferences and individual worker's stresses and discretion vie to determine whose interests those routines are serving. RAP's attempts to control and regain control over their workload during the first two years doing NASS' work, were mostly structured from the top down,

> *it's so much easier to be top-down when you're a relatively new organisation, because you've got to be meeting the requirements of your funders and there are things that are imperatives laid down for you,* (**ED**).

New routines RAP established by trial and error between 2000 and 2002, were largely determined by the performance of specific tasks fulfilling NASS' requirements, differing across sites: initial Reception at Heathrow; completion of NASS application forms at Central office; dispersal advice and facilitation at Rosehill EA. At the beginning of the research period specific teams had been allotted one of these central tasks on a permanent basis. These tasks had therefore become more repetitive for workers no longer rotating around sites. In particular, for the two teams completing NASS forms every day, the nature of this task and at Central Office by managers anxious to meet NASS targets, prevented much room for creative involvement with clients, who were taxied in and out solely for this purpose. Some workers complained

they were becoming de-skilled with this repetitiveness and compared their current work with that prior to April 2000:

> *Particularly after 1999, there is no room for creativity… it is so slow now. Before, we had two to five days to accommodate people. One day I moved 150 people across fourteen London boroughs, in two stages. NASS can't do this in a week. There is a huge amount more bureaucracy and there's no space for creativity in this process,* (**SM**).

> *It is since four years I've joined RAP. I was a Refugee Support Worker, at that time… and you were working mainly **outside** from the office…RAP was responsible for finding accommodation then…The Refugee Support used to go there and get the client from the accommodation and take him to the DSS, taking the client to the council, to the doctors, to the college as well to show him the areas, to help that client, that family. We were educating, we were interpreting… The other thing was we were travelling around the country…Manchester, Leeds, Norwich, Bognor Regis, Bristol, Cardiff. I **was** enjoying that. I'm still enjoying my job now… it was a big change when NASS came, so now we are 99% inside, indoors, in the office.* (**NTPW, int.**)

However although saying, "*it is very difficult to deal with them*" (NASS), another NTPW described the fact that they now only had one agency to refer to rather than many previously more positively as making life easier for RAP.

6.2.1.2 *Servicing NASS' bureaucracy*

Despite this PW's contention that work was now easier for RAP, he also reminded that pre-NASS clients stayed in RAP EA for two nights before being accommodated in HPU's around London or, latterly, dispersed informally countrywide, whereas now clients were in RAP's care for "*four weeks or more.*" This and the immensely inefficient bureaucratic character of NASS, meant that workers spent the majority of their time involved in dealing with some aspect of NASS' bureaucracy; from the routine form-filling, dispersal, 'booking' and 'cancelling' clients, to trying to deal with a client's bureaucratic problem, due to a NASS mistake or inefficiency. Such as,

(NASS)…*stopped voucher for no reason, for silly mistakes or something like that NASS don't even know why the money has been stopped and you have to keep ringing from section to section* (**NTPW**, int)

Illustrating workers' buffer role, a PW, following up the case of a client granted refugee status but unable to move out of EA until receiving his NASS 35 form, said,

NASS show no initiative, they don't care. They are a very bureaucratic organisation. It should be easy to pass a fax on, but they are very bureaucratic indeed, a very narrow-minded organisation. We'll give them seven more days, but this man is very angry. He comes every day, (**PW, obs.**)

Of just speaking to the correct NASS official a PW said,

*We have to phone up NASS, and then… first it is difficult, because NASS is a vast organisation… You don't know where to phone, if you ring because they're… the thing is, they are changing it I would say, every single day… their staff, their extensions, so you ring… Well, if you ring someone today, and tomorrow if you ring, there's another one there… It's a **nightmare** sometimes to find the right person… There should be differentiation between us and other general people, because we are working, if we are waiting for one call for two or three hours, then it gets very complicated.*

Workers' attempts to circumnavigate bureaucracy and inefficiency and gain some continuity by building relationships with particular NASS workers, were often quashed by NASS high turnover of staff. An SM was unequivocal about the impact working with NASS had on RAP,

All the external restraints I have, particularly with the Home Office and the whole new system now, it's just a nightmare to say the least… So bureaucratic, and of course anything bureaucratic puts an awful lot more on people who are trying to work within it… There are probably close to 800 people working there because of the paper trail they need to have and because they obviously need to work within very narrow, defined boundaries of what their roles are… (**SM,** int.)

6.2.1.3 *Meeting targets*

Another aspect of this bureaucratisation of RAP's work for NASS, was the greater emphasis on targets; the setting of targets by management and the meeting of those by front-line workers. This was at times dictated by rising numbers of clients, 'backlogs' in processing clients NASS had not dispersed, or in response to a NASS directive that RAP reach one target or another. This caused the inevitable tension between processing the most *numbers* of clients in the least time and dealing adequately with clients individually, which Lipsky (1980) argues is the most fundamental dilemma of street-level bureaucracies. One TL talked about middle-managers' fight to set the top limit of NASS application clients per project worker per day at 6:

> *We've pushed really hard for that, cos it was seen that they should see more and we just said, 'They can't! It's too many clients a day for people,' and just because we get walk-in clients who are hotel clients… that takes time to deal with too, everything takes time.*

Despite this, at a Team Meeting some PWs argued that sometimes having to see six clients a day was too many: *"If we go for quantity, we cannot go for quality,"* one said. Another said, *"If two of our six cases are difficult, we can't do all of them…I thought that by fixing the number, the pressure was going out, but it's the opposite, it's coming back to us."* The TL replied, *"While we are monitoring this, you know the pressure. You know what the responsibility is: to empty the waiting room. That's the issue of the day",* (**Obs.**)

Also illustrating how the 'requirements' of NASS targets could drive RAP's practices 'on the ground,'

> *We're technically not a one-stop service, yet we do it 'cos managers deem it necessary to keep our funding… at one point we weren't seeing enough clients, we were funded to see 240 a week and we weren't seeing them, so that's why we started the one-stop. At one point we were seeing over 100 walk-ins a week, because we were told…'We just need numbers. You just have to see them all, because we can.' We had about six people off sick every day, absolutely exhausted. It became a complete factory,* (**TL,** int).

6.2.1.4 *Systems for controlling the chaos*

It was obvious that since NASS, the organisation had been in the continual process of attempting to develop new systems to control the potential chaos. For instance,

> *It's crisis management. It's changed I think since I took on the role, it was* ***more*** *crisis management. Since I've taken on the role and we've got these new teams, it's been much more in terms of development of staff. I find the crisis management very difficult. If it's not ordered, I don't like it. I can't bear the chaos at the front desk…*(**TL, int.**)

A little further on though she said, "…*we've continued in this whole kind of crisis…* ***Daily*** *crisis.*" Another worker struggling to prioritise so that she could deal with her clients in the way she felt was most humane and productive,

> *I've suggested ways of making it more effective and more efficient, 'Set aside time to do this, make appointments, you know, and they say 'Yes what a great idea,' but it never happens! They just still continue…I think everything's sort of on the edge of crisis here, on the edge of chaos… It's crisis management a lot of the time, it's whichever client shouts the loudest, sometimes,* (**PW, int.**)

However, it was apparent workers *had* developed many new 'systems' of various sorts for ordering work. The most significant was computerisation with a (often-crashing) cross-site database for processing client information, when prior to NASS all their work was 'manual,' on paper file. A TL commented on a new petty-cash monitoring system,

> *I have to do all of this fiddling about with the book to sort out the petty cash. I can't put it into the computer because it would get lost. When I first came here, RAP was just haemorrhaging money all over the place; they gave out so much money. Now there are systems in place and it's all recorded and set straight,* (**TL, obs.**)

The ED suggested that since the latest organisational structures were in place, RAP had been able to begin more "*bottom-up*" systems and processes in order to

Maximise the quality of the service that we give, and the bottom-up aspect of it is really increasing. For example, the Quality Mark... saying to staff, 'Look, you're the experts, you know how things emerge from clients'. People came up with some brilliant ideas about how we can improve things, and then you develop a little process.

For example, a RSW had begun an admin system with NASS forms that pressurised NASS to process them more efficiently. The development of systems to control work processes, such as one ensuring workers with appropriate languages were available for the clients taxied in to complete their NASS forms, were often the premise of middle-managers attempting to increase efficiency or assert order on potential chaos. Some welcomed and others resented this with an element of nostalgia for 'the good old days' or intolerance of becoming more bureaucratic. For example, two TLs working together at Central Office discussed new forms one had introduced for managing work and workers more efficiently. Shirin, a long-term RAP worker, was tolerant but quietly sceptical. She joked, *"I'm confused. It's Sue's fault! I have to write everything down now. Before, I had it all in my head!"* Shirin confided that she would let Sue try these new systems out, but quietly believed they wouldn't work and they would go back to the old ways of doing things, more by feel than design.

6.2.2 The bureaucratisation of clients

It seems inevitable in such circumstances of the bureaucratisation of the organisation and its work, that in order to process their clients through NASS' bureaucratic system, RAP might bureaucratise their clients in certain ways. With large numbers of people to be processed in a certain way by a certain time target, the logistics of this operation involved considering clients in terms of numbers and categories. RAP workers frequently complained about NASS' inability to consider clients other than as numbers or categories, and a visiting NASS worker confessed that sat in their offices at their computers without ever meeting clients, *"We don't see the clients as human beings; to us they are just numbers, statistics or batches."* One TL's daily mantra to her workers, to NASS workers by phone, and as if to remind herself, was *"These are human beings we are dealing with, you know, not numbers!"* (obs)

However, each client had at least three types of different agencies reference numbers, an ARC, a NASS and a RAP number, and was usually expected to produce at least one of these (or their 'papers') to be dealt with by a worker. Clients were also frequently considered in terms of the numbers of them to process in one way or another, or move from one place to another. For instance, a stressed TL one day explained *"we're trying to get through all these walk-ins, because someone has filled in **two** forms with twenty appointments each,"* (**TL, obs.)**

While RAP workers were aware of the need to resist treating clients as numbers, there was more of a tendency to consider them in terms of their bureaucratic category or problem they presented. Lipsky (1980:59) discusses this common tendency as the *"social construction of the client,"*

> *People come to street-level bureaucracies as unique individuals with different life experiences, personalities, and current circumstances. In their encounters with bureaucracies they are transformed into clients, identifiably located in a very small number of categories, treated as if, and treating themselves as if, they fit standardized definitions of units consigned to specific bureaucratic slots.*

The categorisation of clients at RAP was obviously a strategy for simplifying a complexity of tasks and attempting to most efficiently address large numbers of clients' complex bureaucratic enquiries and entitlements, within time and staff resource limits. This was largely determined by the way they were categorised by the NASS system, but their categorisation also fragmented across agencies giving a clue to their specific often complex civic status and related entitlements. The complexity and inefficiencies of NASS categorisation, which also frequently changed and shifted with new policies and procedures, meant that RAP workers often needed to spend considerable time ascertaining the specific bureaucratic situation of each client before attempting to assist them. RAP also used their own formal and informal categories to determine the type of service they were entitled to, thus *"walk-ins,"* including *"subs-only"* (NASS category) clients, were only officially entitled to be assisted by RAP workers on an appointment system. This typically ran three weeks in advance, but was often arbitrary, and people were sometimes assisted anyway depending, for instance, on their insistence or which TL was running the 'front-desk'. Official client categories included *"change of circs," "disbenefitted", "self-write", " in-country," "MF",* and unofficial terms included

"complex", "exotic", or even *"untouchable"* 'cases.' An admin worker explained that *"untouchables"* were clients RAP would not 'touch' because they had exhausted all claims and entitlements, though she had not seen an 'untouchable' for some time now. Such categorisation is typical of the fundamental dilemma of street-level bureaucrats with large numbers of clients and low resources, despite workers' best intentions to respond to people as human beings. However this consideration and fragmentation of people (clients) predominantly in terms of their bureaucratic category was potentially dehumanising,

> *In response to the need to categorize clients they tend to treat them only as*
> *bundles of bureaucratically relevant attributes rather than as whole persons,*
> (Lipsky, 1980:76)

6.3 Controlling access to welfare

Morris (2002:144-5) has attempted to make sense of current contradictory tendencies within "*the political and social construction of rights and the underlying principles of control*" by developing the concept of 'civic stratification' to analyse "*the increasing diversity of 'outsider' status,*" focussing "*on both the formal inclusions and exclusions which operate with respect to eligibility, and the informal gains and deficits which shape delivery.*" Morris (2002:147) argues that formally held rights "*can be enhanced or restricted in practice,*" and some aspects of the granting and administration of rights are often not clear-cut, especially when there is room for discretion or interpretation in application of eligibility criteria. It was obvious from observation of RAP's operations, that within the formal status of 'asylum seeker,' there was an increasing diversity of further criteria for eligibility to differing welfare rights. Some of these were formally specified in the 1999 IAA and 2002 NIAA and amendments; some were formally or informally dictated by NASS and RAP; and RAP workers formally and informally decided others. While NASS centrally controlled asylum seekers access to their 'safety net' welfare support from a distance, RAP (and the other RAAs) were actually physically controlling the point of entry of human individuals to the NASS system and its attendant support rights. They also controlled access to a diversity of different rights specific to the pre-dispersal reception stage of the NASS system, as dictated by NASS, within which they had the discretion to decide on further details of eligibility to their specific welfare arrangements and supplementary services. Lipsky (1980:xiii) has

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proposed that street-level bureaucrats with substantial discretion in their decisions on eligibility, delivery and overseeing of state *"benefits and sanctions,"* in important ways *make* public policy, and *"implicitly mediate aspects of the constitutional relationship of citizens to the state"* (or, in this case, of these specifically categorised 'outsiders' or 'margizens'). At best they,

> *…invent benign modes of mass processing that more or less permit them to deal with the public fairly, appropriately and successfully. At worst they give in to favouritism, stereotyping, and routinizing – all of which serve private or agency purposes,* (ibid).

This section considers how RAP workers controlled the access of asylum seekers to NASS' welfare at Reception and how the organisation developed its own systems for controlling access to their specific reception services, through devising and operating systems of eligibility for the limited 'benefits' they (were permitted) to offer.

6.3.1 *Controlling access to NASS support: 'deserving' and ' undeserving' clients*

RAP's reception service was one of five transitory points of entry into NASS' dispersal system, at which RAP determined asylum seekers' eligibility to claim NASS support, accommodated eligible claimants in EA until they were dispersed or granted or refused refugee or another humanitarian leave-to-remain status.

6.3.1.1 Reception

The first 'border' to negotiate in order to gain initial access to the NASS system was at RAP's Heathrow office, where people arriving at London airports, in-country and in various other circumstances, were initially assessed for their eligibility to claim for NASS accommodation and/or subsistence support. If found eligible at this stage and in need of accommodation people were "booked in" to one of RAP's EA's, then taxied the following day to Central Office to complete a NASS application form. Eligibility for NASS 'last resort' support, officially depended on a person having made an asylum claim, having no-where else to stay, and being destitute. For RAP's Heathrow workers, assessing people's eligibility involved checking their paperwork for proof that they had

claimed asylum, checking they had no alternatives to NASS accommodation, and what resources (e.g. cash, savings, and valuables) they possessed.

In practice the boundaries of eligibility could be hazy, and workers made decisions favouring asylum seekers or not in degrees of defiance or adherence to NASS criteria, sometimes using more informal assessments of individuals' eligibility. For instance, depending on a person's time of arrival, if an in-country applicant and on informal assessments of the 'genuineness' of their situation, people were booked in to EA before they had claimed asylum (defying NASS rules). However, in compliance with NASS rules, workers always asked to see proof of their asylum claim (e.g. papers, arc card), but decisions workers made, with or without these documents, could be based on informal judgements of the enquirer's 'genuineness'. For instance, a worker had shown a young man who said he was an asylum seeker requesting NASS support, a map to Croydon telling him he must go there to claim asylum before RAP could help him. The worker said she didn't feel bad when he got angry and left because, without any documents or luggage, she did not believe he was an asylum seeker and had been in the country for some time,

> *I don't feel bad about him, but for the one in genuine need and hardship I will feel very bad. I can tell which ones are genuine; they might sit down and get depressed and cry. Others will get angry… You get to know this by experience,* (PW, obs).

RAP Reception workers explained people's options to them and asked if they wished or were able to stay with a 'sponsor', but did not dissuade them from claiming NASS support (as Cohen, 2002, suggested RAA's did). The Reception team also controlled the 'border' to changing support if peoples' circumstances changed. For instance, if somebody came saying they could no longer stay with their 'sponsor' for whatever reason, workers would phone NASS for authorisation to 'book' them into their EA and NASS' dispersal system. Sometimes, the TL explained, NASS might say, *"Can you stay with that person for two more weeks,"* or *"if they are genuinely destitute,"* they would be booked immediately. Thus there was an element of persuasion and judgement required by RAP workers, on NASS behalf to ensure their 'safety-net' really was the person's 'last resort'. However, workers also used persuasion on a client's behalf to

NASS (again sometimes depending on informal judgements, worker differences, or NASS' 'crack-downs'), which a PW found,

> *One of the most challenging issues is coming from a sponsor and need to readmit because you need to request that from NASS and you have to argue why you want to readmit him in emergency accommodation.*

People were asked if they had resources and their answers accepted at face-value and, it seemed with this Reception team, strictly adhered to. If a person stated they had resources over the NASS defined threshold (which varied by marital status, age etc), they were told that they could not be supported by NASS (accommodated in EA) until they had used up their resources to below the threshold. These eligibility decisions could also be accompanied by judgements on how 'deserving' clients were. The TL compared clients she had received the previous day,

> *…there were three Palestinians and an Iraqi, he was a doctor, and I just said to him 'Are you OK? Welcome. How was your journey?' …a man, but he started* ***crying****! …and I started crying with him… and when he tell you how he escaped, what happened to his brother who was killed and how he felt now, leaving his wife and three children… 'Don't call me a man!' he felt so* ***guilty*** *because he escaped! …The money he had paid! …And these three other Palestinians… we couldn't take them on Friday 'cos they had £600 between them, and Monday they came and said they had spent all the money… I said, 'What happened to the money?' 'Oh, we went to Soho! We were drinking!'…I said, 'If you were a new asylum seeker… how would you know to go to Soho, to a party'… and I wrote it in the contact episode like that…I said 'Now that you have spent everything, we have to take you, but you will be accountable towards the asylum'…But you cannot, we're not here to… kind of justify what they say. You have to say with kind of trust, or listen to what they have to say. Tomorrow they have to answer to Immigration and to the Home Office about what their action is, but it* ***does*** *make you think, sometimes…So we have got different flavour of people who will come, and we have got an open-door policy… we have to be helpful for everyone.*

Therefore, despite the private moral judgements workers sometimes made about the 'deservingness' or 'undeservingness' of people, they were also aware of RAP's equal opportunities or 'open-door policy', and strove to practice equity and adhere to NASS criteria when making eligibility decisions, but did not always succeed.

6.3.1.2 EA

Having gained access to RAP's EA, an asylum seeker would be required to apply for NASS support by completing an application form, officially the next day. Cohen (2002) argued that RAA's would be required to evict and 'starve people out' of EA if their NASS application was rejected. However in practice, having fulfilled the initial eligibility criteria of being an asylum seeker, homeless and destitute, almost *nobody* was rejected for NASS support. Once people, now RAP 'clients,' were staying in EA, different access issues to elements of welfare requiring eligibility decisions by RAP workers were salient.

Because RAP's EAs had varying facilities and living conditions, because most people stayed for several weeks or months (**never** seven days) and because many of those who stayed longer had special needs, RAP had negotiated with NASS to allow people with particular needs to stay in self-catering accommodation and receive cash, instead of full-board support. For those with special needs, RAP also had some influence in applying to NASS for clients' access to longer-term accommodation in London rather than dispersal regions (e.g. via MF assessment). This 'border' to specific welfare services involved decisions of eligibility based on medical evidence, usually in the form of a doctor's note, or a client's verbal appeal to a worker about her situation (e.g. long-staying, pregnant single parent). RAP workers were typically caught between the needs and demands of clients in front of them, scarce resources and NASS targets, allocations and variable attempts to 'crack-down' on different aspects of welfare. Managers, under greater pressure to meet NASS demands, would step in to rein resources in and take control when lower level workers had handed them out too liberally. For instance, at one point SMs insisted all decisions on clients eligibility to move onto cash be deferred to them on behalf of NASS who were,

> *…very concerned that that is acting as an incentive to stay… concerned about the number of people on cash… …so we're getting a handle on it. Otherwise it*

was getting out of hand, people making decisions willy nilly... for not valid reasons, (**SM**, int.)

But such decisions were not easy for Managers either, attempting to "*ration services*" (Lipsky, 1980:87) more leanly and they became involved in increasingly detailed judgements which again were based partly on factors considered objective, such as a written doctor's note but also on more informal judgements of need or 'deservingness'. Such eligibility decisions were often made through intense negotiations with people concerning the fairness of different variables, and the validity of their reasons. A SM gave an example of a client with constipation and piles, who she argued needed changes to a more fibrous diet and medication,

> *So we have the conversation with the client...'We'll ask the hotel to provide you with these things, but we're not going to put you on cash for this,'cos it's not an urgent medical need, it's something that just your diet needs a bit of tweaking. And then they get very, very angry because the whole purpose is to go on cash. As far as they're concerned, 'I want to cook my own food',* (**SM,** int).

The SM also told of a series of negotiations she had with a family wishing to be moved, stressing their insistence and use of "*emotional blackmail*" and the difficulty of making such decisions under the circumstances,

> *Her reasons for going on to cash were much stronger than her husband's. I had the mother and child on the Thursday, and then the husband on the Friday, both with letters and I said no to hers, so there was no way I was going to say yes to him and he got quite angry about this. She kept coming back and saying 'You're going to kill me and my child' and I was like, 'Your child's getting money, what's the problem! ... the doctor's asked for this to be improved and we're trying what I can improve in your diet... It was a real uphill struggle... as she walked out her mobile phone rang... and I was thinking, 'how's she managing to pay for that?'... she was getting £54 a week, which is not unreasonable when you think that both her and her husband could eat full-board... I had to make a conscious decision in the end... not to put them on cash at Carlton... move them to one of the other hotels that are cash anyway.*

Lipsky (1980:151) argues that *"ideological considerations that justify client differentiation"* and *"unsanctioned distinctions between worthy and unworthy clients"* are typical in street-level bureaucracies structured so that workers are always forced to ration scarce resources. RAP was certainly no exemption as resources were typically scarce and eligibility criteria could be vague, changeable, open to discretion and interpretation, and hard to prove. Therefore, despite attempts at equity, access to resources could also involve workers' informal judgements based on, for instance, the possession of a mobile phone or nice clothes.

6.3.1.3 Dispersal or Eviction

At the end of the Reception system, people were either dispersed or, if they had had a decision on their asylum claim before dispersal, were required by NASS to move out of EA, on receipt of a positive decision into mainstream housing and benefits systems. Although the designated 14 (increased via lobbying to 28) days those given a positive decision to move out of NASS accommodation was notoriously too short for refugees to find new accommodation, at RAP people in this situation could wait weeks as NASS was failing to issue the required NASS 35 form on time. RAP could assist clients in their appeal to NASS to remain in London, or for 'hard cases' support for those at the end of their asylum process but with 'good reasons' for being unable to leave the country, or they could enforce resistant clients' eviction from EA. The options for people with a final negative decision are well known. Evictions were fairly rare as most people were dispersed before a final decision. Also, there was often not strict control over evictions; people often overstayed because they were overlooked by the system. When evictions were enforced, usually these were managed by letter and then physically by EA, rather than RAP staff.

6.3.2 *Managing expectations and perceptions of fairness*

As RAP workers peopled the 'front-line' controlling access at the borders to NASS' welfare safety net with 'hands-tied' (as several workers put it), limited in what they could offer to people, workers aimed to change what they could; that is the expectations and perceptions clients had of the welfare they *were* entitled to.

One of the perceptions RAP workers could often be heard clarifying was that while they were delivering the messages and acting as mediators between clients and NASS, "*We are not NASS,*" and "*this is outside of our control, this is **their** process,*" and "*It is not us doing this, we're just passing the messages from NASS to you,*" and "*We are just a go-between. Dispersal is not our problem. I can give you the address of the Home Office and you can go and shout at them.*" There were several reasons for this disassociation from NASS to clients, one being that clients often did confuse particularly RAP's Central office as NASS, primarily because this was where they completed NASS applications. Also as one project worker explained of this problem,

> *The first thing we tell them, 'We are not Home Office, we are not NASS, we are not Immigration, we are not police, we are just independent organisation. Our aim is to help asylum seekers and newly arrived refugees as much as we can… not to give them a lot of, too much **expectations**, because…as you know RAP is a charitable organisation, so we are not… We are a little bit tied. So in the meantime, we are telling them that, as much as we can, sometimes we cannot do some things. So… and then we… I mean, if we cannot do something, we have signposting as well. When I say we are not…linked to the government they are a little bit eased, they can talk about their different things,* (**PW**, int.)*

Therefore as workers sought to reassure clients that they were not the 'state', they also aimed to absolve themselves of the blame for the conditions of 'support' their clients found they were offered, the inefficiencies and deficiencies of NASS, and their relatively 'helpless' position as just messengers for the government.

At the same time, many RAP workers talked of their role as to 'manage clients expectations,' which almost always meant attempting to lower them to 'realistic' expectations of what welfare they were likely to receive. A part of this was the role workers were expected to play by NASS, of informing clients of their rights, responsibilities and entitlements, of giving them standardised and accurate information (particularly since the NASS review crack-down). Another reason for this was to attempt to stop clients from becoming too demanding of RAP, and RAP workers would often talk about lowering expectations in conjunction with the 'demandingness' of some clients:

Some people are very demanding and have high expectations. We teach them not to expect too much. My colleague does this well. He is very laid back and good-humoured. He jokes a lot and calms people down! (**PW,** obs.)

This is not necessarily an unusual role for a welfare service agency; "*Street-level bureaucrats convey to clients what their proper level of expectations of the bureaucracy should be,*" when 'teaching the client role,' (Lipsky, 1980:63). It was also an issue for the MF, as a counsellor there told BfS volunteers on a training day that when referring people, "*It's very important to manage expectations. Expectation is becoming very high. People think that when they get there, all their problems will disappear.*" However, for RAP in their position as a NASS' RAA, and easily accessible, with little to offer, this task seemed important for self-protection.

Another aspect of controlling clients' understandings was managing their perceptions of RAP's fairness and trying to ensure that they were *seen* to be fair and equitable in treatment of many people. This was partially necessary because clients gained a lot of their information from other clients, so if one person received some benefit, others heard about it. But also because the complexity of entitlements according to contracted civic statuses meant there was a great deal of seemingly inexplicable confusing variation. For instance, a TL jokily berated a woman who came in asking for the £50 entitlement for women whose babies were six months old and had been born in the UK, but had not had a decision on their asylum case made yet:

You women! Talking among yourselves! You think that if one gets it, the others have to have it too. Halima only got the money because she had her baby here, and you did not, so you can't have the £50, (**TL,** obs.)

A SM explained the difficulty of this problem at the EAs which operated both cash-based provision and full-board,

*The problem is **now**, is you are running two systems in conjunction with each other… and of course, clients that are on full-board at Carlton are gonna think, well… 'I want cash as well. Why can't I have cash?'*

Managing clients' expectations and perceptions of how entitlements to any benefits worked was also cited as the reason for making certain eligibility decisions, setting a precedent to proceeding clients and reducing demand, so A TL and SM in discussion decided that a man with special needs they would have to allow to receive cash, but the rest of his family should remain on full-board, because *"if we let one family do this, everyone else will want to do this too."*

Some front-line workers found the expectations clients had of them extremely stressful because they were powerless in making decisions concerning clients' welfare,

> *… for the client, I haven't got any decision, I'm not deciding how much he's getting, I don't deciding whether he's due dispersal or not, I just like, I'm between the client and NASS, I just convey the information from the client to NASS and from NASS to the client… So my involvement is not very effective… maybe my negotiation skill, my communication… and my working relationship with NASS help in solving the problems quicker… but the decision at the end of the day is not in my hands for the client…(being in this position) t's not good, because sometimes the people, the client when they come to you they have high expectations, that you are the one whose going to solve the problems, you are the magician who's going to solve the problems… so this is one of the things, the high expectation of the client just is, on the other hand, my hand is tied…*

With the pressure from NASS to give less and the pressure from clients to give more, RAP workers in the middle found this tension in their roles very difficult, especially when they *did* have some discretion and autonomy to decide how to distribute NASS' minimal benefits. Managers were more in touch with NASS directives than front-line workers so sometimes removed PWs and TLs from the dilemmas when they felt too much was being given to clients. Therefore, as a SM said,

> *I think we try to be as fair as possible within the constraints of the external environment and that's very difficult because often clients will tell you, 'It's so unfair. Why won't you do this?'*

The only solution to this was to try to lower clients' expectations of the services they could give right through their Reception experience, thus lowering clients'

disappointment and their demand of RAP workers to make these difficult decisions, so preventing such dilemmas as much as possible.

6.4 Collusion, compliance and coercion

Taking on the role of NASS RAA had involved major changes as the organisation had adapted by bureaucratising, and in different ways had assumed the responsibility of guarding the internal boundaries of the separate system of welfare from 'illegitimate,' receivers. However, the welfare asylum seekers *were* entitled to was designed not only as a last resort, better than sleeping rough but worse than sleeping on a friend or relative's floor, but as intentionally deterrent. Agencies like RAP were also, therefore criticised for colluding with overseeing and providing asylum seekers with an inadequate degree of welfare, a 'poor law'. Because of the system failings and unintended role RAP played in practice, this was exacerbated and ensuring compliance with the system involved a greater degree of discipline, control and coercion of clients in their care.

6.4.1 *Colluding with welfare as deterrence*

Government plans that asylum seekers would stay in Reception EA for up to seven days, because this would be humanely tolerable, and because this would prevent asylum seekers settling in and refusing to leave London, highlight the compromising position a RAA like RAP were placed in as these plans immediately fell foul. The fact that those clients of RAP staying longest in unsuitable accommodation were people with special needs, in complex positions and the most vulnerable, compromised them even further. Their primary EA, Rosehill 'hotel', was a cavernous ex-military, ex-HPU run-down institutional hostel block with many hundreds of rooms running off long linoleum corridors, the majority of which housed at least two single people, with bathrooms shared between several rooms. Bedrooms and corridors were cleaned regularly, but bathrooms and toilets were often dirty and in disrepair, and there had been pest problems. Kitchens were out of bounds except for mothers to heat baby milk, as everyone else was required to queue to eat at set times in the canteen which served very similar, poor quality food every day. With failing dispersal RAP procured more 'low-cost' EA; 'hotels,' 'hostels' and some houses, all basic, varying from squalid, dirty, overcrowded and institutional to reasonably comfortable and allowing for a

degree of autonomy. EA staff were employed by their private sector owners and gave varying service, ranging from helpful and understanding, to abusive and hostile. RAP were in a tenuous position with EA providers as, by NASS' demands for flexibility and value-for-money, they held no written contracts only verbal agreements with EA providers,

> *Ultimately, the only leverage we have is that we'll stop using them as accommodation providers, like we did with the Grange because we got serious complaints…We've done everything we can… but we're in a bit of a catch-22… they've got us in a bind, because we need them, we've got over a thousand people in EA.* (**SM,** int**.**)

At crisis times, RAP did not always check accommodation before using it, and as some of it was widely dispersed, did not always monitor conditions and the services their clients were receiving. This factor also meant clients had very different degrees of contact with RAP staff for advice, information and support. RAP withdrew from two EA's during the research period, because of the poor treatment of clients, one of which had involved the EA manager physically abusing clients. RAP's provision of deterrent welfare also involved overseeing the poverty of clients, tightly guarding small cash allowances for essential transportation to asylum-related or medical appointments. RAP's policy under NASS instruction was to give no advice, unless asked, about local educational facilities although children had entitlement to attend schools, nor funding towards school uniforms, fares or lunches, reinforcing NASS intention to minimise incentives to stay in London.

RAP's almost total reliance on NASS funding, their 'flexible' and responsive Grant Agreement accommodating NASS' 'requirements', extended by default, so co-opting them into implementing further legislation and executive amendments, the most serious being the 11th hour amendment of the 2002 NIAA, Section 55, which came into force on January 8th 2003. This involved the RAA VS agencies' potential collusion in preventing access to any welfare support for in-country applicants not provably claiming asylum *"before reasonably practicable."* Another civic status designed to control and exclude, S55, made it illegal for RAP to accommodate in-country applicant singles, although they could accommodate families whose NASS applications, however would not be processed. The system broke down as it started, another example of

practitioners expected to enact policies with no planning of operational details and Human Rights legislation and High Court rulings began to outlaw a similar wilful destitution of asylum seekers to the 1996 AIA. RAP workers were only briefed by SM about the changes at a meeting at 3.30pm on January 7th. An SM said, *"This is a clear and cruel legislation. Help will be denied a lot of people."* However their position as a NASS RAA involved colluding with and facilitating S55, despite all workers despondency at doing so. Procedural changes then occurred daily and NASS RANS backlog grew As the NASS screening team, RAP soon had another backlog of S55 clients waiting in EA until the Home Office worked out what *'applying as soon as reasonably practicable'* meant in practice and appealed against their breach of human rights. Because of this instant failure and their geography, RAP breathed a huge sigh of relief that they were not seriously implicated in refusing to accommodate or in evicting to homelessness destitute in-country asylum seekers, unlike some other RAAs. It wasn't until July 2003 that RAP gathered their SM team to inform a group of in-country asylum seekers who had waited at RAP for their turn in the RANS queue, that they had to go to NASS where a decision might be made that might result in their homelessness. SM were desperately apologetic and encouraged the young men to take legal action using the Human Rights Act to fight such a decision.

The new NASS application forms workers were required to complete after the NIA 2002, included new questions about a client's route to Britain and time of asylum claim, about which one worker commented *"This turns us into Immigration Officers,"* requiring a greater degree of RAP's monitoring and surveillance by 'internal control'. The implementation of S55 was a further example of the compromising 'bind' RAP was in with their 'flexible' Grant Agreement with NASS, without which they would no longer be able to exist.

Collusion also involved complying with the dispersal of people to places beyond RAP's visibility and to unknown and quite frequently bleak or hostile conditions. RAP workers, caught up in the daily difficulties of operating the complex machinery of their work, could seem blind to what lay beyond their position as a transit agency,

> *I remember here, when one asylum seeker was murdered, was Huddersfield or somewhere like that, and the Home Office said 'OK, we're not dispersing **anybody** else, we've cancelled dispersal to Huddersfield'… and then the*

following Monday, people were being dispersed to Huddersfield again… from
here! *Nobody challenged it! No manager said 'Wait a minute,' and it went*
ahead! ***Just*** *went ahead! D' you know, that sort of thing. They get 95% of their*
*funding from NASS and if NASS says… 'Jump,' they have to jump, (**STPW**).*

6.4.2 Coercion and compliance

Beyond overseeing a deterrent style of welfare, was a more coercive form of gaining
client cooperation workers sometimes used especially at the end of peoples Reception
transit in persuading people to 'travel,' that is to be dispersed. Dispersal was a
contentious process at RAP that routinely happened daily, sometimes twice daily, the
process beginning with faxes from NASS, a notice in the EA office window and under
a client's door to inform them of the date and general region they would be sent to.
People were given between a day to two weeks warning (predominantly 2-3 days), and
everyone was required to attend a dispersal advice session with a RAP worker, at which
they were given an information pack including meagre NASS material in English and
additional information from RAP such as the address of the local refugee support
agency. For the majority of the research period this information pack was of very poor
quality, with the sheet on what to do in case of racial harassment (telling not to return to
London) photocopied in a virtually unreadable way. There was no information about
the local area people were being sent to, other than the nearest RSA address and a map
of Britain on the wall for workers to show clients where a place was if they asked. With
little information from NASS and RAP, clients spread informal 'folk' information
amongst themselves about the pros and cons of dispersal areas. Towards the end of the
research period a TL started her team on producing more and better quality information
about dispersal areas and local services.

There were very mixed responses to dispersal. Many people were desperate to be
dispersed away from the living conditions of EA and were delighted when their names
came up. Others accepted dispersal grimly with fears and worries about another
unfamiliar place and unknown living conditions (a lot of people, especially if single,
were dispersed to other shared 'hostel' type accommodations in dispersal regions). Still
others were desperate to stay in London where they had connections, social support,
were undergoing medical treatment or had a solicitor they didn't wish to change, for

instance and did not want to 'travel.' Others changed their minds. As a SM said, *"clients have very good reasons for wanting to stay in London."*

Apart from the routine dispersal advice and reassurances about Glasgow or Hull, RAP workers fairly often engaged in interactions of persuasion, compulsion and informal techniques intended to coerce people reluctant to 'travel' to comply with their dispersal. On one occasion a PW and TL were attempting to persuade a young Eritraen single mother with a baby to sign a NASS letter agreeing to 'travel', as she had refused to do so once before, been 're-booked' by NASS and must sign agreement again or she would be 'cancelled' from EA and the system. Despite their threats NASS (and RAP) could not legally evict families from EA, but they performed this 'dance' of 'cancelling' and 're-booking' people then sending further letters threatening eviction without compliance to travel. The workers were particularly frustrated with this client as she had previously been desperate to go, and had been in to plead with them every day to move her case on, but had then refused when her dispersal came through. She had two weeks to sign agreement or have her support 'terminated' and the workers used several persuasive verbal tactics to gain her compliance,

> *You won't have a home for your baby… You are not listening. You know it's good for you… If you don't sign, you have to be aware that you will have to get out on the 12th or the police will come… NASS doesn't play,* (**PW**, obs.)

Although reminding Amma that she could stay in London if she had someone to stay with, the workers were also very keen to disassociate themselves from the system, stressing it was NASS in control of the process, and urging her to think carefully before refusing as she would be 'cancelled'. On the morning of the 12th when Amma didn't arrive to sign NASS' letter, she was evicted from her room by RAP workers and hotel security staff telling her she had been 'cancelled' by NASS, and her belongings placed in the reception area. They warned her that if she did not sign they would call the police and she would be 'put out' and have to go to social services. Amma sat all day in reception without meals, until 3.30pm when she quietly submitted, saying her solicitor had told her she had no other option. Having signed, it then took another two hours before RAP could get through to NASS on the phone to 'rebook' her. A month later NASS had still not found her a dispersal place, so when some NASS workers visited, the TL used the opportunity for some unofficial tactics to get Amma dispersed.

Explaining to the NASS workers the difficult "*pressurizing process*" RAP workers had gone through, she brought Amma in to meet them, telling them she was settling in nicely again at Rosehill. Amma smiled sweetly, not understanding what they were saying and the NASS workers agreed to "*fix this",* which soon after they did.

Another young woman and baby, from Liberia were subjected to similar tactics of persuasion to comply with dispersal to Glasgow that night, a week before Christmas. In one of the small cubicles at Rosehill EA, a TL and PW spent over an hour engaged in what felt like a process of gradually 'breaking down' this young woman's resistance as she gradually became tearful and distressed. The workers argued that she was not putting her daughter first and she should not "*let NASS do this to you,"* they would "*put her out"* of her room if she refused to go. Each of her reasons for not wanting to go, the workers took apart. She had a doctor's note, but the workers said she would get treatment in Glasgow. She said she wanted to go to Newcastle where her friends had been dispersed, but the workers told her to act like a grown-up and do what was best for her child, not spend Christmas in Rosehill but in her own place. To the woman's entreaty that Glasgow was a long way and would be cold, they were scathing, saying she had come much further from Liberia, and her appeal that she had only been told the night before and did not have long enough to prepare was met with,

> *This is a very weak excuse. A Somalian woman with several children took an hour and a half to pack all of her luggage up and get it to reception ready to go. You will be going whether you like it or not,* (**TL,** obs.)

The workers repeatedly reiterated that she should consider her child above herself and she should not allow NASS to evict her, "*Don't give them the chance to do this to you… We're out of the equation now, it's between you and NASS."* Another worker confided that the situation was distressing because the young woman had been in EA for six months now. However despite this process she 'refused to travel' that night and RAP (and NASS) cancelled and rebooked her, despite their threats. The workers said that eventually she would realise she had no other choice and she would have to go, and that she *would* be in a better place than she was now.

These workers were not unkind and heartless people, they just believed they were doing the right thing both for this woman and child, but also in giving an example to other

people who might refuse to be dispersed, thus with an eye to keeping the wheels of 'the system' oiled. There was the sense of immense pressure from above (from NASS via SMs) to clear 'backlogs' of people held up in EA. When the incoming TL visited for handover, this outgoing TL said, the new team would have to be "*really hard… to give one or two severe examples or there will be a lot more refusals. You have to put people out and cancel rooms,*" (**TL,** obs.)

With care of large numbers of widely diverse people, some living in proximity to rival factions they had escaped from, one RAP SM commented that there were remarkably few major disruptions. However there were fairly frequent minor problems among EA residents that could erupt and RAP Rosehill workers would become involved in sorting them out. There was a sense of discipline and socialisation of clients in 'proper' client (Lipsky, 1980) and refugee behaviour, the latter being part of RAP's NASS responsibility, when during their NASS advice session, clients would be informed of the rights, responsibilities and obligations accompanying their 'asylum seeker' status. Solving disputes workers often used appeals to clients to obey British laws and cultural norms, for instance, "*When you come to this country, you cannot raise your hand to a woman! To anyone! …You must walk away!*" Also workers talked of teaching clients patience and independence, appealing to their survival of worse, to encourage greater endurance of present hardships and not become dependent. With a woman requesting taxi fares,

> *Pregnancy is not a **disease**. You are well. You can take a bus. We do not want to create **de**pendent people, but **in**dependent people. If you came all the way from Africa, you can get to the hospital without too many problems.* (**TL,** obs.)

The informal practice of putting people out and cancelling their rooms was used by RAP workers as a disciplinary tool in situations other than gaining compliance with dispersal such as punishing a client's 'anti-social behaviour'. When a woman resident had complained that the man in the adjacent room had been "*harassing*" her and others recommending solicitors, taking their money and papers for his services, the TL dealt with him by "*cancelling*" him, evicting him from his room and making him sit in reception with his belongings. She insisted on leaving him there for most of the day as though they would evict him entirely, saying "*let him sweat a little bit more*" before warning him about his behaviour and re-booking him into a different room, (obs.). A

SM's explanation of this practice suggested that TL's away from Central had more autonomy, using unsanctioned methods of persuasion and discipline, than under SM control. The SM began saying,

> *We use the cancellation system purely as a means of bringing clients to us. So if we've left six messages in someone's room, they've not responded, we will cancel them in order to bring them to us. If they're not around then fine, the room goes to someone else... You don't keep rooms that are unoccupied, keep paying for them, you put other people in them,* (**SM,** int.)

The SM conceded that only NASS or the EA providers, not RAP had the authority to actually evict someone, but they had used the method as a tool for bringing a client to them pre-NASS,

> *We can always re-book... Tried and tested methods, you don't just throw the baby out with the bathwater, you continue to use them as long as staff are clear that it **is** a tool...*

6. 5 Conclusion

RAP managers had been aware of their contradictory position entering Grant Agreement with NASS, but generally believed it would be a compromise worth making in their clients' and the organisation's own interests. However the compromise involved an unexpected change of role, elasticity to accommodate NASS inflexibility, unreliability and an unpredictable and changeable policy (and global) environment, where decisions affecting RAP's operations, and front-line work were made politically, not pragmatically, and felt by workers and clients. The degree and quality of independence, autonomy or 'partnership' the organisation had with NASS in their service provision to asylum seekers was in question when considering the degree of power and constraint NASS, embroiled in its own inefficiencies and policy constraints, appeared to have over RAP. Although attempting to work *with* NASS, 'agent' rather than 'partner' of NASS seemed a more accurate description for the organisation in its position during the research period. This has been further verified in later Home Office (2003:22) research finding the most common complaint among stakeholders was,

> *…NASS does not recognise the value and benefits of partnership working and does not have the skills to do it well…*

And recommendations include,

> *Partnership working needs to be treated as a core organisational value within NASS – from the most senior level down throughout the organisation…*(ibid:23).

The process of bureaucratisation which RAP had undergone, and was continuing to develop and work under, since their Grant Agreement with NASS was a fundamental aspect of implementing government policy since the 1999 IAA, affecting the size, structure and character of the organisation, its daily work and to an extent, the way workers conceptualised and treated their clients. Bureaucratisation was a result of processing greater numbers of clients, for longer periods of time in terms of NASS' agenda for cost-effectiveness and 'value for money', controlling the results of faults in the system and attempting to instil order on what had been and occasionally was a situation of chaos. It was also enforced on the organisation by the extremes of bureaucracy emanating from NASS, and the ever-more complex system of categorisation in terms of entitlement that this Home Office agency was attempting to instil, which RAP therefore had to engage with, and to some extent reflected. This was the lived experience of implementing the increasingly complex system of entitlement by 'civic stratification' (Morris, 2002) imposed on asylum seekers, which was intended to delineate legitimate from illegitimate welfare receivers (Geddes, 2003), and so control the borders of welfare.

RAP's role as an 'agent of NASS', and as mediator between the state and their 'margizen' clients, involved controlling the borders of NASS' 'safety net' welfare at different stages of the Reception process. At initial entry to the NASS system, at their airport Reception, during asylum seekers stay in EA, and on clients leaving (or coerced on) by dispersal, moving on, or eviction, RAP workers made "*sanctioned and unsanctioned*" (Lipsky, 1989:151) judgements to assess asylum seekers eligibility to varying welfare services. Despite best efforts to use formal and 'objective' criteria for eligibility, and practice equity and fairness, when there was room for discretion workers sometimes used their private judgements of 'worthiness' or 'deservingness' in their decisions. Therefore controlling access to the complexity of these systems of NASS'

and their own negotiated Reception welfare could be fraught with dilemmas and through "*negotiated pragmatism*" with clients, could result in "*the informal gains and deficits which shape delivery*" (Morris, 2002:147), so expanding or contracting asylum seekers' formal social rights. With little control over the welfare they could offer, workers tried to control and manage their clients' expectations and perceptions of fairness in order to reduce the demand, reduce clients' sense of inequity and reduce the dilemma and dissonance in their relatively powerless roles.

Operating the Reception stage of NASS 'safety net' also involved colluding with a standard of welfare which could be considered compromising to human dignity, and the enforcement of a 'no-choice' dispersal by coercion of incompliant clients away from a place where they had found some security, and sometimes of their eviction. Managing Reception could involve the use of discipline and socialisation of 'deviant' behaviour, both in the interests of ensuring a secure environment and teaching 'proper' refugee and client behaviour, so reducing demand and instilling 'norms'.

7 Experiencing Reception

The welfare-related provisions of the 1996 and 1999 asylum legislation greatly increase the power of the state to monitor, control and anormalise the lives of asylum seekers... ensuring that migration can be reversible by denying access to chances for social integration, (Geddes, 2000:145-6)

I need my life back... I don't know how long this is going to take... them to get my papers straight... just to go back to that normal life, (Christine, an asylum seeker with RAP).

The deterrent safety net of Reception was not simply given out or 'done' to passive recipients, but human agents were actively, inter-actively involved in their individual and shared experiences of this stage of asylum seeking. This is so even if "*the welfare system transforms active adult refugees into passive clients,*" as Wahlbeck (1997) warned an over-controlling Finnish system risked, and despite the obvious power imbalances and the NASS system operating as an inverse form of welfare, attempting to prevent opportunities for participation and inclusion, (Geddes, 2001).   To understand the 'safety net' welfare system in practice, it is essential to consider how it was experienced by the active subjects who were its policy objects; from their accounts and from reflexive observations an understanding of their viewpoints can be gathered.

Just as the categorisation of the immense diversity of human individuals as 'asylum seekers' or 'refugees' falsely homogenises people who differ in most possible dimensions (gender, age, class, sexuality, country of origin, ethnicity, religion, education and profession), it is important to recognise the differences in very different people's experiences of journeying through the Reception stage of the NASS system with RAP. However, as the system itself homogenized asylum seekers (albeit further categorizing within) in processing and controlling their access to specific social rights, the system also forced similar experiences. This is, arguably, especially the case as large groups of people lived together in very similar circumstances in RAP's London EA's before dispersal to more diverse living conditions around the country.

The heterogeneity of people's previous experiences, life histories, the complexity of their needs, individual psychologies, their possible connections with others in the UK, their familiarity with the language and knowledge or expectations of the asylum and NASS systems, among other factors, will undoubtedly have affected the way they experienced Reception as asylum seekers. The experiences of a lone-parent English-speaking woman from Nigeria with two young children, say, are likely to be quite different from those of a young single Kurdish man from Iraq with no English or a married couple from Zimbabwe. It seemed likely, for instance, that people's different reasons and motivations for claiming asylum in the UK might have made a difference to their experience of Reception. Sharing showers with many others of both genders might be an endurable inconvenience of indignity for instance for the Zimbabwean man who laughed when the RAP PW asked routinely at his NASS application session, '*Have you been tortured?*' answering, "*Of course not, I just want to come here!*" However for the Eritrean woman who had been gang raped in communal showers in Eritrea the flashbacks of her horrific traumas left her too terrified to use them. Taking the plurality of experience into account, each individual's experience of shared similar conditions was valid; they were both idiosyncratic and emblematic.

Geddes (2000) suggests asylum seekers lives are 'anormalised' by the safety net welfare system designed as deterrent. For people assigned 'asylum seeker' status opportunities to participate, integrate and settle in society or to lead a "*normal social life,*" (ibid:143) are minimised while waiting a decision on their claim, and the degree of state intervention in their lives increased, in order that their 'removal', might be easier if refused leave to remain. Reception was an important stage of the NASS safety net, especially as, in practice and for most, it was **not** just the point of access to NASS support, a brief orientation and transition to a dispersal area, but was experienced by many for months, before dispersal, change in circumstances or an asylum decision and the variety of fates that led to. This exploration of the experiences of Reception of some asylum seekers will consider whether and how their lives were 'anormalised' by the welfare policies of which they were the 'objects'. This understanding was primarily gained from the in-depth accounts and observations of four English-speaking women from different African countries as well as from shorter conversations with and observations of other EA residents and visitors to RAP's offices, and the testimony of RAP workers or BfS volunteer befrienders.

7.1 Leaving, arriving and dislocating from home

7.1.1 Leaving and Arriving

> *With the little friends I've made, some did come for different reasons. Some people come here just to learn the ways, the life, the language of the UK, and some people come here to stay because back in Africa, they are unsafe, you understand? And some people come here to make money and to go back... Most people, they come here because they have difficulties in their own country, **most** people... I can't continue staying in such a country that there is no security, the place is not safe, no food, no shelter, no... the **health**!* (**Lucy**, int)

People came to the UK for different reasons with different life stories coinciding where individuals felt what they left behind was worse than what they could expect or look forward to here and in hope for a brighter more secure future, each dislocating from a former life and some kind of home. Telling the stories of the four women from African countries helps contextualise their experiences of arrival and Reception.

Lucy, a lone young mother who had her first baby during her RAP stay, told how she left Liberia,

> *In my country there is a conflict between the government and the rebels in which... we don't know what might happen the next minute. It's not safe, no security, no rest.*

She went to Ivory Coast through her sister, and worked for "*a white man,*" who urged her to leave with him for Canada when the fighting started there, but who abandoned her at Heathrow airport, she explained.

Femi, also pregnant and with a three year old told how she had been travelling from Nigeria to Canada but, with false documents, was prevented from going further by UK Immigration. She only claimed asylum here because her alternative was deportation back,

*Me, I never want to go back to where I'm coming from because I have problems there, that's why I left the place. I'm going far from there… I'm afraid of some people in my country, and one also when I was pregnant he told me, if you get back I will kill the baby… I want to go **far** from these people… I can't stand for someone to kill my baby.*

Sarah, an older Kenyan woman said that she came to the UK because of the Mugiki,

*That deals very badly, the women …a type of sect that has prepared themselves to harass women by circumcising them and raping them. Or they tried to do that, and then they said they going **have** to do that to me, so I was circumcised, but I said I cannot be raped… some of them have AIDS. So that was why the pastor made me run away and I came to this island…*

Christine revealed her reasons for leaving Uganda gradually. She said her husband had deserted the army who then believed he had joined the rebels and came knocking on Christine's door trying to find him. They did not believe that she did not know where he was so detained her. She managed to escape from prison and to the UK with the help of an "*uncle.*"

Not everyone arrives clearly intending to "*seek asylum,*" as Lucy said laughing,

…the immigration man said, 'Do you wanna seek asylum?' I said, 'what's the meaning of asylum…? I don't know!'

She said that Immigration had been threatening, and

*…some people they don't even allow them to express their mind… and before you know they are on their way back home, back to the suffering… They behave as if asylum seekers are **animals**… We are human beings as well!*

When Femi arrived, she was desperate to be allowed to continue her journey but was detained overnight at Heathrow and her daughter taken into social services care, "*My God, it was very difficult for me!*" When Christine first arrived, she was alone and just pregnant, and had a friend to stay with so did not immediately enter the NASS system.

Two months later she was joined by her two-year-old daughter, brought by *"an agent"* who took the child's 'papers' because Christine couldn't afford to pay. Sarah described her arrival most positively, arriving unknowingly with untreated diabetes,

> *When I first arrived here I was very sick. So the first thing RAP did was to take me to the hospital… and I was really given good treatment by the doctor… even when I was taken to the Home Office, these people were all so friendly! They were looking for somebody whom I could speak my language… you are able to express yourself better!*

Each woman acknowledged the 'safety-net'; having their basic needs met by RAP and the NASS system. Sarah said, *"Food I'm getting. Shelter I'm getting. I was given some clothes… I do not want!"* Lucy said she found the support system fair,

> *Back in Africa, who is going to give you a house to stay? That will feed you…even clothe you? No! To me it's fair! To me, they are trying. I'm not complaining, they **are** trying. They feed you, they clothe you, they give you shelter.*

Christine believed RAP were doing their best under the circumstances,

> *You can't blame them for it. You can't meet everybody's needs. We are all from different kinds of countries, we eat different kinds of foods… It's not their fault, they try to do their best.*

And Femi, having been moved around different EAs was philosophical about her alternatives,

> *When you don't have any other choice, whatever they give to you, you have to be agree with this… At least it is a little bit bigger, my baby can play… I cannot just go and sleep on the streets… I have to manage.*

However the women, all of whom stayed with RAP for several months, and many others living in EA for any length of time, struggled with EA living conditions, which could compound troubles they carried from former lives. Coming to terms with leaving

a 'home,' people arrived and entered Reception with a multitude of uncertainties around the possibilities of building a new 'home.'

7.1.2 Dislocation from 'home'

The involuntary loss of 'home' in exile and the effort to reconstruct a new 'home' is one of the most defining aspects of the 'refugee experience' in the literature, however 'home is conceptualised. 'Home' may no longer be a place of safety and security, or even still exist, except in memories or haunting nightmares. Dislocation from 'home' often means separation from loved ones who sometimes may still face danger. It may not be just the loss of a 'personal' home. Leaving a 'homeland' in flight even if accomplished swiftly and safely, "*is likely to prompt major emotional and cognitive turmoil*" (Ager, 1999:7) and can involve "*cultural bereavement*" felt more forcibly in adjustment to sometimes intensely 'alien' host cultures, and "*transition across a very significant social distance*" (Eisenbruch, 1990, cited in Ager, 1999:8). The concept of 'home' may refer not just to physical but also "*symbolic places*" where "*It is not only national, cultural and social belongings, but also a sense of self, of one's 'identity',*" (Al-Ali and Koser, 2002:7). Thus 'home' usually involves a sense of belonging, and security in one's identity.

For the diversity of forced migrants living in RAP's EA, loss of and dislocation from their 'homes' will have taken on similarly diverse meanings. For many this meant separation from and loss of families and loved ones either still left at home or somewhere in their 'homeland.' For some this produced intense guilt, that they had escaped but their loved ones had not, such as the Iraqi doctor who cried when welcomed on arrival (6.3.1.1). For others, the pain and grief of separation haunted them day and night, as for a Nigerian man who woke at 5am every morning and cried for an hour as he remembered his murdered family back 'home'. Many women had separated from their children in leaving, such as Christine who came initially alone, pregnant, then secured her two-year-old daughter's arrival two months later, but had another daughter aged seven still in Uganda. She only revealed this as I enquired about the people in photos she had in her room, and said quietly that the only way she could cope with this was not to think about her, as she had said about her husband whose whereabouts she did not know nor whether he was alive or dead. Christine's concept of 'home' revolved around her family. Asked where she considered home,

*However good things are here, this will never be… I will want to go back **home**, to Uganda… that's my home… at the right time I know I have to go back cos all my people are there… my mother is there, my kid is there, my relatives, my people… everybody's in Uganda. I've got no family here, friends I know I need friends but that's not my family and I can't… bring the whole family to Britain. If only I could do that then maybe one day, one time, Britain would become home…*

Femi also considered her home to be where people she knew were, and so 'here' was not home because she was alone and felt isolated,

I'm from Nigeria… Yeah! It's my home. Yes…even if they allow me to stay here today, I have refugee status, Nigeria's my home… and I would also want to visit and come back to Nigeria… While you are in your country, no matter what, you will have people you know, the family… and here I don't have anybody…

For single mothers like Femi and Christine coping alone with their children was an immense struggle in EA, especially as facilities were not geared around their needs. For instance, Femi found cooking quite a problem, as children were not allowed in the kitchen of her EA, which was a long way from their bedroom, so she took the three year old and left the baby in her room,

If I leave her with this girl, maybe she will just hit her, because she herself is just a baby… it's very difficult, so I have to take her with me… She have to sit down when I say sit down, maybe when she is running around they will get angry… Here I don't have anyone. It's just me and my kids, I don't have anybody, I have to look after them twenty-four hours… It's very difficult for someone to stay inside twenty-four hours.

For others, separation from family and friends was less of an issue, and the situation they had left may have been much worse than the one they now found themselves in, therefore for some, 'home' was less about being with your 'people'. Lucy, though pregnant when she arrived, spoke very little of people she had left in Liberia,

Now, Liberia doesn't feel like home, cos Liberia is not… is not better… Here it
feels like home, but where you feel like home is when you have rest of mind,
peace of mind… When UK could be a home is when you've gotten your
papers… Now when you've not yet gotten your paper, it's not yet your home…

Suggesting 'here' feels like home because of being given food, shelter and having organisations, like RAP, to "*run to*" when you need them, Lucy continued that 'here' could not be home while still asylum seeking, because she had no "*rest of mind*". Becoming asylum seekers had involved leaving and losing a 'home' and homeland, to come to a strange land where, even if now safer and more secure than before, in Reception as asylum seekers people felt dislocated and unable to make a new home especially being separated from families and because their status was not secure.

7.2 'Hanging' – lost in bureaucracies

When people made an asylum claim and similarly on claiming for NASS support, they entered legal and bureaucratic systems which from all accounts seemed obscure, complex and often incomprehensible mazes. If some people were unaware when they first arrived of what seeking asylum was, they very soon came to associate themselves with their new label or identity, aware of the media and public furore over people like themselves, and experiencing living each day as 'asylum seekers' in distinctive ways. Christine said,

I don't say that everything here is bad, but the moment you're still asylum
*seeking, oh my God! It's a nightmare, and…I've gone through hell… **Hell!!** …*
Until I've got my papers, that's the only way out… that's when you've really
finished everything… At least, you know where you are going… at least, you've
got a destiny… at least, you know where your life is leading. But when you don't
have the papers, you never know what is going to happen… and that's a really
bad situation… You're hanging… You don't know where you are the next
minute. If you're back up? Or maybe you're still here? Or maybe you're
somewhere else. They keep on tossing you around…

This description of chronic uncertainty and loss of control over her future was echoed by Christine several times over the months of her stay in EA. She referred both to uncertainties over her asylum claim and her dispersal, and this description seemed to express the experience of many others, particularly those who spent months in EA waiting to hear what their destiny might be.

7.2.1 Claiming asylum

As people entered the legal and bureaucratic systems they began gathering numerous documents which somehow represented their positions but generated immense confusion over their meanings as people tried to make sense of them and their implications for their lives and entitlements. Everywhere around RAP sites people carried bundles of documents and papers, coming to RAP workers or going to a solicitor for enlightenment. Finding and working with a trustworthy solicitor was a maze to negotiate in itself where, although RAP guided people who wanted guidance to a legal firm they had found reputable, some were prey to disreputable legal advisors who came round the EA's at night touting for business using bribery, offering £10 notes and taking people's papers. Some found a helpful solicitor who would not take their case beyond a certain point, so they would then need to try to find and change solicitors perhaps several times. Others lost their solicitor or found communicating with them over a distance, or just the worry of how to manage their case when dispersed, stressful and difficult to cope with. One young Iranian man complained that even his solicitor recommended by RAP was difficult to communicate with, being mostly unavailable and unhelpful when she was. For Christine, the whole conception of going to a solicitor was alien, humiliating and she suggested, criminalising,

> *The way things are being run here, it's different from… way back home, we don't even go to solicitors, for what? Sometimes we go there, I mean, you sit really tight, unless something is really important, that's when you go to the solicitors or the lawyers but here all the time you are going there…*

Christine felt similarly about having to give evidence before a judge,

> *We're not used to this, you know, going to court. I think I've never been to court myself, never in my life. I've gone to court here… to go in front of a judge, I've*

never even met the judge in my country, I've never! Feels that, when we come here it looks as if we are being tortured, going in front of the judge, everybody listening to you…

On top of just the fact of appearing before a judge like a criminal, was the humiliation of having to tell the details of what had happened to her to a room of people, the sort of things, she said you would normally only say to a priest *"when confessing"*, and not being believed,

I hate it! All the time you have to go 'Oh what happened, this, oh that, then what happened? Then they raped you, then what? Then…' Owwww! Why do they have to go the… all that? You've told them your story!

Despite all the humiliating questioning, Christine said that the judge did not believe her and she felt uncertain about how such a decision was made, that it seemed completely arbitrary how the judge decided whether you were lying or not,

The judge said, when they went through my case, they said I was lying… my case is not strong enough to win. What can I do? If I've told you what's happened then what can I do? Am I supposed to lie or what? I've told you whatever happened to me, I've told you what I know… I mean some people, yes, do lie. But they get their papers! So I wish I could just turn back the clock and lie there… If that's what they wanted! … Cos I haven't gained anything! … Some people do lie and some are… really they need protection… But how can you know anyway if somebody is really lying? It's just luck… if somebody believes your story then you're lucky, if they don't then you're so unlucky… In fact I don't know how they determine if somebody's lying or not…It's between them… All this time they have been questioning me and I haven't got anything… Oh, OK I'm still waiting, maybe but… it hasn't helped me at all…

These feelings of 'hanging' in uncertainty, waiting for others to make decisions about your life using unknown criteria, in a system like a lottery and over which you have little or no control but undergo a humiliating, criminalising interrogation, were typical of many especially towards the ends of their cases. Many asylum seekers, including the four African women, spoke of their anxiety and depression; uncertainty over their

asylum claim fed into a constant fear of deportation, which Christine and, here, Lucy spoke of,

> *So the **basic** thing or the most fundamental thing is for you to get your stay! If you get your stay, you become free! Your mind is at rest! …When you are still seeking asylum your mind is not at rest, because you hear different things… there are hundred and something people, asylum seekers that they are deporting. Your mind keeps saying, 'God! Will I be the next person to be deported? Will I go back to my suffering in Africa?' …So if you are in this, in Europe, in England without… a paper, you don't have rest of mind. You **don't** have rest of mind! You don't at **all!***

7.2.2 Claiming for NASS support

As well as waiting in uncertainty, feeling powerless, through their asylum process individuals also waited in EA as their claim for NASS support moved through *that* bureaucratic process, uncertain when, where or even if they would be dispersed. Some were dispersed relatively quickly (though no sooner than three to four weeks), often those with special or complex needs, single-parent or large families and arbitrary others were not. People varied in their feelings about dispersal, some desperate to go others to stay, others changing their minds seeing others come and go. For long-stayers particularly, this experience again seemed as Christine described it, like "*hanging;*" waiting in uncertainty for an unknown future with no control over it and in the meantime enduring difficult and demeaning living conditions.

For instance, a middle-aged Zimbabwean couple, with the husband a wheelchair user, lived for several months in Rosehill on the ground floor as no EA's had facilities for wheelchair users, and NASS fought over their housing responsibility with the LA. The wife talked about the increasing strain this was placing on their relationship, that her husband had not had a bath for three months and she had to fetch all his meals from the canteen (on the first floor). He was becoming "*moody*" and she was becoming more depressed and had warned him they would have to "*split*" if he continued like this. Sarah, with severe diabetes, partial blindness and bladder control problems, was also caught up in NASS because of their seeming inability to find her somewhere suitable to

live. She too was desperate for dispersal but had to endure five months waiting in EA. When her dispersal finally came through, Sarah was not immediately happy because of being uncertain exactly where or what new living conditions she was going to. Her fear of these unknowns was particularly pertinent to her special needs, but was typical of many,

> *I was happy that I have been dispersed, but you know, that **joy** that I'm going was not there… because I never knew where I was going, whether I was going to a place where we are going to share. That was my worry… I never knew, and let me tell you, somebody had told me that people are dispersing here to be detained to another hotel there at Newcastle, waiting for two weeks to be given… So these are things that have been worrying me…*

Christine's example is typical of some of the worst bureaucratic failings impacting on a family's lives. I first met Christine when she became quietly tearful and obviously distressed in RAP's Rosehill office, being seven months pregnant and with a two year old, on hearing for the third time she was lost to NASS' system, and was on no dispersal lists. She was desperate to be dispersed, so that she could have her newborn in her "*own place*" and not in Rosehill EA where she and her daughter had been staying for three months. NASS had sent her details to the RC not RAP on one occasion. The second time she said, "*I had to check and check and check the list*" but eventually going back to RAP in desperation found she was not on any database and NASS had no record of her pregnancy, so had to complete a *third* NASS form. Christine had feared through this time, that there was something wrong with her or her claim, that she was under surveillance. She said "*they will never know that you are seven months pregnant until somebody goes through your papers,*" and though disliking complaining she conceded she would now have to badger RAP to check her continued existence and progress in NASS' system. Christine was still not dispersed before she had her baby, but after she gave birth RAP moved her to Carlton EA where they had begun to send pregnant women and nursing mothers, and she had what she had particularly longed for, her own kitchen and bathroom. Though Christine conceded of Rosehill, "*Actually it wouldn't be that bad here provided I don't stay here so long…*" when she was moved to an EA with better facilities, the continued uncertainty of her potential dispersal became the problem,

> *One minute I feel OK, another minute everything is changing… one minute you're in Hounslow, the other minute you're in Manchester. When you've got kids that's… in fact, it's very bad with kids… Sometimes they just keep on changing… things keep on changing every now and then, from them…*

Femi also experienced the "*hanging*" feeling, that her future was in someone else's hands, that there was no certainty about what might happen to her, but for her, the suspension was one step removed as she was subject to S55 of the NIAA 2002. Because Femi had refused to claim asylum immediately because she wanted to continue her planned journey to Canada, and applied only having been detained overnight realising that this or to be returned were her only options, she was deemed not to have claimed "*as soon as practicably possible*". Because she was heavily pregnant and with a child, NASS granted her RANS so RAP could accommodate her, so she was not waiting for dispersal but for NASS to reach her case in their backlog to decide whether she could go on dispersal lists. Femi still waited anxiously for a move to a better place than her EA not thoroughly comprehending that or why she was caught up in this new bureaucratic queue. She was, however, more resigned than others to her fate being deportation. Having watched asylum seekers on TV sewing up their lips and going on hunger strike when refused refugee status, she said,

> *That frustrated me, watch telly…every time 'asylum seekers, asylum seekers…' But for me I don't have any problem, if they say 'Go', I will go… If they say 'Go', I will go to my country. I cannot say, 'No, I'm not going for me to kill myself here'. No, I'm not going to do that because I have two kids to take care of…*

In another sense, 'hanging' can also be understood as suspension from a 'normal' life or the opportunity to begin to try to settle or 'integrate,' as Sarah described her situation while living in EA. Her life was on hold, she was suspended separately away from normal life in the UK, but anticipated that on dispersal she *would* experience "*outside,*"

> *About my life in the UK? You know, when I came I was brought to this room, I've never experienced myself outside to know how life is. But now when I go is when I'll know how life is in the UK… I will get more experience.*

These accounts suggest how *"anormalised"* (Geddes, 2001) asylum seekers lives were while in EA at Reception.

7.2.3 Claiming entitlements to Reception welfare

As well as the sense of loss and confusion in the faces of the giant legal and bureaucratic asylum and NASS systems, people living in EA also felt the confusion and opacity of RAP's everyday bureaucratic monitoring of entitlements to different aspects of NASS support where they had this discretion. Within the civic status of 'asylum seeker', were numerous further strata all with differently nuanced entitlements or disentitlements to specific social rights and benefits.

Femi with her imposed status of 'in-country' asylum applicant just after January 8th 2003, found RAP workers almost as confused as she was. She recounted how she had discovered her entitlement to the one off payment of £50 NASS gave to women who had given birth in the country after a certain number of months,

> *She told me she want to give me £50. So the other one was saying, 'Nooo! You are not entitled.' She was saying to me, 'You are a Country Applicant' I don't know what they call it, 'You are not entitled to **anything** in this country, whether you give birth or not, so you are not entitled'… But this boy says 'No! Because you have a child, automatically you have another one, you are entitled to it'…*

There were two general issues relating to the confusion and uncertainty around such everyday, status-dependent entitlements, one was RAP's (and NASS') constant changing and shifting of the 'rules', and the other related issue was an overwhelming sense of inequity many EA residents felt as they saw different people receiving different benefits for reasons they could not understand. Lucy complained,

> *Their system changes in a twinkling of an eye. You see them bring this system today, tomorrow they bring another system.*

Lucy and Christine both moved from Rosehill to Carlton EA whilst heavily pregnant and were then living in adjacent rooms. Because Lucy had her baby after the time that RAP, under pressure from NASS, were 'cracking-down' on the numbers of people

receiving cash (6.3.1.2), and Christine had hers before this, Christine was still given cash so allowed to do her own cooking, whereas Lucy had had her cash allowance withdrawn after giving birth. Neither of them could make sense of this, or RAP's other systems of entitlement,

> **C:** *Some people are getting less money, some people are getting more money*
>
> **L:** *Some people are not getting…*
>
> **C:** *Some people are even getting nothing!*
>
> **K:** *Do you understand why some people are getting this?*
>
> **C:** *No…no…*
>
> **L:** *We don't understand. And we are not even… they don't alight us… You don't understand their system because you see some nursing mothers, mothers with babies, they don't give them money and you see some single people, they give them money. Why? …They shouldn't!*

Christine and Lucy were also confused and expressed a sense of injustice concerning entitlements to payments for transport, and were not alone as RAP had daily encounters with clients asking for money for fares,

> **C:** *…and another thing is like, when you need transport, 'Ah! You! You're from Carlton…* **No, no, no,** *no, you don't need anything! …Ooh! You go! Just walk there! It's not very far, just walk!'… When you're on your own, I don't mind, but when you've got kids…*
>
> **L:** *The fourth day, I first gave birth, because the manager* (of the hotel) *said he can't give me money… that I have to go the RAP office and register my baby… I couldn't believe! Four days! They never, nothing like transport… Four days, I had to put the baby on my chest… and take the baby!*
>
> **C:** *Me too! …Even from the hospital, I take my own self… I went to RAP, I showed them the receipt, they said, 'No! Who told you to take the cab? You're supposed to go by bus!'*

As well as a sense of injustice and confusion over seemingly 'official' systems of entitlements, there was also a sense that RAP workers used unofficial, unfair methods for deciding entitlements, which Lucy expressed as "*a little tribalism,*"

I've really observed something, when you go there. I think there is a little tribalism in this staff…in those people working in RAP… Maybe you are from Somali, and another person is from Somali, and you, you are from Uganda… or Liberia… or Congo, because the…worker is a Somalian, you want to attend to the Somali person… Why should there be any tribalism? We are all one!

7.2.4 Summarising

The feeling of "*hanging,*" being entangled in confusing and obscure legal and bureaucratic systems which often seemed unfair, or irrational and over which people felt little control, but involved waiting in for uncertain outcomes for an uncertain time, which nevertheless might have very significant effects on people's lives and futures, seemed to be one major aspect of the experience of Reception for asylum seekers with RAP. Uncertainty and this kind of 'limbo' experience, is very well documented as typical of the 'refugee experience,' not just for asylum seekers waiting for a verdict on their claims, but for those with refugee status, living perhaps in Europe or in camps in the developing world, suspended somewhere between their former lives, social worlds and statuses, and the structural enablement to forge positive new lives, (Al-Ali, 2002). Another fundamental and related aspect of experiencing Reception was asylum seekers loss of autonomy.

7.3 Losing autonomy

When individuals entered the NASS system, especially those with little or no outside help or resources, they gave up various rights to choose, most notably where they would live, but also, in accepting this 'welfare' package the accepted many restrictions on other living conditions. This was part of the deterrent design of the system. Of course, most people had no choice but to accept NASS support because they were destitute, and most did not have the option of staying with friends or relatives or, if they did, this often changed as 'sponsors' became unable to support them for any length of time. During Reception, people had no choice where to live, whom they would be living with and, because given full-board accommodation instead of cash, had even fewer choices of lifestyle. As Christine had said, this was endurable for a short time, but much more difficult for a long time. Therefore one of the most notable features of experiencing reception, manifest in several ways by many, was losing one's autonomy.

As explored above, people lost control over their destinies in significant ways on claiming asylum and accepting their dispersal by NASS, but in Reception people also lost control over daily living with increasing significance for RAP's 'long-stayers.'

7.3.1 Food

For the majority of residents of RAP's various EAs, their accommodation package was 'full-board', or at least part-board, so people had to eat at the 'hotel' canteen at set times. At Rosehill EA, where the majority of RAP's clients lived, this involved queuing in a line which went partly round the dining room, out of the doors and down the stairs every meal-time. The food and getting it was institutional and low quality, as on a tight budget. An AW, working with RAP clients identified as *"most vulnerable,"* asked what the main needs or issues of her clients were, replied

> *Main thing clients complain about is food… depending on where they are staying, but, you know, it would be easier if they could cook their own food. **So** many of them have said that **so** many times… that is one of the **main** issues that they have…*

Food was a major issue for Christine, Lucy, Femi and Sarah, and most of the people I spoke to more briefly. The majority of appeals RAP workers dealt with for changes in living conditions involved appeals to move so that people could cook their own food. Some of the issues revolved around the strict timing of meals,

> *It's really stressful… when we always have to wake up really early in the morning to go for food. Sometimes I'm not ready for that… So most of the time you end up missing breakfast.*

Or the lack of variety,

> *Three kinds of dishes… but the same every day… For a whole week, a whole month, one month, two months, three months… So that's why I say that, if you stay here for too long, that's really too much…*

Or the poor nutritional quality of the food,

> *Not a balanced diet, always rice and chips, rice and chips, rice and chips! You could imagine a pregnant woman or a nursing mother eating rice and chips every day! It shouldn't be!*

Or,

> *Trust me, it is not food that I would like to eat, because of my special diet, my way of life… my diabetic… But for food I have been longing to eat… Sometimes I go there and do not eat… there are some things that you don't want to eat… they are the enemies to my diabetes!*

A worker at a local 'satellite' agency had also heard numerous complaints about food from RAP's EA clients, including Muslims complaining of the inadequacy of provision around Ramadan, being given non-halal food and others, that all meals were *"curry."* Femi and Christine were greatly relieved to be moved to EAs where they could cook their own food. Even though for Femi, this involved juggling two children, getting some distance to the kitchen with a three-ringed hob that served eighty people, and taking her pans back to her bedroom to eat. Femi proudly showed some hot chillis she used, saying she liked very hot African food, and this degree of autonomy and freedom to express her individual cultural taste was obviously very important to her. Being stripped of the autonomy to produce one's own food to individual and cultural taste at times of one's choosing, contributed to an institutionalisation of life in EA, and held extraordinary significance for people struggling to hold onto their identity and sense of 'self.' Jones (1982) found 'food' and the importance of self-catering of similar significance to Vietnamese refugees living in accommodation centres for long periods, as a staff member commented,

> *Given the physical and mental state of refugees arriving in this country and acknowledging that food is an especially important factor in promoting well-being and a sense of security, I think it is grossly insensitive to expect families to eat institutional food in a huge communal dining room,* (ibid: 38-39).

7.3.2 Sharing

Losing choice and autonomy over living conditions was manifest in various ways, such as sharing often cramped living space with a multitude of others sometimes people of rival political, ethnic or religious positions, often sharing bedrooms if single, in most cases sharing bathrooms, often with strangers of both sexes. Some with special needs, might be moved to slightly less close-knit EAs, where they could have slightly more autonomy, and, if somebody had a particular problem with their roommates, RAP and EA staff attempted to move people But there was a limit to this choice and not everybody's requests were granted. Obviously, in such conditions, disputes arose occasionally over political or similar issues, but more often around mundane differences. Femi had had a difficult time in one of the few EA houses RAP had procured at a vulnerable time just before and after giving birth to her second child by caesarean. She explained that the day after she came out of hospital, one of the other women in the house asked her to clean the toilet,

> *I said, 'No! I cannot wash the toilet now, because I have caesarean. You have to wait for* **one** *month. If I can be OK, I will wash it.' The other ladies whose living with us, they say, 'No! This lady just give birth! She cannot wash the toilet, we will do it for her'*

However, "*the Somalia lady*" kept on insisting that Femi could not use the toilet until she had washed it herself, and "*she was making problem with me."* This woman had hit Femi's daughter for hitting her own son,

> *You know, kids, it's normal! …I say, 'How can you beat my baby for your son?' So from there, I just take my shoe, I say 'Let me hit her with my shoe.' They were saying, 'No, no, no! One have to go out!' So they take me out… All those stress! I was* **very, very** *stressed! I was* **sick!**

Christine also found being forced to live closely with strangers problematic. -aving to tolerate behaviour she found undignified, which encroached on her and her children's personal space and privacy, and which was very different to 'home',

*Oh my God! It's very bad! …Everybody behaves differently here… I don't like this kind of environment with my kids… I **don't like** staying with a lot of people here… Everybody's been forced… One can stay in a towel for a whole day! She can just come in your room in the nightie, or in a towel! And you won't tell her, you know what, go and dress up! One way, your kids are here so… you've got friends, somebody just comes in, 'Oh, are you cooking? Give me some food.' I can't do that! Some people just come in and bang doors… you can be sleeping… No private life! Especially when you are not used to this kind of life, it's really hard to adjust, but you try to adjust anyway.*

For Sarah, sharing was an issue because of her health problems. She had a humiliating bladder problem, and when she gave her interview she had obviously caught scabies, which she believed was due to having to share bathroom facilities,

*It has not been easy, especially for the toilets, because you cannot sit on them… and always when you sit on them and somebody else has come… you will catch that same problem… Now even I don't know whether this has been caught by the bathroom where we go to… Cos I had been told this, even the whole body is like this… especially through the night when… I just take out my cream, I want to **scratch!***

Sarah found sharing bathrooms with men and other women very problematic and, stressing the extent of the indignity this caused her, she compared being forced to share in this way with her living conditions in Kenya,

Because even throughout my life I've never shared with the outsiders… even in this year, let me tell you, I've never shared… I have been in my own house with my husband and children. Even on my own, where I was brought up, we have never shared with other people… So you… when you have a bad experience and you come to a place like this one… Only in secondary school… it is normal because it was a boarding school, you are using the same toilets, they're separate but then we were only children, we were young ladies on the same side… but not among the grown-ups…

7.3.3 Dirt and squalor

Although there were occasionally some people who arrived with infectious diseases (such as TB), as the Health Visitor said, many of the minor health problems people suffered were caused or exacerbated by living for long periods of time in a crowded environment often in poor hygiene (shared washing spaces and toilets were often unclean) and not, as some EA staff suggested by disease and dirt-ridden clients. Both Femi and Christine spoke about the dirtiness of some of the EAs they had had to live in over their months in Reception. Christine suggested the dirty conditions were inhumane,

> *I don't know how they take the asylum seekers… You just look at the carpets and say, 'What's this?' …I know they can't meet everybody's needs but… Let them change the carpets! …We are not cows! We are not goats! We are not supposed to live in that kind of environment! The first thing I told them, 'Can you please help me to wash my carpet?' They said, 'It's not dirty' …so I had to get a brush and wash it myself… 'Cos I knew what I wanted. It's not them who are living here, it's me and my kids!*

7.3.4 Poverty and dependency

While a few people were given a small cash allowance, if they had a child under two, or had special needs and were living in part-board accommodation, most were full-board and only received cash for essential fares for legal or medical visits. A few people obviously had some access to resources outside NASS, such as from relatives or friends or even working illegally. This enforced poverty and dependence gave people very little autonomy to *do* much, other than pass time waiting for their dispersal.

Christine obviously had some source of outside financial help, as she had friends living in London who, she said, helped her with solicitors' fees and a few household items, however this was also dependency which Christine found particularly humiliating, and did not prevent her financially struggling. We had just visited the local single-mother's charity which gave second-hand clothes and equipment to women in need, where Christine had returned items her children had finished with and picked up others,

all the time going to, what do you call it, charity… I'm not that kind of person who's going there to beg for clothes. I don't do that in my country, I used to work. I'm a secretary by profession, so I used to make my own money. I used to buy clothes for my kids. So I'm not used to this kind of, you know… The money I get here is not enough, so I can't afford to go and buy good clothes for my kids and myself, so I can't help it I just have to go to the charity… and I hate that… but what am I supposed to do? I've got to bear with it…those are the kinds of things I'm not used to… People might think, oh you, you're really poor… Africa… Not everybody's that much poor… Whatever little resources we've got we try to utilise those and make our own desires… in Uganda, I can't go home and say 'I need clothes', you've got to work to get those, and I used to work… I feel embarrassed 'cos I know how to look after my kids when I'm working…

Christine continues saying she tries now to be resourceful with the little money she receives from NASS, but

Some people can't do that. That's why you find them all the time they are hanging out, they're just waiting when they are going to get dispersed.

Such unwanted dependency on the state and charity to survive at a minimal level of existence forced idleness, which Christine found robbed her of her dignity and meant she and others did pointless activities or just gave up trying,

You spend most of the time (laughing) *walking down the High Street doing window-shopping! We don't do that in Africa… there's no time for that, you have to be working or at home…*[here, in this situation] *you've got nothing to do, they do your hoovering, they make your beds, they cook for you, so you're either sleeping or you're in the High Street doing window-shopping… If somebody's ready to work, let them work! …you can't live on £35 a week…*

Christine believed the Government were wasting money doing asylum seekers' hoovering, then blaming them for costing too much. She also felt that the idleness their situation had forced was a blow to her former status and identity, and could not understand why others made their low situation visible by "*hanging around*" outside the EA,

*I spend most of my time on the telly, I hate being on the streets. I hate sitting out on the flats, I don't do that… I'm not that **kind!** [Some people] especially in the summer time, they hang around, sit there, do what… That seems like, maybe somebody finds you sitting there who knows you and just say, 'Oh my God! What happened to her!' …I'm not this kind of person, but when people come here everything changes…*

Such dependency on NASS for basic subsistence and shelter had further consequences for people living in EA. Another issue that upset Christine was lack of privacy, not just from other residents but from NASS and RAP, worrying her that she was under their surveillance. Despite being unhappy living at Rosehill, Christine had also been pleased that,

They don't monitor you all the time and they give you at least some little privacy…

This meant Christine did not always stay at Rosehill, but sometimes stayed with friends in London, and RAP either did not notice or did not mind. However, several months later at Carlton she said about her life as an asylum seeker,

You don't have your private life… All the time they keep on… You don't have a private life here while you are still asylum seeking, unless you get your status. That's what counts… like here where I'm staying, they've got to clean your house every day. Every now and then somebody's knocking, 'We want this. We want that'… Someone's just walking in… like yesterday, 'Oh, we need to check your kitchen'. My food is there, my work is there, you can't tell somebody, 'Oh, what do you want in my kitchen?' …Or, like they're calling you, 'NASS wants you'…

As her case was coming closer to ending, Christine felt that NASS was trying to contact her more and more, such as requesting her daughter's birth certificate, which she did not have. It was obvious that she felt uneasy with what she felt was increasing monitoring and surveillance, easy to find because she had no autonomy to live elsewhere. Christine also felt she lacked privacy from society in general, that without

the autonomy to live where she chose, she was on show and stigmatised as an asylum seeker,

> *When you become a refugee… you go in different places, so one wouldn't know they are obviously a refugee… Unlike here, you're kept in one place… Whoever is here is asylum seeker… as long as you're still here, everybody knows you're asylum seeker… but when you've got those papers, you're given a house somewhere… I just can't wait to have that… From there my life will… would start going on, normally.*

7.3.5 Summarising

Losing autonomy, choice and control over everyday decisions (on top of long-term life steering) meant people were compelled to live fairly institutionalised lives. This was experienced by some as a humiliating dependency, loss of dignity and humanity, a loss of 'self' and former 'identity', which contributed to a sense of helplessness and sometimes depression. Dependency with loss of purpose and the power or resources to change your situation, can erode self-esteem and identity and this theme runs throughout the literature on refugee experiences. *"The profound loss of individuality, self-esteem and independence endured by refugees and fostered by the dynamics of relief assistance,* (Callamard, 1998:203), was one of the most significant and difficult aspects of the Reception experience, affecting many areas of people's lives. Harrell-Bond (1998:137) reviews literature supporting her argument and research that refugees receiving 'aid', such as in refugee camps in the developing and developed world, *"during that 'liminal' stage of their transition from flight to resettlement,"* suffer from stress and mental health problems because of their forced dependency and ways of *"being helped"*. Harrell-Bond (1998:139) contends,

> *All human beings are dependent on others to a greater or lesser extent; the issue is not being 'helped'* **per se***, but the relative powerlessness of the recipient* **vis-à-vis** *the helper.*

The NASS system, particularly for those with no other source of help or resource, and particularly at Reception, could be equated with such a 'liminal' stage.

7.4 Responding and Coping

How did individuals respond to and cope with long periods of waiting, "*hanging*" in uncertainty, loss of choice, autonomy and control over their situation, dependency and loss of dignity in very basic, even squalid, living conditions sometimes for long periods of time; loss and dislocation from home, familiarity and loved ones? Obviously responses and strategies for coping with the circumstances of Reception greatly varied between individuals, and in all likelihood were influenced by many differential variables such as gender, age, language, previous social status, pre-migration experience, as well as structural variables such as length of time spent in EA and EA conditions. However, the responses of this small number of long-staying women and of some others, give some insight into the possibilities for responding and coping.

7.4.1 Attempting to assert autonomy

Although some people (as RAP workers and Christine testified) seemed to succumb to the dependency of their positions, many found ways of attempting to assert some control and autonomy if not over the guiding aspects of their situations, such as their asylum claim or position in relation to NASS, then over their everyday lives. The ways in which people may have tried to affect the outcome of their asylum claim is beyond the scope of this thesis, but some of the strategies people with RAP used included appealing to the MF for an assessment for proof of torture, which could positively influence someone's claim, following the advice of an 'agent', friend or relative who had been through the system, or a RAP worker's advice to be consistent and trying to use good solicitors. As Christine suggested though, many felt that the asylum system was a lottery over which they had little or no power.

7.4.1.1 Influencing NASS

More obvious to observe and, it seemed, more possible to influence, was NASS' dispersal system. Although people could have no choice about where they were dispersed to (except very rarely, if a close family member wished to join their relative), they could attempt a little control over the speeding up if desperate to move out of EA or slowing down of the process, if desperate not to. Such attempts did not always work. Although in theory it was possible for RAP's clients to phone NASS themselves, the

problems RAP staff had successfully communicating with the appropriate NASS worker were several-fold for asylum seekers themselves, so clients relied heavily on RAP workers as mediators to NASS, and in some cases viewing RAP as NASS (or confusing the two). To get action on their dispersal (or another aspect of their position with NASS) people visited RAP offices, some with ease and others with great reluctance to appeal or just to make their presence quietly but persistently felt. For some these actions were consciously and carefully planned, for others they were just acts of desperation. Sometimes these appeals were combined with sacrificing current comforts in order to gain envisaged future ones.

Sarah's main strategy for speeding up her dispersal was making herself visible to RAP. She could frequently be seen, a quiet but noticeable presence, sitting in RAP's Rosehill office, sometimes engaged with a worker, sometimes just sat, sometimes crying silently. She explained her reasoning when asked how often she visited RAP,

> *Every day! Every day! Even, I don't like to come to my room. You see me here, 'Don't get angry with me' I said now, ' I don't have anywhere else to go. But when I come and sit here and then see you work, I'm also happy! And to greet you… also you see me, you check into the computer whether my name has come'. Yes, you know, they check when they see you. If they don't see you, it means that you only want to stay here! So, that is why I was going every day!*

Sarah's determination to persist in making her presence quietly felt, like a thorn in the side for RAP, was also part of her reasoning for refusing RAP's offer to be moved to Carlton so she could cook for herself, as her sugar level was rising,

> *I have refused… because if I go to Carlton, I will not see them!!* (laughs) *…how will I be seeing them in the office? Unless I ring, and I do not want to ring, I want to see them face-by-face! …They have been telling me, 'Sarah, you have to leave this place, we would not like you to die here, because of this.' And I told them, 'I'm not! If I have to leave here, it will have to be my own house, where you are going to give me!'*

One of Sarah's strategies was to endure shorter-term pains for the perceived longer-term gains of a suitable dispersal place, more quickly. Persistence in appealing to RAP

workers was occasionally enough both to provoke them to act in appealing forcefully to NASS *and* for NASS to act quickly to achieve a person's dispersal place, but often it was not. There were few other options, and one of the rarest but probably most effective, was when individuals were given the opportunity, through RAP, to appeal directly and informally to NASS workers. Sarah's dispersal was eventually organised when her RAP worker gave her this opportunity on a rare occasion when NASS workers visited the Rosehill office. She was able to explain directly to a NASS manager how life was for her in EA with her disabilities, and he immediately phoned and precipitated Sarah's dispersal to supposedly appropriate accommodation.

Appealing to RAP to appeal to NASS on various grounds was also a strategy people used to resist dispersal and gain either extra time in EA in London, or the right to more permanent London accommodation. There were very few grounds on which NASS permitted exceptions to dispersal; on medical grounds that treatment could be obtained nowhere else, and the "*concession*" NASS granted to those accepted by MF as "*victims of torture,*" subsequently defined very narrowly by MF due to the increased demand from those hoping to stay in London. A lot of people attempted to resist dispersal by appealing to RAP with doctors' notes and others by requesting MF referrals. Such appeals were rarely successful, but it did not stop people trying, as there were few other options. There was more scope for *delaying* dispersal either with doctor's notes or just by refusing or failing to travel. Single people or couples were not evicted on their first refusal or failure to travel, and families were never evicted, though everyone was threatened with it, 'cancelled' and usually, 're-booked'. Many people did this once or maybe twice in acts of desperation (6.4.2), others seemed to calculate and consciously manipulate the system. One Iranian man successfully delayed his and his family's dispersal by several months until his wife had had their second baby, citing medical appointments, failing to sign NASS letters to agree to travel, and failing to attend for dispersal several times. This fact and his attitude towards RAP staff meant they, at least, believed he was cynically 'playing the system'. The fact that NASS had lost so much control over dispersal made it easier to for people to 'hide' from and resist NASS if they chose to. RAP obviously had some influence over the degree of compliance or resistance of their clients.

7.4.1.2 Coping with EA

With very little scope to influence key factors directing their lives, some people attempted to assert autonomy and control over their immediate circumstances, in the limited ways possible to them. Many people complained to RAP or EA staff about their living conditions and appealed to move rooms or EA, usually because they had problems with their roommates or their rooms, or on medical or special needs grounds. Some complained vociferously, others very reluctantly and perhaps only to a trusted other, such as an AW. The majority of appeals to move EA concerned the desire people had to cook their own food, which also involved receiving cash to do so, thus giving individuals a small realm for some autonomy over what they ate and when. For Christine, the greater autonomy she gained when moved from Rosehill to Carlton giving her the freedom to cook to her and her children's own cultural taste and with a little more privacy, meant that she no longer felt the same urgency to be dispersed as when living on full-board at Rosehill. For Femi also, although having to use a shared and distant kitchen, gaining the autonomy to cook her own 'hot' African food was very important to her. Lucy, extremely upset at having the facility to cook taken from her after giving birth, asserted her autonomy by insisting on washing her newborn's clothes herself in her room, believing that her baby might "*catch something*" if they went in the general laundry.

Having a little cash for food also gave some people the autonomy to buy a few other items, which in Christine's case contributed to her ability to make a 'home' of where she lived, a very important aspect of making her current circumstances more bearable. She talked about being resourceful "*by whatever means you can,*" possibly involving some resource support from her friends living in London,

> *Like the microwave, I had to buy it myself… I had to buy from the utensils e v e r y thing! …From the £37 I'm given a week… …I don't mind… if not being dispersed 'cos I've made my place a home, so… Some people it makes me sick to know that, OK… Sometimes I just think, they are going to disperse me why should I bother with the place, but when I think that Oh, I've got the kids, I have to make myself… my house clean, 'cos… shall I drop something down and eat if from the…? So I have to make it a nice home, and I've tried my level best… I've tried to make it a really nice home… a lot of people come in here, 'Oh my God!*

Your house looks very nice!' 'Cos it's you that make your place home… a nice home. If you don't then nobody will make it…

Christine's room was always immaculately tidy and clean, with homely touches such as photos of her family placed on a piece of cloth on her fridge, and a bedspread on her bed. She insisted on doing her own "*hoovering,*" taking the "*hoover*" from the cleaner at the door when she came round. Although only having one chair, she sometimes had friends round to visit, sitting on her bed for instance one time while she cooked traditional Ugandan food as they watched a home-video of activities in their village in Uganda. Being resourceful with few resources and having the autonomy to make a room in EA like a home, was obviously of great importance to some people, like Christine. For her, although feeling "*For emergency accommodation, I was lucky I got this place,*" this was obviously a way of maintaining her dignity, pride and sense of humanity, in potentially inhumane circumstances,

If I thought I could give a chance to see my home in Uganda, they couldn't believe it… Because I'm a really clean lady, very smart and clean and things, now just look at this… Sometimes the carpets are just… I was even seven, eight months pregnant, I used to do my carpet, I used to wash it every Monday with a brush… Anyway, that's me, that's the kind of person I am.

For others held up in EA waiting for dispersal, autonomously attempting to settle locally was another way of coping with it and beginning to feel at home, such as sending children to local schools. One such lone mother having attended a local church had begun sending her daughter to the attached school, and while RAP or NASS would not fund her uniform or bus-fares, the Church did. The daughter had been very happy at the school, made friends and begun settling, so when their dispersal came up they were both very upset at having to up-root and unsettle again.

Such expressions of a little autonomy over their immediate environments and lives were one method people found of coping with situations where most of their autonomy had been stripped from them and while waiting for their uncertain futures to unfold.

7.4.1.3 Passing the time - sitting out Reception

As weeks became months and with work illegal, no money and few recreation facilities, people waiting for their dispersal and their asylum decisions found some ways of either using their time or passing it as painlessly as possible. In two of the EA's there were accredited English language classes some attended, and in Rosehill there was a nursery of sorts for pre-school age children if accompanied by parents (though some parents left their children there). There was a *"TV room"* with one small TV mounted on a wall, a few hard chairs and a large lino floor, in which a few people 'hung out' as they did in the Reception area of Rosehill, just sitting or chatting to others. Some tried to use their time resourcefully without money, such as Sarah,

> *I cannot just sit here doing…* (nothing)…*Let me tell you, I have not wasted my time. I went to the library and from the time, for one month when I knew there was a library here, I have read 40 or 60 books! So I have not been wasting my time! …I walk. I'm supposed to walk two hours a day! That is what I am told by the doctor for my sugar level to go down. So sometimes I take a long stretch, walking one hour and coming back, another hour. I time myself!*

Some people obviously worked illegally. Staff at one of the newer EA's complained to a RAP manager that people were working, for instance. Christine also said,

> *You can't rely on £35 a week, that's nothing. So, if somebody's really working I don't blame them…If they can't give them work permits, then what can they do? You don't want them to steal. I don't blame anybody who's working…I myself don't know anybody, but if anyone… let them do that.*

Others were more passive and shut time out as a way of coping with it, for instance by sleeping for as long as possible. It was often difficult for RAP workers to rouse clients in the late morning or early afternoon to communicate a message to them, and people sometimes wandered around in their nightclothes all day. Christine, who had also spoken of window-shopping and watching TV, believed a lot of people were just waiting for dispersal, *"They hang around, sit there, do what!"*

7.4.1.4 Others - Social EA networks

Although it was not always easy living closely with hundreds of strangers in such basic conditions, the close presence of others in a similar position and possibly from similar global regions, languages and cultures, was also a potential source of immense if strangely transient support in a variety of ways. The social networks and relationships that developed seemed to reflect the somehow unnatural and transient passing-through stage of Reception. Sometimes immensely supportive, sometimes superficial, relationships and networks provided information, companionship and solidarity, social support and practical help in attempt, it seemed, to fill official support gaps and their loss of intimates, familiar social networks and familiarity from the suddenly strange situation people were in. Such networks and relationships were a resource that people formed and relied on in different ways to different degrees and levels of trust. Some sought intense support, others more distant, and a few relationships were less than supportive (6.4.2).

Many relied on the social networks that developed within EA's as an essential source of informal information, or 'folk wisdom' about the systems everyone was going through and the complexity of entitlements, especially when official information was obscure or inadequate. People gave each other tips and guidance ranging in accuracy, which might clarify or confuse, and rumours spread like 'wildfire,' for instance on the relative pros and cons of dispersal areas. Lucy said that the first information she had was from other asylum seekers like herself, before RAP filled in the details,

> *Through friends I get to know how the NASS and RAP system looks like… Then later I went… to RAP and NASS and they really explained the full details about it. But the **first** people I got to know was through friends.*

Others were more cautious about taking the advice of fellow-residents, such as Femi who was trying to discover if she had the right to send her child to school. Another client had told her she should just take her child straight to school, but she wanted to go officially through RAP to get the information, feeling it would be too forward to do this, ("*It's not so nice")* and that, as RAP were responsible for her care, this would be the correct way to proceed, "*It's better for someone to direct me, look how they give me information, before I can go there."*

Information and informal knowledge passed between EA residents was a prominent feature of life in Reception and way of coping with the uncertainties and confusions of asylum seeking whether it was taken up, was accurate or contradictory to official knowledge or not. RAP workers often felt embattled by this 'folk wisdom' and when advising clients, frequently began by dispelling rumours, sometimes to replace them with more accurate knowledge and sometimes with information not necessarily based on known facts, but to persuade people to comply (for instance, Glasgow's not that cold, hostile or far away).

Social networks were both visible and hidden. In the bigger EA's, especially in the large reception area and dining room of Rosehill, often large numbers of small groups of people gathered to talk or just 'hang-out' together. People from similar regions discussed and thus kept 'home' alive, in reassurance to each other, such as a group of African men and women sat chatting in Rosehill reception about an escape route being used between the borders of Zimbabwe and Botswana. Other networks were more hidden, some preferring more private and selective relationships. Christine, Lucy and Sarah suggested friendships mostly developed between people from the same country, or language, and sometimes just having children precipitated bonding. Christine said, *"You find your country people"* and *"The first thing is the nationality, when you talk the same language… you're most likely to be together. Then secondly, might be when you've got kids."* Sarah explained,

> *There was a lady who was here… that lady has also helped me, because she was the one who gave me courage to go to the office… This one they were calling me Grandmama! …they used to say, 'I cannot go without you Grandma, you have to disperse me with her, because we talk the same language, because there aren't other Kenyans here only her and me. Unfortunately she was dispersed before me…She rings every, almost every, twice a day…Even this morning she rang…So in fact, although we do not know each other so much, only that we are Kenyans! … she got in touch like a daughter and a mother!*

Such intimacies were short-lived but often continued by mobile phone when people were dispersed, continuing the exchange of knowledge, spreading informal networks nationally, about unknowns on the later stages of the process, which for some could provide extraordinarily significant reassurance. Christine was also in contact with a

dispersed fellow resident, who gave her phone numbers and advice on finding trustworthy legal advice as she ran out of local options.

EA residents also supported each other with friendship, practical help and solidarity. For instance, people frequently interpreted for one another. Lucy explained the encouragement of solidarity people sharing similar experiences gave each other,

> *We help each other, we encourage each other, maybe when I come to an interview… 'Hi! Hi! Hi! Hi!' We sit down, crack jokes together… Make ourself like, lightly… Make ourselves happy! And then we encourage each other… in the same place. Maybe you've been refused, you will be **sad**! You encourage her, 'that is not the end of life', you understand?*

The day before saying this, Lucy and Christine with their two babies, were laughing and joking together when I arrived, trying on a wig one of them had and dancing around the room in it to music. A little later on Christine attempted to help Lucy settle her newborn, being the more experienced mother, giving her advice on settling restless babies, another time one minded the other's baby so she could shower. Practical help like this could be substantial, if reluctant and ambivalent, when single-mothers had no other options, for instance, the woman Femi subsequently fell out with had looked after her older daughter for ten days while she stayed in hospital giving birth to her second. Femi, now hesitant in forming close relationships, still gained relief from her isolation by more distant chatting to a woman living downstairs, "*We talk sometimes… she never make me lonely, anyway.*" Such combinations of practical, advisory and light-hearted support were an extremely important factor for some people in getting through life in EA and the asylum systems. Despite the difficulties of living in EA for long periods of time, for some people the companionship and social support of others, even though often transient and superficial, was an obvious comfort and seemed preferable to being isolated in their own place, such as the young single mother who preferred to stay in EA than be dispersed to Glasgow where she knew no-one and would be alone with her child (6.4.2).

There is substantial long-standing literature suggesting the immense (though nuanced) value of different types of social networks in facilitating forced migration, (Koser and Pinkerton, 2001) providing social support and assisting settlement (Carey-Wood et al,

1995). There is also new evidence of the changing character and increasing significance of informal networks, such as these, reflecting the gaps in state, VS and more formal networks springing up in support of newly stratified layers of individuals excluded from all welfare support and scattered away from 'communities' by dispersal (Moran, 2002; Dwyer, 2005). Medlicott (2006) has suggested the concept of 'surrogate intimates' to describe the types of relationships developing among EA residents at RAP, capturing the strangeness and transience of intimacies developed where peoples' 'familiar' intimacies have been dislocated and lost.

7.4.1.5 *Outside others*

For some, support from friends, relatives and outside strangers helped ease the Reception experience. Not everyone was isolated and alone in the UK and some had relatives, friends or informal contacts from whom they could gain various types of support, including a place to stay, as it was possible (though not always easy) to move in and out of the NASS system. Although staying with a 'sponsor' sometimes seemed preferable, this placed strains on relationships, as sponsors often lost benefits if an asylum seeker stayed with them, and it could take weeks for NASS to begin sending vouchers to people moved to a sponsor. Christine had stayed with a friend for four months before entering the dispersal system, when it became impossible to continue staying with them. However she obviously had a network of social support outside EA, and probably stayed away quite frequently especially from Rosehill, one of the reasons she was pleased to have a little privacy there. Her friends had also been asylum seekers and could therefore advise her about the processes. She said they lent her money to pay the last solicitor she had, so she possibly had some outside help with resources through Reception. They were obviously a significant but importantly reciprocal source of support, and partially explained Christine's aloofness from and lesser reliance on EA residents. Towards the end of her stay at Carlton, Christine had a young girl staying with her in her room, helping her with the children and chores. At one point Christine began referring to her as her 'sister', but she explained that she was a close relation whose mother was friends with her mother, so she just called her 'sister',

> *(K: Do they question you about your friend?) No they don't! In fact, I don't know why they're not asking! They've never asked her. She comes and goes, she sleeps in when she wants to. 'Cos I need her around, I can't do it on my own,*

especially when I've got kids. Sometimes she helps me when I'm going to do the shopping, I leave her with my kids. So I'm just lucky they haven't asked me yet... So when she's not around I just feel bad. I like her around all the time. She's cleaning round, so... she gets some advice from me. Sometimes she can't be at home on her own... She's waiting to appear in court... She's still young, but she's got to go to court. She's seventeen, but she was given a house to live in on her own. It's really hard for her. I've just told her to come in and stay in here. Whatever happens to me, let it happen...

Other than known social networks, there were local church, charity, RCO and other 'strangers' offering different support and services to EA residents. Sarah attended a local church group that came into Rosehill and gained obvious emotional support from,

... They come even to preach to us...on Thursday. There's a group that comes here. They preach about hope! 'Cos sometimes when you come here, you... sometimes you're hopeless! You would just say, 'I wish I died!' and such a thing. But they come to give us hope! Yes, and we like it very much!

Lucy also got emotional support from a local church she attended regularly. Others gained support from Amigos, which offered befrienders to those who had been referred usually through RAP, if particularly vulnerable and without other support. Femi had recently met her new Amigos befriender who she found friendly and kind and was going to help her with getting her daughter registered in school. The Zimbabwean couple including the husband who used a wheelchair, had an Amigos volunteer who advocated for them with social services to get an assessment and the equipment they needed and who took them out to different parts of London occasionally, such as Kew Gardens which the wife found a break from feeling trapped in EA. People living in EA were differently active in receiving and acquiring the support they needed; some support came to them, some people actively sought it out (such as the woman who found the local Catholic church and adjoined school for her daughter to attend).

Some of this 'support' was less than supportive. With a growing 'asylum industry' gathering to exploit the vulnerable, media interest and sometimes politically driven groups attempting to recruit members at very visible and easily accessible EAs, residents could be vulnerable. On one occasion an EA security worker had to intervene

when a young man became intensely angry and upset with a woman visitor who, he said, was trying to recruit young Iranians in the dining room to the Mujahedin. The woman denied this, saying she was just passing by and was asking if people would join a political demo. The young man shouted, 'We've come here to get away from people like you, we want peace', and a RAP worker ordered the woman to leave, so she stood outside the building chatting to milling residents. RAP did what they could to try to protect people from 'abusive' outsiders but were only able to act on what they saw or came to their attention. In vast EA's with hundreds of residents, many often milling around reception areas, security measures were unreliable and usually anyone could walk in unnoticed.

7.4.1.6 Hopes and fears

With little autonomy or control over their destinies, and living in uncertainty, sometimes the only coping strategy possible was to find ways of thinking that alleviated mental distress, anxiety and depression. Each of the African women's hopes and fears centred around their asylum claim, gaining their status or being deported. Christine spoke of being prescribed anti-depressants towards the end of her asylum case and said she could only feel hopeful while she had a solicitor working on her case. Each of the African women talked of a religious faith and prayer, with no option but to trust their fates to God. Their prayers were for their 'status' and a possible future in Britain,

> *My main fear is that I might be deported... But I pray I won't be deported…Even I have not been given… the one you call status. But I believe! …that if the Lord has prepared me to stay here, I will stay here! …If they give me status… I can still do a job! 'Cos I have the language! Yes, I am not very old! I can…see when people do feel better doing something, doing work. So even me, when I get that letter… I will still do some job…even if it is sweeping… I will earn my living!* (**Sarah)**

> *My hopes? … I need a good life for my kids and for myself. But now, I don't have a good life. I'm not happy with the way I am in my life now… I always pray for that before I go to sleep, I pray. When I wake up in the morning, I pray for God to help me and give me a good life* (**Femi)**

(My hope) *Is for me to be granted my stay… take care of my baby, take care of myself, then try to go to college, because I didn't finish my school… Try to be in one of the organisation or other helping asylum seekers… going through their system.* **(Lucy)**

However some people just did not cope or find adequate ways of thinking to deal with their situation, particularly having heard negative decisions about aspects of their asylum claim, and believing hope and all options were exhausted. This had been the thinking of the young man who had heard one day that his claim had been rejected by the Home Office and was due to be 'cancelled' by NASS the next day. He had run out of RAP's office before the TL had a chance to tell him that there might be another way of ensuring he could stay in EA for now. Instead he returned to his room where that evening he had set light to himself. He and the many other residents in the EA only escaped serious injury or worse because EA staff found him and pulled him out before this could occur. RAP staff who knew him well felt this was a serious attempt at suicide from sheer desperation. When this was discussed at a volunteers' training session, several other stories of attempted suicide among clients had emerged.

Reaching the end of perceived options also included for some rejection for treatment by the MF. People held high expectations that MF acceptance would give them the option to stay in London for treatment, and help with their asylum claim, and felt this rejection and its potential consequences very keenly. Within a few weeks two separate Iranian men had injured themselves on hearing of their rejection by the MF, the first putting his arm through a glass door, the second crashed his head through his window. The TL who had rushed to the second scene found him "*sobbing like a baby*" and his wife aggressively throwing accusations at her for letting them down. The TL said she felt ashamed of her country when she witnessed such scenes. These were acts of desperation from powerlessness, demonstrating the potential for despair when individuals lost or felt they had lost, all autonomy and control over aspects of their lives and destinies, and reached the end of or had negative decisions made on their various claims. These and the hopes, fears and prayers of the four women also demonstrate the immense importance that finding a safe and secure asylum was for people journeying through Reception, and in many senses they had not yet found it.

7.5 Conclusion

This account of asylum seekers experiences of Reception living in RAP's EA, from the perspectives of several people, who spent several months in this position, has discussed various themes that emerged from the data. People had very different experiences prior to arriving in the UK, which will obviously have affected their experiences of Reception. All were dislocated from 'home' and their individual conceptions of it, most leaving family and friends when travelling to this country and in losing 'home', also experienced some loss of 'self' and identity. In claiming asylum and for NASS support, people felt their lives were left 'hanging', they had lost control over their destinies, which were in the hands of unknown others making decisions using unknown criteria and the outcomes felt like a lottery, just 'luck', and an all-encompassing sense of uncertainty took over people's lives as they waited in limbo.

While losing control over these fundamental, life-changing events, people also were and felt stripped of autonomy in their daily lives, which bordered on the institutional and squalid in some EA's, with very little choice in where or who they lived with, and as such symbolically important aspects of choice and cultural comfort such as preparing their own food when they chose, was removed. Living in poverty without cash, or meaningful occupation, people felt the indignity of dependency and forced idleness whilst aware of complaints against asylum seekers 'sponging'.

Despite this, people found ways of coping and attempting to assert some autonomy over at least some daily aspects of their lives and to a limited extent over NASS, by petitioning RAP to advocate for them or to change their living conditions. Also by taking control where they could over daily living, trying to make a 'home', doing their own washing, and being resourceful with very little. Sitting out the wait, some people tried to use their time resourcefully, others tried to shut it out by sleeping or "*hung around,*" waiting for their dispersal or asylum decision.

People developed relationships and social networks with other residents, sharing 'useful' information (not always so useful), giving practical and emotional help, and encouraging one another in the solidarity of occupying similar positions, offering companionship and "*cracking jokes.*" Some could rely on more extensive social networks outside EA and the NASS system, for relief from living in EA, resources,

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advice and friendship, as well as organisations around RAP offering various services. Most people relied on RAP in some way. When all else failed, people could try to think differently about their situation to help them through it, turning to faith and religion, future hopes and the necessity to be strong for the children's sake. Most people suffered from some form of mental distress, but for some this overwhelmed them utterly when all paths of hope seemed to have closed down to them, and a few resorted to desperate measures of self-harm.

The experience of Reception for 'received' asylum seekers was one of the 'anormalisation,' (Geddes, 2001) of their lives, where any opportunities for social participation and experiencing life "*on the outside*" especially locally were severely curtailed. The deterrent measures of policy (the cashless system, forced to live, with no-choice where, out of London, subsistence below income support, containment, monitoring and surveillance) were felt as a denial of the autonomy to try to settle where they were and be other than dependent (so easily monitored) on the state. There was a feeling that life was on hold, in suspense or limbo, "*hanging*" in uncertainty with no foothold to control their future direction, that 'normal' life could not begin until that letter granting 'status' was received or, as some hoped, when dispersed.

However, Reception *was* relatively short term. For most, there was life after Reception. Most people were eventually dispersed. Sarah and Lucy were. But for some, their worst fears were realised. Having had her last hope, judicial review, dashed when the 'solicitor' she had paid £500 turned out to be unreliable, Christine was woken before dawn one morning to find the police and Immigration officials in her bedroom, and she and her two young children were taken to the 'holding centre' at Heathrow. After refusing to get on the plane, transfer to Gatwick's 'removal' centre, appealing to IND that she had not yet received their reply on her last appeal on humanitarian grounds, enlisting all possible support and all efforts to stay her 'removal', Christine and her children were deported back to Uganda accompanied by guards threatening handcuffs, several days later. Christine and her family were objects of the government's new drive to 'remove' failed asylum seekers, particularly targeting families with children who found it difficult to 'disappear' into society. In RAP's EA they were sitting ducks.

8 The struggle to "maintain integrity:" reinforcing the 'safety-net'

> *The scene is so diverse and fast moving, how are we able to deal with this and maintain our integrity? … It is so political and rapidly changing, it requires us as an organisation and as individuals in the organisation to develop a strategy to best go forward…* (**SM, speech to whole organisation, Christmas 2002**)

> Government funding … *It's not a problem in itself… the challenge then is how you **balance** that in terms of other funding for other projects… because asylum seekers' needs are… very varied and complex and the government funding covers only very… sort of… the **core** needed…* (**SM, int.**)

> *NASS isn't interested in support needs, you know… And everything feels like… it's a deterrent against helping people… It's a **real struggle!*** (**STPW, int.**)

While RAP helped implement the IAA 1999 and subsequent legislations as a Reception Assistant, they worked daily with children, women and men, the majority of whom, one PW said "*do have special needs in some way or other, some of them more complex than others.*" This chapter examines the conjunction of these two elements of RAP's work. What were the implications of working for NASS for addressing their asylum seeking clients' needs? Were they complementary? What possibilities were there for doing the latter when constrained by the former, in the ways we have seen in previous chapters? Considering RAP's increase in control putting policy into practice as an agent of NASS (chapter 6), experienced by RAP's clients as a *decrease* in control when entering the NASS system (chapter 7), this chapter focuses on the possibilities there were and efforts RAP made to deliver welfare in response to their clients needs, *despite* the control aspects implementing policy required of them.

RAP experienced their financial dependence and subsequent requirement to fulfil NASS purposes, which changed with the political wind, as a challenge to their integrity as a voluntary organisation whose aims were to provide welfare to asylum seekers in need. NASS funding and prerogatives were designed to provide new asylum seekers with only the barest safety-net to allay destitution, being welfare designed as a deterrent, and covered only the very "***core** needed", "very basic needs,"* (SM, int.), provision of food, shelter, protection and advice as the women asylum seekers

acknowledged. However, Karim continued, *"day in, day out we see all sorts of complex needs, which require special attention,"* seemingly presenting a contradiction and, presumably, dilemmas experienced at organisational level and for individual workers faced daily with humans in need. In order to explore this apparent contradiction, it is necessary to examine what the sometimes special, multiple and complex needs of RAP's clients were. Using Lipsky's (1980) analysis of public service bureaucracies, what were RAP's "*service ideals*" for addressing such needs in their reception role? This chapter will then examine the boundaries or barriers to 'helping,' thus compromises to their "service ideals" for workers and the organisation, before considering RAP's potential for addressing clients' needs *despite* these. RAP was not in a sealed microcosm, and other agencies and individuals (I term 'satellite agencies') circulated around them, at RAP's or their own behest, attempting to address unmet needs and fill perceived service gaps. It should then be possible to address the questions raised by the contradictions and consider the state of reception 'welfare' for asylum seekers under the NASS system of deterrence and control, via RAP.

8.1 'Multiple complex needs' and the 'service ideal' response to them

The stereotyped perception of refugees as helpless and desperately needy victims is widespread and, Harrell-Bond (1999) argues, often perpetuated by 'aid' responses to people forced to migrate. Despite the stereotype, this is not to say that people seeking asylum do not, as a result of their particular position, have specific needs, some multiple, complex or desperate, others more straightforward. Obviously a person's needs depend on their unique trajectory, and individuals carry and express similar needs differently, but the accounts and observation at RAP, of people receiving and giving help suggest many have *some* common needs gathered prior to their arrival in the UK, *and* needs related to their experience of seeking asylum here. This includes some common needs when people *first* arrive in a country of asylum, probably distinctive from those who claim asylum having been in Britain some time.

Obviously the most basic need of an asylum seeker arriving in a country of asylum is to find a place of refuge, safety and security. The 'forced' nature of asylum seekers' migration means that forced migrants are *less* likely to have contacts, be familiar with or know the language of a 'host' nation they flee to and more likely to be destitute than migrants with more choice, (Bloch, 2002). Therefore people can have very basic needs

for shelter, food, the means to survive, that is, a 'safety net' to prevent destitution (Home Office, 1998). On arrival, people can be "*vulnerable, frightened and bewildered*" (RAP, 2001/2:1) by the unfamiliarity with their new surroundings, and situation culturally, legally, socially, linguistically and the legal, bureaucratic and 'welfare' systems they enter as destitute asylum seekers, their new associated obligations, rights and entitlements. They therefore could have orientation needs; "*You haven't got a context when you arrive,*" an AW said, not knowing, how social 'systems' like seeing a doctor, work. Extremes of uncertainty can also be characteristic of asylum seeking, which Wilson (2004:4) describes as a journey,

> *…into psychological uncertainty and the darkness of the unknown that is experienced as living 'in between' worlds of reality; that which 'was' and that which 'exists' without a foreseeable future.*

However, compounded with this,

> *The traumatizing effects of asylum seeking or being a refugee in a homeland or a 'strangeland' are overlaid by personal experiences of trauma. Many asylum seekers and refugees have layers of trauma – personal, familial, social, cultural, national and spiritual,* (Wilson, 2004:3).

Asylum seekers arriving in the UK may experience the emotional and psychological traumas of separation and loss in multiple dimensions: home, loved ones, familiar culture and way of life, status, job, identity, contributing to feeling isolated, depressed, stressed and anxious. Some may be suffering the physical and psychological effects of torture and persecution, with sometimes complex related health problems (for example women made pregnant and with HIV or AIDs as a result of rape). Others may have unrelated visible and non-visible health issues and disabilities, perhaps untreated for some time, even unaware of their condition (Sarah). However,

> *…we must not assume that all refugees and asylum seekers are ill or needy. This is not only inaccurate but also stigmatises people. The truth is that most asylum seekers arrive in the UK in reasonable health,* (Refugee Council, *Information Service,* 2004: 122).

Some people had few needs, maybe had contacts in the UK, access to resources, spoke English, were in reasonable health, were able to be quickly resourceful and resilient and needed little other than a little familiarising, advice and signposting. As we have seen in Chapters 6 and 7, the NASS system of Reception and dispersal, the legal asylum system, the complex and obscure bureaucratic webs of both and layers of civic stratification, and other social conditions created new needs compounding those with which people arrived. This includes the extended time people spent in Reception, during which people expressed their needs very differently; some in loud demand, others not at all. An SM worried that,

> *Often the most vulnerable are those that speak quietest. Sometimes the ones that speak the loudest tend not to be as needy.*

Whether people had complex, multiple special or few straightforward needs, they had the need to be treated with humanity and dignity. Many had needs beyond the basic or 'core' needs of destitution met by NASS' 'safety net', which was designed to deny people with the means to begin a process of reconstruction (O Neill, 2001), settlement (Robinson, 2003) or integration (Castles et al, 2003).

8.1.1 *'Service ideals'*

RAP workers recognised and were daily confronted with the fact that "*asylum seekers needs are… very varied and complex and the government funding covers only very… sort of… the* **core** *needed…*" (**SM,** int**.**). As a VS agency, whose purpose was the "*…provision of relief for refugees and their families and dependents who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress at or near ports of entry to the United Kingdom*" (RAP, 1998) staffed with workers with strong often personal and ideological commitments to the well-being of asylum seekers, their "*service ideals*" were, it might be assumed, challenged daily by this factor. Lipsky (1980:xii) argues that individual public service workers usually enter such work

> *…with at least some commitment to service… because of their potential as socially useful roles…Ideally, and by training, street-level bureaucrats respond to the individual needs or characteristics of the people they serve or confront,* (ibid:xii).

However there is an intrinsic contradiction in their work, between the service ideal of responsiveness to individuals and "*the bureaucratic ideal of impersonal detachment in decision making"* (ibid: 9), of equity in treatment and distribution of resources, "T*he fundamental service dilemma of street-level bureaucracies is how to provide individual responses or treatment on a mass basis,"* (ibid: 44).

Obviously different players (the organisation as a whole, individual workers, asylum seekers, policy makers, the polity, refugee activists and RCOs) will hold different ideas about the ideal Reception service for asylum seekers, going to the heart of the welfare and immigration control nexus. Any 'service ideal' way of responding to the multiple, complex and simple needs of newly arriving refugees, is contentious in the literature, with conflicting ideas, for instance on issues of 'dependency,' but was also contentious between workers at RAP. However, when talking of their ideals workers included, a desire to provide holistic services addressing the needs of the whole person,

> *When I use a casework approach to a case, I want to address every issue… 'Cos I think most asylum seekers do have special needs in some way or other,* (**STPW**).

This included the ideal of developing services to address the identified needs that front line workers witnessed and clients expressed daily, and therefore that the organisation should be controlled more from the "*bottom up"* than the "*top down,"*

> *You're seeking the whole time to have maximum feedback from our staff… …for example, there may be some people that would **love** us to develop a massive service for vulnerable women…* (**ED**).

> *Maybe doing a little bit more around longer-term support through counselling maybe, through doing some befriending, being able to respond in some way to people that are extremely disturbed, distressed, vulnerable, special needs that we can't always do even for very vulnerable clients,* (**SM**).

These ideals involved filling their and others service gaps, which sometimes involved ensuring just that clients actually received their entitlements,

> *In an ideal world, it would be much nicer to be able to plug those gaps…I'd like us to be able to somehow fill the gap between what clients are entitled to and actually getting someone to acknowledge they are entitled to it,* (**SM**).

One worker also felt that it would be ideal, "*to be able to spend some **time** with them, in just not a pressurised work environment… sit down and talk and listen*" in order to find out clients needs because,

> *What we feel, what we think that the clients needs are, is different from what the client thinks that their needs are and there's always a gap between these two understandings, the priorities of them is different from ours.*

The managerial approach to this was the ideal of being better resourced, "*more staff and more time for it… That would be my wish… also looking to get particular expertise.*"

All workers felt the compulsion to attempt to respond to clients needs in some way (if with differing ideas of just 'how' was appropriate) however there were structural constraints and barriers, some generic to public service 'street-level bureaucracies', others specific to RAP's positioning in relation to this particular state at this particular time, as a key 'stakeholder' in NASS 'safety net' welfare. Thus there were discrepancies between their or the *"service ideal"* and the reality of service provision and structure of their work.

8.2 The barriers to and boundaries of 'helping'

If the service ideal might have been to respond to address clients complex needs by offering them appropriate emotional, psychological, functional and practical support without fostering an unhealthy dependence or denying people their autonomy, either by providing such support themselves or assisting clients in accessing relevant external services, what barriers prevented RAP from doing this? Lipsky (1980: xiii) suggests,

> *Compromises in work habits and attitudes are rationalised as reflecting workers' greater maturity, their appreciation of practical and political realities,*

or their more realistic assessment of the nature of the problem. But these rationalizations only summarize the prevailing structural constraints on human service bureaucracies. They are not 'true' in an absolute sense…

We have seen (Ch. 6) how the structural constraints for RAP operating as a Reception agent of NASS, precipitated a bureaucratisation and routinisation of their work, a greater emphasis on control, and greater numbers of clients, particularly those with special needs, staying longer,

> *…the system itself did not take into account… it tended to treat everybody the same and did not make any distinction between people who have different needs. There is nothing in the legislation that said if people had needs above and beyond pure destitution… where that would fall to* (**SM,** int**.**).

RAP's ability to and practice of addressing clients needs was conditioned by a multitude of different idiosyncratic and emblematic factors, as well as their position in the NASS system, including their unique character and history as an organisation of "*refugees working with refugees*" (**SM**), and, of course, as an interactive process in relations with their clients. This section explores *two* of the main emblematic barriers there were to 'helping' or addressing clients' needs, with reference to the idiosyncrasies of RAP.

8.2.1 Superficial, not holistic support

In response to their new responsibility for clients for long periods with "*multiple or complex needs*" (RAP, 2001/2:9), RAP had appointed a worker to manage MF referrals in 2001, then in their 2002 restructuring, had set up a Support Services Team, to work with clients with obvious special or complex needs. During the research period, this fledgling team had just begun operating and was learning its new role, however one STPW, also new with RAP's restructuring, with considerable previous experience working with asylum seekers with mental health and other special needs felt,

> *They do recognise the need to meet people's support needs, but they're not looking at it… realistically, at what it actually involves… they don't want to do what's **involved** in it… they don't want an intensive approach… they want their*

staff to get through lots of people quickly… it's going to be very superficial and it's not going to address peoples needs… (**STPW,** int.)

However, Kath had been granted by one manager the discretion to develop her own service in her own way, using a casework approach with a few clients with particularly complex needs, addressing "*every issue, 'cos that's where I get job satisfaction."* Most of this work involved spending considerable time attempting to access wider statutory services clients' needed, and with clients using counselling skills she was trained in. At the time of her interview Kath was very despondent with the weight of constraints which she felt to be, internally and externally resistant to her attempts to address clients' needs,

> *…it's very difficult for me to do what RAP, I think, envisaged the support team would be doing. Sort of, doing it in a very superficial way… the approach they have to the NASS forms… They look at it, 'We've got to get through all these clients, I'll give you six', that sort of thing, and for people who've got complex needs…*

Kath recognised the constraints of their NASS position on RAP,

> *it's difficult 'cos so much of their funding comes from NASS… 95% …and NASS isn't interested in support needs, you know, and everything feels like a deterrent against helping people… It's a **real struggle***

However she also felt that RAP was not yet "*geared up"* or "*equipped"* to address people's special needs, and was uncertain that SM wanted to develop this way. Kath felt this was partially because RAP was quite an insecure and unconfident organisation, repeating another worker saying, "*…they don't want to go away from their recognised role."* Other workers and a VS 'satellite agency' social worker also expressed the concern that,

> *…a lot of people have never worked in any other environment, have come straight from wherever they were as a refugee and then have got themselves a job in **this** refugee organisation, so they've never worked in the UK work environment before* (**TL,** int.**)**

Many people don't have a lot of experience about how the system works in this country, which is, you know, absolutely understandable, (**STPW,**int.).

…they are not providing a holistic service……they might have lots of experience directly or indirectly, but no statutory qualification and they don't know the law here around health, children and disability…(**SAW**)

The problem with this was that, without the experience of working in the statutory sectors, workers who were refugees were not as conversant in both the formal and informal techniques of statutory agencies running a 'budget-led' not 'needs-led' service. They were not as sure as they needed to be on asylum seekers' entitlements and so could accept statutory agencies' refusal to offer services without assertively insisting they fulfil their statutory duty. These workers recognised that many of RAP's refugee workers were very highly qualified but were subject to the well-established discriminatory employment situation (Carey-Wood, 1995) where refugees nationally tended to be under-employed and could often only find jobs in organisations supporting refugees,

Workers who are refugees… not all of them, but the majority of them, I think they are really exploited by their employers… they don't think they can get a job anywhere else and they think they should be grateful… They've had a tough time, they've come here and it's been a struggle, and it continues to be a struggle, but they should be grateful for this… or for the Refugee Council, and they shouldn't object to … how they're treated, or if they don't have a contract for ten years… or something like that. They're not happy about it but they feel, 'Oh, it's very hard to get a job, nobody's going to employ me, this is the only place I can work', and I think that these organisations, however unconsciously… take advantage of that… people put up with a lot and get on with it… it's very much a sort of… stoical, accepting culture (**STPW**).

SM's position on RAP's approach to addressing clients' special needs was ambivalent. They acknowledged RAP's deficiencies, rationalising them in several ways, which as Lipsky (1980: xiii) said, summarised *"the prevailing structural constraints,"*

Do we offer enough for special needs clients? …the short answer to that is "no". But then again you need to be asking what our role and function is, and where that should be done… I can't watch my staff killing themselves trying to provide something like the boy with his finger in the hole in the dyke, trying to provide those support services that really should be provided externally… You have to draw the line otherwise we would all just burn out very, very quickly. That's the situation as it stands at the moment. I've already said about in an ideal world it would be much nicer to plug those gaps, but I don't think anything's changed that much externally, unless we've got the resources to challenge that. In the meantime we need to be supporting clients as much as it's reasonable. (**SM**)

(Lipsky, 1980:99) argues that this is a typical managerial position,

When confronted with the dilemma of serving more clients or maintaining high quality service, most public managers will experience great pressures to choose in favour of greater numbers at the expense of quality.

This SM also raised the issue of what *exactly* the service ideal for addressing asylum seekers' special needs was especially over the issue of dependency, while criticising the above STPW's attempt to develop a more holistic service,

As an organisation… I'm very strongly of the opinion that we should not create dependency from our clients and I've seen that happen time and time again. And I've had various conversations with various members of staff about, 'You cannot be there… their mentor, their mother, their sister, their brother. You cannot be the person they need if things go wrong. They have to start finding those resources in themselves and what you've got to remember is that often they've come from situations that lesser people would have collapsed under.' By opening up our arms and saying, 'Don't worry, we'll take care of you,' you are actually not giving them the respect they deserve. You're disempowering them, and I feel that very, very strongly in relation to the work that worker was doing… I felt she was creating an air of dependency of the client. She was providing services that **she** *felt were appropriate, that were not agreed appropriate services from the organisation,* (**SM**, int.)

However, Kath had expressed a strong sense of the importance of boundaries to attention clients' were given, believing RAP tended to prioritise by those who shouted loudest and could respond by giving 'louder' clients *"ridiculous"* and inequitable degrees of attention. Although the SM acknowledged that this STPW's work obviously benefited some clients, despite her belief that she had been *"creating an air of dependency"* with clients; she agreed concerning one refugee, *"I've seen him change and blossom and begin to look a lot happier."* However she had the managerial concern that this man was not RAP's client, therefore was no longer entitled to services, the boundaries of welfare no longer extending to his particular civic status,

> *We are not funded to do that… we've got enough vulnerable clients within our care that we are finding it difficult to fund… …I'm not saying she didn't do a wonderful job, I'm saying she didn't do a wonderful job within the remit that this organisation should be providing.*

This managerial position reflects the dilemma Lipsky (1980:44) argues is most fundamental to street-level bureaucracies,

> *The ability of street-level bureaucrats to treat people as individuals is significantly compromised by the needs of the organization to process work quickly using the resources at its disposal… The typical conflicts here are… response to the needs of individual clients versus efficient agency performances.*

And in RAP's case, superficial rather than holistic services, because,

> *The existential problem for street-level bureaucrats is that with any single client they probably could interact flexibly and responsively. But if they did this with too many clients their capacity to respond flexibly would disappear,* (ibid).

It seemed that those intent on providing an intensive or holistic service for people with multiple complex needs were likely to either burn out or leave. This STPW had already handed in her notice when she gave her interview, conceding partially practical reasons for this, but also,

I don't want to be part of a production line; I want to do… reasonable casework with people who need it.

The worker doing a similar role to the new ST, had left RAP due to stress,

Jill used to do all of the Medical Foundation stuff for clients with status, arguing daily with NASS, trying to get letters, to issue NASS 35s or termination letters. She used to do all the stuff with local authorities, trying to get NASS to treat people appropriately and she left us because she couldn't cope with it any more. I dearly love her, but she took on everything and we've got a team that do those functions and roles that Jill was trying to do very much on her own… but the thing that got to Jill in the end was she couldn't… it was so bureaucratic that… you know, someone who had been with us in EA, 'great, wonderful. You've got ILR, brilliant news! Let's go ahead and you can start your life now, you can go out, you can find somewhere to live, you can get yourself a job'… and then they took another three months waiting for a letter to come so that they could leave. It was just so frustrating for the client, obviously, frustrating for the members of staff as well, (**SM**, int)

But a superficial and overly bureaucratic approach potentially had serious implications for clients with special needs as the outgoing STPW reported,

*When she first came her behaviour was very disturbing and very disruptive and she was obviously psychotically ill, and she was admitted to hospital. She then was discharged within a month back to the care of RAP, unfortunately, and she was placed in Unwin hostel…and she's become ill again, and partly that's because… she'd come here asking for money to go to an out-patients appointment, this was following her discharge, and they said, 'Oh, you have to have your appointment card with you, we can't give you money'. So she missed it! You know! And if anybody'd **checked** the screen, they would have seen that she, you know… So she missed her appointment! She just accepted it, and went off… missed her appointment, didn't have her medication renewed and gradually began to break down, and she has taken me just, you know, about a week's amount of steady work taking her back to psychiatric hospital…*

8.2.2 One cog in the machine: 'nobody wants to take responsibility'

One primary task of the ST and any RAP worker attempting to address clients' special needs was accessing statutory services beyond those RAP provided. Thus a further barrier to helping clients was the difficulty RAP workers had in persuading statutory services to take responsibility for them, partially because of poor specification within the1999 IAA for those with needs beyond destitution,

> *…it's been an ongoing problem. Special needs are a real problem because nobody wants to take responsibility for them particularly because the legislation made no reference… it took the right of… people to access any service apart from what NASS were providing, so that if they needed services that were beyond NASS' remit… local authorities would tend to say, 'No, it's their responsibility not ours'. So it's been extremely difficult. We've had clients who have been here for ages in some cases and we've not been able to do anything or move them on,* (**SM,** int.).

The 1999 IAA did allow NASS to make *some* special payments to asylum seekers with special needs, but these were virtually inaccessible as there were no set procedures for making claims and by the research period, very few successful claims had been made. However, court cases such as Westminster Council v NASS established that asylum seekers *were* entitled to a local authority Community Care Assessment and assistance if found to have needs *"above and beyond destitution,"* like any British citizen, (Harris and Roberts, 2004).

That RAP was just one cog in the machinery of agencies responsible for their clients' support needs was a further time-consuming barrier for RAP workers,

> *For people who've got complex needs… for services, statutory services who do not want to touch asylum seekers with a barge pole, it's very difficult to get them the services they need, and it takes for ever, and it's a struggle, a daily struggle,* (**STPW**).

Statutory services, as well as reluctant, were confused about specific entitlements of people with specific 'civic' or immigration status, and employed their own bureaucratic stalling techniques seemingly to lessen demand,

> *The disability team… I have actually managed to get them to do a couple of assessments but it's taken weeks and weeks… apparently, all referrals to Social Services have to go to the Asylum Team first! …it's got nothing to do with the Asylum Team! They don't assess health needs or social care needs… but that holds things up… my referral then goes back and forward, back and forward… and then I have to keep chasing up… and then it gets lost in transit… and then they say, 'No, we're not going to do anything'… that is **typical**, that is **really** typical!* (**STPW**).

This worker particularly found the local CMHT reluctant to engage at all with asylum seekers,

> *…they do prioritise, and obviously they're like any other service, they're under a lot of pressure, but **this particular** team, it's as if asylum seekers are from Mars! And, you know 'We… can't deal with these people, because we don't have the skills, it's up to the MF, we're not equipped to deal with them, they're victims of torture'. That's actually irrelevant! … you can hardly get them to do an assessment, never mind… provide a service! They're very, very unwilling even to address the need to work with this client group… …CMHTs like this one, have a statutory duty! …to work with this group, and I think they're discriminating against our clients,* (**STPW**).

A social worker at a local satellite charity confirmed this discrimination among statutory agencies against asylum seekers,

> *Social services have a tiny bit more insight than members of the public, but there are serious prejudices against asylum seekers.*

This social worker also believed that some RAP workers were not familiar enough with the informal working of statutory agencies, which were also guarding the borders to

their bit of the welfare state, to get really assertive and demand their clients' entitlements,

> *they're not sure when they go to those who provide services that they are budget led, not needs led… I know, I've been on the other end of the phone in Social Services, defending resources…*

Together they contributed to the civic deficit of asylum seekers who had the same legal entitlement to many special needs services as a British citizen, but were much more unlikely to get them.

Kath felt,

> *I think statutory services, and other voluntary agencies… …I'm sure they're affected by the same… however unconsciously, by the same attitudes everybody else is drip fed now, by the media… It's very difficult even to get people to return your calls, never mind get services…*

She found this affected *her* self-esteem,

> *…trying to find a way of meeting those needs… and it's* (sighs)… *often, just not possible… and it's a real* **shock** *to me, that it's not possible! 'Cos… it affects how I see myself as well… I think I've got a record of being able to get services for people, and provide a good service myself, and if I'm not able to do that! God! What am I doing here! …and then I have to see these people, and say, 'I'm sorry, I haven't been able to get you any…' …and also they're so* **used** *to it! They're so used to being rejected… or receiving a really poor service…*

These 'barriers' to providing ideal holistic, needs-led services, were largely generated by the structural constraints of operating as an agent of NASS, including guarding and controlling the boundaries of welfare set to their minimal level by legislation, thus control could dominate care aspects of RAP's welfare provision (Sales and Hek, 2004). Lipsky (1980: xiii) argues that,

Street-level bureaucrats often spend their work lives in a corrupted world of service. They believe themselves to be doing the best they can under adverse circumstances, and they develop techniques to salvage service and decision-making values within the limits imposed upon them by the structure of the work. They develop conceptions of their work and of their clients that narrow the gap between their personal and work limitations and the service ideal. These work practices and orientations are maintained even while they contribute to the perversion of the service ideal or put the worker in the position of manipulating citizens on behalf of the agencies from which citizens seek help.

There was a range of perspectives and experience among RAP workers in various positions concerning the quality of the services they were providing, and the distance from or tension with their personal 'service ideals'. For some, like the STPW, without the long-term loyalty or commitment others had to the organisation, and with a very strong *"emotional investment"* (as she put it) to asylum seekers and refugees, working for RAP working for NASS caused her too much dissonance, so she left. A long-serving SM, aware of but rationalising their service deficiencies, when asked whether she felt RAP were only able to *"scratch the surface"* of meeting clients needs replied, echoing Lipsky,

We are not able to provide that sort of intensive kind of service that someone needs… I think we more than scratch the surface with very little resources to do it. I think we do a sterling job really, in terms of what resources we have.

Others accepted the status quo, perhaps critical of NASS and government policy, though sometimes acceptant of it, some having been granted asylum themselves by such a government and witnessing less 'worthy' asylum seekers trying to *"bend the rules"* in their eyes. Others believed, like one NTPW that *"RAP is doing well at meeting clients' needs."* Some workers felt stressed by the impotence of their position, either feeling resentful towards clients for being too demanding or resentful towards and blaming NASS and the government for being too minimal and inefficient in their provision, or both.

However, despite the tight boundaries to welfare RAP maintained on NASS' behalf, with tied hands, and the other obstacles to holistically addressing clients needs, RAP

and RAP workers struggled to "*maintain our integrity*" by finding ways towards their service ideals and "*charitable aims,*" and of responding to their clients, needs and distress.

8.3 Working from within to 'maintain our integrity'

> *…there is quite a lot of anxiety both internally and externally that our reliance on funding from NASS may, in some cases, jeopardise our independence… Of course, we don't think it **does** but we… as an organisation we, constitutionally and otherwise, we feel really strongly that to do this work, without compromising our…er charitable principles, as such…nor have really the funders or Home Office asked us to do so…But it's nevertheless very politically, very difficult time for everyone… and if you want to be in this kind of work, you will have to get your hands dirty sometimes, I'm afraid,* (**SM**, int.)

RAP had been aware from the outset of their involvement in the 1999 IAA, that their position in the NASS system, their relationship to NASS had intrinsic contradictions and would involve them compromising their 'service ideals,' or getting "*your hands dirty sometimes*" and, as many workers repeated, their hands were tied by NASS. However many also believed the compromise was worth it because, "*even under these circumstances, we are making a difference to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees*" (**SM, p5**) and "*we're a bit more compassionate. At least we can say, 'I've tried,'*" (**TL, p6**).

Lipsky (1980: 81) argues that,

> *Street-level bureaucrats manifestly attempt to do a good job **in some way**, given the resources at hand and the general guidance provided by the system…* and,

> *…they develop techniques to salvage service and decision-making values,* (ibid: xiii).

The salvage techniques they use, trying to find satisfactory rather than optimal solutions to deal with the uncertainties and indeterminate objectives of their work, involve

organising patterns of work within resource constraints, modifying their conceptions of their jobs by lowering their objectives, and modifying conceptions of their clients, Lipsky (1980:83) argues. For RAP, dealing with the ambiguities and contradictions of their position delivering a deterrent-designed welfare, workers and managers sought ways to 'salvage' the integrity of their personal and organisational aims and deliver services attempting to address clients' needs in *some* way.

Lipsky (1980:13) has argued that due to their "*relatively high degrees of discretion and relative autonomy from organizational authority*" street-level bureaucrats effectively *make* policy, not just implement it. His analysis concerns public service workers in direct interaction with *citizens,* however in the case of a VS organisation 'contracted' by the government, RAP itself in *some* ways - not just RAP's 'street-level' workers - could be considered the equivalent of his 'street-level bureaucrats' with NASS representing the organisational authority he refers to. Although, as we have seen, NASS in many ways held a tight rein over the services RAP offered its 'margizen' (Martiniello, 1994) clients, ("*our hands are tied*"), managers were also keen to stress,

> *We are allowed the freedom and inventiveness to play that role in terms of practicalities with this new legislation,* (**SM**).

And,

> *We are… pretty much the masters of our own decisions and… NASS officials… really they are not the masters of their own decisions,* (**SM**).

And,

> *The Home Office… specify what services we provide. They don't specify the **way** in which we provide the services though! That is really a matter for us to maximise the **quality** of the service that we give,* (**ED**).

While Lipsky (1980) argues that with few resources, ambiguous goals and considerable discretion street-level, bureaucrats were most likely to ration services in line with their negative stereotypes of 'unworthy' clients, he also recognises that with the degree of discretion they have, street-level bureaucrats theoretically could discriminate in *favour*

of their clients, if the structure of their work was different. This is obviously the thinking of the VS in their involvement implementing the NASS system; positioning themselves close to the government, with the aim of providing the best service possible for asylum seekers, they hoped to have the autonomy and discretion to protect their clients' interests and soften the blow of harsh policies. The Grant Agreement (2000:2) between NASS and RAP claims,

> *It provides a broad but well-defined framework in which Refugee Arrivals Project may exercise independent discretion.*

This chapter now turns to explore just how much *"freedom and inventiveness"* or room for autonomy and discretion RAP *was able* and did use in attempting to address clients often complex needs, and provide them with welfare despite the constraints, which could amount to the *"civic gain"* of asylum seekers status, (Morris, 2002).

8.3.1 *'Bending the rules' and defying NASS to offer services*

RAP used the concept of widely interpreting their responsibility, using their discretion *within* their legal bounds, or up to a *"policy wall"* (**SM**), to provide various services to clients either disapproved of or not strictly within their NASS 'remit', even 'bending the rules'. This included accommodating, pre S55 in-country, and sometimes port applicants 'out-of-hours', *before* they had claimed asylum, which they were not strictly allowed or funded to. Either NASS turned a blind eye or RAP continued defiantly to ensure that such individuals did not sleep rough, transporting them the following day to an ASU to claim asylum.

RAP also operated an ad-hoc 'One-stop service,' advising asylum seekers who were not their 'hotel clients', but were either on subsistence-only, or just living in West London, for which they temporarily received the equivalent of two PWs salaries from London Borough Grants, not NASS. However in practice, when their NASS client numbers were down, they saw more 'walk-in's' to compensate, so using NASS funds, and their was no strict division of duties. A TL explained,

> *We're technically not a One-stop service, yet we do it 'cos managers deem it necessary to keep our funding… …Our numbers have gone right down, but*

because we have got so many in EA the Home Office are not saying too much about it… …Our bit isn't government funded technically. I mean, we're paying for it out of our NASS funding

Although RAP had developed an appointment system for this they were often flexible and dependent on the particular manager or TL on duty, and the current number of 'hotel clients.' Although people receiving subsistence-only support, or supporting themselves could be just as needy of advice as those in NASS accommodation, the system was not supportive of RAP for advising them anyway

*We want to develop this service in West London… we're right in the middle of working that through because we don't have any money for such a service but there are a lot of refugees who are newly arrived who are living in the community rather than our hotels, who need help and they come to our door… we have done this for a while, so we know the demand is out there! So in a way we **should** be having money for a one-stop service… We do use opportunities as and when we can, but because this area of our work is not currently funded and by and large, it's not seen by NASS as our core business at **all**, they haven't supported us really… They do **know** we're doing it,* (**ED**).

8.32 Gaining concessions

All workers' defence for implementing NASS Reception, was that RAP had a commitment to the well-being of asylum seekers that other, private or public sector agencies would not, so working 'within' the system they could influence NASS and other players in their clients' interests. Two examples illustrate this potential.

When the NASS system began to break down and people ended up,

*…sitting in our EA forever… we need to have some sort of system whereby we can address they're **ongoing** problems…that develop from… families, particularly, living in temporary hotel accommodation…* (**SM**, int.).

In these circumstances, despite NASS' design as a cashless system, *"There has to be some leeway,"* the SM stated. Therefore she and RAP managed to persuade NASS

(approximately two years previously) to give particular clients cash and accommodate them in a hotel where they could cook their own food,

> *We were having a particular problem with… pregnant women, and women with children, and so I set up an agreement with the Carlton, that we would move those particular categories into that hotel, and put them on cash only basis…*

RAP had also just negotiated with NASS that all children under two would receive an increase to £35 from £18.50 per week (and three different systems across their EAs), so parents could prepare food for them. Despite RAP's latest clamp down on NASS behalf on clients believed to be trying to abuse this cash-based concession, they were also in a position to gain and negotiate concessions from NASS when clients' needs were obvious.

Another example of this was RAP's battle with the management of Rosehill, where one SM had attempted to get them to provide more choice and better quality food, in the face of the many clients' complaints about food there. The SM explained during her interview that she had just visited a dietician to get advice about balanced diet and was due to take this to a negotiation session the following day with hostel management,

> *…they always argue that we don't give them enough money. So now we've got this 12% increment…from **NASS!** Who've agreed to put it up 12%, so now is our time… actually to say, 'Right! You've got this lovely increment, way over the top, and this is what we want in return… You know, make it a condition! Now we've got some leverage, which is something we've not really had in the past… It was always, 'Well, you don't pay us enough, so we're not gonna do anything about all that stuff'…*

8.3.2 RAP as a 'buffer'

As well as Lipsky's (1980:184) concept of street-level bureaucrats 'absorbing conflict' in their buffer role, the concept of 'front-line' public services as a 'buffer' can be understood in another sense. Duvell and Jordan (2000:3) discussed social services prior role as a protection between the vulnerable and the state,

During the Thatcher era, local authorities, the public sector in general, and social services in particular, stood as a buffer between the government and unpopular but vulnerable groups like these. New Labour is determined to break this, turning these very agencies into part of the technocratic force to implement its programme.

Although RAP could obviously be described as part of the government's "*technocratic force*" implementing its asylum policy, the organisation and workers also acted as a 'buffer' to some extent, protecting their clients from potentially hostile others, and NASS action, as well as, at times, having to absorb the anger of frustrated clients over the action or more likely in-action of NASS.

RAP primarily saw itself as 'on the side of the client', stressing to new arrivals that they were independent from the 'authorities' and were there to help. A private sector Wackenhut co-ordinator of the dispersal coaches who worked with the other London RAAs, RC and MH said of RAP,

RAP are firm but fair. Migrant Helpline are very professional, maybe because their clients are singles and RAP work with families. RAP are on the side of the clients but also work alongside the Home Office. They are efficient, but nice about it. I've stood at the side of coaches and they smile and say, 'Good luck!' The Refugee Council are terrible, no-one goes from there. They are completely on the side of clients and very few travel. I've heard clients say, 'Oh, I can't travel, I've got a blister on my big toe' and the Refugee Council say, 'OK'!

RAP acted as a 'buffer' of protection to their clients, primarily through their advocacy and protectiveness with less caring or scrupulous agencies, perhaps keen to make money from them, such as 'rogue solicitors' who attempted to tout for custom at EA's, and with EA staff themselves. A TL explained the anger of an EA manager over an incident where some clients, were treated prejudicially by kitchen staff,

He thinks I always stand up for the clients, I'm always on the clients' side. That ***is*** *my job! …I* ***do*** *want the best deal for the clients, whereas the manager is a businessman. He's trying to make as much money as possible. I'm* ***really*** *annoyed with him…*

The TL told how the manager had not handed out the milk and fruit to children at 8pm, she had negotiated with him to do because they were hungry having finished dinner at 5pm. The TL had advertised it, so when it did not happen she felt this made her look bad. One of the newer EA managers, who received and segregated paying hotel guests from RAP clients, seemed to harbour a lot of hostility towards them and visiting PWs attempted to protect clients by gathering information and enlisting a SM who attempted to win the hostile manager round,

> *Pete definitely has some hostility he needs to work through… but the way **I** look at it is… you **can't** just ignore people that have these attitudes and behaviour, what you need to do is work with them… There was always that element of… I felt, second-class type citizens. I **had** the conversation when I went there on Friday… and I said to them… I was…trying to address some of their concerns, trying to point out to them, 'Now that the majority of your work is with **us**, can you not open up your facilities a bit more… 'cos it's not really fair that the clients cook and then have to eat in their rooms'… …It's…**working** with him. If I hear anything… that I think is totally racist… rather than just prejudiced, thinking people are taking advantage, then I won't hesitate to say and do something… I think it's a matter of education…*

The local satellite agency social worker believed RAP should give their clients their cash payments rather than leave it to EA staff, as she had had complaints from lone Asian mothers that some Asian EA staff treated them rudely, as

> *Not just parasites but outcasts from their own community, casting aspersions like commenting that women have jewellery on, and how come? It's a kind of inverted racism…*

Although RAP did not change their payment system, they did start an outreach advice service to two of their main EAs other than Rosehill, once a week. An SM said that they were often negotiating protective deals for their clients with EA providers., This was difficult because of the NASS -demanded catch-22 that RAP were in, with just verbal agreements with them, an example of the difficult and often "delicate balancing act" of interests RAP was constantly engaged in. So, it was in several ways that RAP

acted as a 'buffer' of sorts protecting their clients from the different motives of other involved agencies, (as well as absorbing the anger of clients directed at NASS).

8.4 *Individual workers addressing clients' needs*

Obviously an organisation, such as RAP is made up of individual workers in different positions and separating their work out from that of the organisation is, in a sense, artificial. It could be argued that the work of the organisation is a sum of all individuals' work. Yet there *are* differences. An organisation addresses its clients' needs through its official policy and practices, which are obviously enacted by individual workers. But individual workers, depending on the type and degree of discretion and autonomy they are permitted, practice formal or official *and* informal or unofficial work, have different working styles and aptitudes, levels of commitment and motivation, and could work in compensation for the inadequacy of official systems. Lipsky (1980) argues the more space for discretion and autonomy from organisational authority street-level bureaucrats have, the more they can be understood to be *making* policy, not just implementing it. This section will examine how individual workers attempted to address their clients' needs.

8.4.1 *Advocacy*

The reality of RAP's work was messier than one-way service provision, not just as clients could lever some gains but RAP was also involved in trying to get "*leverage"* with NASS, and other potential public sector agencies guarding their resources by fighting off responsibility, or private sector agencies, such as EA providers mindful of their profits. Thus advocacy at all organisational levels was a substantial part of RAP's daily work, generally with managers and TL's advocating and trying to get the best 'deal' possible for all or groups of clients, while PWs tended to advocate for individual clients. While SMs or TLs negotiated with NASS at a similar level, and with EA managers or owners on behalf of clients, PWs in the Support Team negotiated with social services, HPUs and other public sector agencies to advocate for their clients' need of specialist services. PWs and TLs in all teams also spent substantial amounts of time by phone advocating for clients with NASS, usually over dispersal or some processing or bureaucratic mistake.

The effectiveness of this advocacy could depend on the persistence, canniness, creativity and expertise individual workers used, though obviously sometimes none of this was enough. However, success could make a substantial difference to an individual client's situation. Clients frequently visited RAP offices to chase up progress on their dispersal, and workers would usually phone NASS to advocate for them. Although these calls could take hours and end in frustration, determined workers developed strategies to aid successful advocacy, such as attempting to build relationships and contact particular NASS workers they found receptive. One PW, who felt his involvement was "*not very effective*" because he was just the messenger between NASS and the client, also conceded,

> *…maybe my negotiation skill, my communication… and my working relationship with NASS help in solving the problems quicker…*

When a young Romanian man came into his RAP EA office upset that he had not yet been dispersed as his friends had, recognising that his perfect English and singleness should not have posed NASS any problems, the PW phoned a specific helpful NASS worker to move his case on. He reassured the client he would "*get an outcome on this*" and to return at the end of the day. When NASS did not return his call as promised he phoned them again and with his persuasiveness and persistence that day, delighted the man by securing his dispersal imminently.

Other than perseverance and persuasiveness, committed individual PWs used creativity and canniness to advocate for clients. An excellent example of this was the dogged hard work of PW Sadiq on Sarah's behalf. After months of telephone and written advocacy to NASS workers to find Sarah a suitable dispersal placement appropriate to her special needs, Sadiq resorted to informal methods when NASS workers visited RAP's EA office to learn about operations "*on the ground.*" Opportunistically, Sadiq called Sarah in to tell one of the NASS managers how life was for her in EA, to appeal to his humanity with her story. Sadiq described this as giving the NASS workers,

> *…a close-up understanding of the pain people feel. They have big offices and big computers and no understanding of people's pain…* (**PW obs.**)

Sarah told the NASS worker that they only cared about their money and were discriminating against her, but she had shown them the "*human face*" of their work. Later on that week, NASS found Sarah a suitable flat for dispersal. When Sarah became anxious about the particulars of where she was allocated, Sadiq phoned around to obtain far more details than RAP normally procured or gave clients, to reassure Sarah that she would not be sharing, and of her address.

8.4.2 Colluding with clients and turning 'a blind eye'

Despite their involvement with NASS, RAP workers generally felt a strong sense of solidarity and belief that they were 'on the side' of their clients, against unjust legislations, an absurdly bureaucratic agency and a generally hostile external environment. While this was manifest in their advocacy, it was also manifest in other ways.

Attempting to instigate systemic changes when a need seemed obvious was one strategy which workers with the will and inspiration tried to utilise. For instance, Sadiq attempted to provoke the visiting NASS workers to change their system of "*recycling*" clients who, for legitimate reasons, could not travel on their dispersal; that involved sending them back into the system to start waiting again. Sadiq, who witnessed the effect this had on people, argued that they should give such people "*self-writes,*" to travel to their accommodation by public transport the next day, which would also make far more sense for NASS,

> *I can't see the logic of that, to go through the whole system of sending them a termination letter and so on. Surely if NASS is to keep to its target of ensuring 75% of dispersals actually travel, it is of benefit to NASS not to 'recycle' them but to send them on a self-write ticket which we can organise together over the phone.* (**PW**, obs.)

The NASS worker replied that it depended why they could not travel, their case might need re-evaluating, but his previous line manager had been "*a bit more lax*" about it. Sadiq retorted, "*You mean, more fair!* Where Sadiq could do it without being blocked by NASS officials, he organised self-writes for clients in this situation. However on this occasion he did not succeed in changing NASS' system

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Workers had been trained in equal opportunities but resisting the appeals of clients to "*Do me a favour please, just do it for me*" (**SM**, int.) was sometimes more difficult in practice for workers particularly when clients were appealing to their fellow countrywomen and men. An SM suggested some workers struggled with this especially when it was the cultural norm in their country of origin. One PW however, could be heard giving advice on a mobile phone to an ex-client about getting round certain British systems, and she said she sometimes did give her mobile number to clients so they could contact her for more informal support.

However, most workers also gave some informal advice to clients about their path through the various systems based on their experience as daily witnesses to the way the systems worked in practice, and the experiences of the many clients passing through. Giving consistent answers to NASS and IND questions and thinking carefully before deciding to stay with a 'sponsor' were frequently advised. For instance one PW told a client that his friend might find it a strain having to put him up for a long time, and his NASS subsistence vouchers could take six weeks to arrive, so she advised against leaving EA.

Another way of 'siding with clients' was to ignore or turn a blind eye to some things clients did, which workers considered irrelevant or unjust. For instance one PW dealt with her own dilemmas about the injustice she perceived aspects of the NASS system to embody. She gave clients an opt-out to answering truthfully; she said she advised clients in her NASS advice sessions that whatever resources they *told* her they had, she would write down, as this fulfilled RAP's policy to fill the NASS form with whatever the client told them,

> *In Africa if people have saved up £500 that's a lot of money. They have sold a lot; a car, a house... and here it is a small amount... But these people need help; they'll need that money for something important, for their future. We are not police, we don't search people. One client came in with £50 and I didn't question her about it. I don't know, other people might do it differently. I told her she should spend it on a warm coat or some nice shoes...*(**PW**, obs.)

A frequently heard sentiment was that *"policing"* people was not part of their responsibility, especially over matters irrelevant to their role as welfare providers. One was to turn a 'blind-eye' to people re-applying several times, for instance a PW berating the introduction of S55 said,

> *It's not a fair law just for the 1 or 2% of people who apply for asylum again and again. If I recognise them I wouldn't do anything. It's up to the Home Office to recognise them, and if they don't, tough!* (**PW,** obs.)

Managers also held beliefs about the borders of their responsibilities as workers and as an organisation, and that these did not include 'policing' clients over matters outside their 'remit,' (although it did inside them, at their welfare borders). In response to an EA provider's complaints that clients were working illegally,

> *What I said to him was, 'We have no control… asylum seekers are quite aware that they are not allowed to work… like anyone else who's on benefit fraud, they know the score, we are not here to police them, as long as we make them aware of what the system is, if they want to then break it, then there's not a lot we can do about it'. But… he said to me, 'they are going out to work every day and some people are not actually staying in the hotel', and I said, 'Well if that is the case then you need to bring that to our attention, 'cos we can address **that** with the client… 'If you're not using your accommodation, then we've got plenty of other people that can, you need to be there every day. If you're not… then the hotel will tell us and we will cancel your booking,'* (**SM**, int).

Such colluding, 'siding with' clients by giving tips and advice for getting round the system, ignoring 'misdemeanours' considered irrelevant to RAP's work, was close to individual workers 'bending the rules,' and sometimes involved attempting to change the rules to address clients' needs.

8.4.3 *Putting "a human face on an inhuman system"*

> *The general issue is that we are all here for the right reasons, but it is so hard to put a human face on an inhuman system. We are explaining some horrendous legislations,* (**NTPW**, obs.).

The increasing bureaucracy, emphasis on targets, mass processing and control involved in implementing their Reception service for NASS shown in chapter 6, are the constraints and backdrop to workers attempting to respond to clients, as human beings with needs. It is clear that most workers at RAP applied for their jobs because of their commitment to the well-being of asylum seekers and refugees, though there were obviously some people who felt that, with their refugee status, this was the only job available to them. As we have seen for some with a deep personal commitment to people seeking asylum, the actual constraints of the work posed too great a contradiction and they burnt out or left, but for most they learned to live with this contradiction, compromise and do what they could around the constraints. For many this involved injecting some humanity into their work with clients. There was a strong sense among workers, especially those providing direct 'front-line' services that *they*, unlike NASS workers, treated clients with humanity as they *were* in close daily contact with "*people's pain,*" as Sadiq said. As described, one TL's almost daily 'mantra', to NASS workers on the phone, to EA workers to her team and seemingly to herself, was "*These are human beings we are dealing with*" sometimes suffixed with "*not numbers.*" Workers obviously believed that their genuine concern for asylum seekers, their "*bit of compassion*" could "*make a difference*" to them, despite being the messengers of "*an inhuman system*".

One aspect of this was the fact that most workers were refugees themselves. Although sometimes refugee workers were more questioning of clients 'genuineness', they also could empathise with them. A SM explained how this worked,

> *Our organisation was built up by refugees and is run mainly by refugees… it makes a huge difference because I think it gives a sense of, for clients coming in, for asylum seekers, it's just telling someone, "I understand, I empathise, I sympathise"… coming from one of our staff, if a client says, 'Well, you don't understand', well actually they do because they've been there themselves… they can assure people that are feeling very vulnerable and concerned and worried for the future, 'No, don't worry too much because this will happen, that will happen and look at me! I'm settled now and I've got a job and I've got this and I've got that and eventually those things will come to you',* (**SM,** int.)

This SM said keeping this *"refugees working with refugees"* identity of the organisation was one of her main priorities, and as though equivalent to this, *"that element of giving clients their dignity"* and *"keeping the friendliness,"* in this way *"the diversity of the organisation has worked informally."* Although it could complicate the working relationship, workers who spoke clients' languages or originated from a similar part of the world, could offer support through cultural familiarity and the chance to communicate properly.

Individual workers offered different 'human touches' at each site, depending on the TL on duty. At Heathrow for instance, the TL believed making new arrivals feel welcome, assuring them they were not 'Immigration' was most important. The TL rigorously defended the practice of offering them facilities to make hot drinks, despite a PW's objection on health and safety grounds. Throughout their sites and offices PWs attempted to meet people's distress and confusion with calmness and reassurance. They listened and worked through similar issues with patience, trawling through tedious bureaucratic intricacies, attempting to ensure that clients understood, and *attempting* to treat them as individuals rather than 'cases' or numbers. Workers could greet clients with warmth, care and concern, kindness and often, humour. Clients' expressions visibly lightened when their anxieties were allayed by workers in such ways.

Building relationships with clients and for them seeing a trusted worker, familiar with their case, was obviously reassuring, especially if clients were 'long-stayers.' Workers remembering a client's first name, giving them a nickname, or calling them *"Habibi!"* as this TL often did, also visibly lifted people's spirits. Despite her frustrations, Sarah obviously valued the continuity and commitment of Sadiq and said of RAP workers,

> *These are friendly people, they come not to harass you… You can see that when we meet them… how we greet one another! And not only me, even the rest… They know they are dealing with human beings!*

Lipsky (1980: 151) argues that one of the techniques street-level bureaucrats tend to use to *"salvage their service ideals,"* rationalizing the contradictions in their work and, as a psychological coping strategy, is differentiating between clients perhaps by personal preference or some conception of worthy and unworthy (deserving or undeserving) making

…it possible to perform flexibly and responsively with a limited segment of the
clientele. Thus workers do for some what they are unable to do for all. The
*street-level bureaucrat salvages **for a portion of the clientele** a conception of*
his or her performance relatively consistent with ideal conceptions of the job.
Thus as the work is experienced there is no dissonance between the job as it
*should be done and the job as it is done **for a portion of the clientele**.*

This privately confirms to the worker that she or he *is* capable of doing the job well, despite the structural 'walls' to responsive and flexible service with most of the clientele, which might suggest she is not. As discussed, workers at Heathrow might spend time crying with, comforting, welcoming, reassuring new arrivals they considered worthy, trustworthy or 'genuine' refugees, but either dismiss or process with swift professionalism those they might consider unworthy or 'abusive' in some way. In the other RAP offices, dependent on the degree of autonomy and the number of clients to process that day, some workers particularly those in the Support Team or EA team, might spend more time and effort on their case (for instance, Sadiq going the extra mile for Sarah) or building a relationship with a few clients, either organisationally endorsed as worthy of this extra attention, (for example, those referred to the ST were considered in greater need) or just on an ad hoc individual worker's decision or preference.

As discussed, the STPW who eventually left had the autonomy, though not the managerial support, to develop an intensive casework approach with each of her clients, refusing to take on other cases or get distracted by other issues, but without the structural support found the dissonance and workload too great. Whether managerially endorsed or by personal preference, another STPW also built intensive relationships with some clients, as Lipsky suggested, doing for "*a portion of the clientele*" what she or the organisation as a whole could not do for everyone. She obviously developed personal relationships and talked with great warmth about those she supported, "*I am soft. I want to help people, to give them my own money.*" One client she was supporting was dying of cancer and the STPW had helped her access items of equipment to make her life more bearable. Sufia said she cried often over her and tried to do all she could, and the client was very grateful. Clients often warmly thanked individual workers, on leaving or returning later, with kisses hugs and tears of

gratitude, for their particular support. Such responses suggest that sometimes RAP and RAP workers *did* make a positive difference to asylum seekers' lives.

Although not necessarily holistic 'needs led' service provision, and perhaps based more on chance and the volume of a client's shout, there *were* ways that individual workers managed to offer more humanity and sometimes more holism to their processing and work with clients, than the superficial, bureaucratic service the NASS system, and the need for equity demanded. That constant *"balancing act,"* managers spoke of and Lipsky (1980:15) described as,

> *…the search for the correct balance between compassion and flexibility on the one hand and impartiality and rigid rule-application on the other.*

8.5 Enablements of working within NASS' system

As Mason (1996:155) suggests, looking for alternative explanations and negative instances in one's data is important for developing a rigorous analysis. It is essential in this case to consider whether and in which ways RAP's operation of their Reception service, as an agent of NASS, was advantageous or enhanced RAP's ability to address clients' needs.

The SM in the context of saying that government funding covered only basic needs also insisted,

> *We are **very** sort of reception, arrival focussed… and it's only the last couple of years we've quite coming out of Heathrow… into… kind of the community, with this new legislation, that the organisation has grown to a reasonable size to be able to make a long term **assessment** of where it needs to go… I would say that we're just at the beginning of a vision or a strategy for the long term where I don't… **I** think that the government funding is a **strength**, I don't think it is a negative thing.*

Also the BfSW, despite finding one of the strengths of BfS its independence from government funding, argued of RAP,

I think we should be funded by the Home Office because then you don't have to worry about, 'Oh, we've run out of money, where are we going to get the money from?' You can operate as a business… with other projects I've worked with in the past when the funding's just been for eighteen months, by the time you've set it up you've got to shut it down.

Both these arguments suggested that RAP's funding from government had enabled them to grow and expand their vision away from their previous narrow focus, and because of the *relative* security of their funding (although generally it was reviewed and renewed quarterly, this had almost become a formality), it gave the organisation the chance to concentrate on improving its services and structuring and to look to the future to new ventures.

It can be argued that NASS' insistence on value for money, its demand of a quarterly report of statistical information, attendant monitoring of services and so on, forced RAP to become more accountable and more efficient in some ways. This was not necessarily always about value for money, but their introduction of a networked database and online recording systems, meant essential information about clients cases was readily at hand at most sites and enabled quicker, more efficient attendance to clients' queries. RAP had also achieved the "*Quality Mark (General Help Standard Certificate)*" the previous year, and again during the research period, which according to their Annual Report (2001/2002) acknowledged their "*standards of competence,*" with an inspection. They had produced a 'Client Feedback' questionnaire for this purpose and a worker was busy distributing these in time for their inspection early in the research period. They seemed more an exercise in gaining their Quality Mark than seriously seeking client feedback. However these, combined with a new more rigorous system for client complaints, were an *improvement* in their accountability to clients. Also, as previously discussed, restructuring the organisation with their new NASS funded staffing in response to huge increases in asylum applicants during 2002, meant individual workers were also held far more accountable for their work with individual clients.

RAP's attempts to control the chaos; increased staffing, restructuring teams, stopping rotation of teams and specialisation, developing systems to control and co-ordinate the processing of clients efficiently (for instance, co-ordination of interpreters and PWs

with languages matching clients attending for advice), although bureaucratising their services, *also* made RAP arguably more effective at meeting clients needs. Clients were *less* likely to wait pointlessly for many hours to see someone who could communicate with them, for instance; were *less* likely to be bureaucratically lost, and, with RAP *more* in control of their bureaucratic systems, they were in a better position to hold NASS to account over *theirs.* With their teams and workers static and more accountable, greater control over client processing, limits set on numbers of clients seen per day per PW, teams and workers could concentrate more on "*development*" (TL) of their skills and of their services, such as the production of information packs and better, clearer information for clients. The specialisation of workers also meant that clients with special or greater needs were more likely to be referred to the new Support Team and BfS and so have their needs addressed,

> *The relationship with RAP and BfS has really improved in the last four months since the teams have specialised, 'cos what was happening before was… it was really random the referrals, and it was based on particular…project workers referring a lot rather than the client need, so now 'cos they get referred to the Specialist Team, the Specialist Team can spend more time with them and see that they do have a need and if it's appropriate for them to be befriended. I would say that specialising the teams is really good, for BfS it's worked really, really well. It's **very** complementary… before… you were part of a huge team and you can't really get anything done… you don't know who's responsible for what… you'd say to the particular project workers, 'Oh, she needs this and that, can you do the casework on it?' and they might not have been able to 'cos it wasn't their area… So now everybody's got an area, if you've got somebody who's homeless then you know you have to go to Mohammed, if it's a single male…* (**BfSW,** int.)

Another aspect of both their increased accountability and efficiency was RAP's drive to *standardise* and make more equitable their advice to clients, and their distribution of services and cash allowances, partially in preparation to operate the government's new Reception idea; 'Induction Centres.' During a Team Meeting of the NASS teams, the TL's introduced a 'file review' whereby each PW's recording of information, or "*Contact Episodes*" of clients was assessed by the TLs. Also, as part of their drive to improve 'information', a team of PWs was compiling a list of advice and information

issues the NTPWs would be obliged to ensure they covered with clients during their NASS form advice session, including offering referral to additional services. Whilst it could be argued, that standardising, routinising and creating systems such as 'tick box' referral and needs assessment forms, bureaucratises services making them superficial rather than holistic, it was obvious from the testimonies of confused asylum seekers, that equity and clarity of advice, information and entitlements was of great importance to them. RAP's Annual Report (2001/2002:9) quotes a SM,

> *We explain the situation with authority, consistency and empathy. Asylum seekers have few choices, but we want them to understand these. We maintain a very good rapport with our clients because we convey clearly the limited choices they have.*

The strong emphasis on managing expectations throughout the organisation, (although of course, RAP could not predict everything that would happen to an individual) was obviously also important to clients, as the desperation people felt living in uncertainty, unsure of what they could expect to happen, is evident in Christine's account, for instance. What one PW felt was most important about his role, and which he struggled to balance, was offering people just *enough "optimism"* to get through the system *"without giving false hope"*.

Though RAP was just beginning to operate in control of the chaos since the 1999 IAA and to set up systems and processes aimed at improving services, *recognising* the need to address support needs and to have more rigorous referral systems, as we have seen in previous chapters, they were not always successful; people slipped through the net, or the net was not yet designed to accommodate them. A SM said,

> *It's not been easy. It's been, in fact, a long time and a lot of hard work, putting in place the resources or the mechanisms to be more effective…*

With these new resources SM aimed to become more 'bottom-up' or needs led in their service provision. Although managers publicly denied RAP's contracting by NASS compromised *"our charitable principles,"* they still felt considerable unease about their almost total reliance on NASS for funding, and their individual aims and visions were to diversify, to tap new funding sources,

*We're moving, shifting our emphasis… in the long term… to be able to survive and be a **viable** effective organisation, we need to move in this direction… trying to look for other partnerships, other sources of funding… …Ultimately we… I don't want the government, one source of funding to be everything. I'd rather have a spectrum of… or collection of funding or funders who can put different pressures on the organisation… …in that way RAP gradually could be one of the organisations providing a holistic set of services for asylum seekers,* (**SM,** int.)

As well as the desire to diversify their funding to diversify their services, some in RAP had become insecure about the financial uncertainty of being so tied to providing Reception to the Home Office, the frequent and unpredictable change of policy and process and the latest government drive to cut numbers of asylum seekers arriving. The workers recruited just prior to the research period, enabling RAP's restructuring, were only given one year contracts, and a further recruitment of PWs into 2003 with the general uncertainty left some workers feeling jittery about their jobs.

8.6 Reinforcement of the 'safety net': Supplementary, additional and extra-organisational support

Cohen (2002:143) quotes IND document '*Asylum Seekers Support'* (1999), describing the potential benefits of VS involvement in the NASS system, including,

The voluntary sector's unique capacity to involve volunteers in their work… once voluntary agencies are involved in the support arrangements, they will start to raise funds to provide additional services… their ability to draw in other organisations in the sector to provide additional resources or expertise…

Cohen (2002) calls "*chutzpah,"* the expectation of a government, having involved the VS in implementing legislation that reduces asylum seekers' welfare support to the barest minimum and as a deterrent, that they would then fundraise and attract more comprehensive services and support, from civil society sources. In RAP's case this Home Office prediction was entirely correct; the organisation's desire to provide more 'holistic' services and better address their clients needs meant they turned to external

sources of funding, or manoeuvred within their government funding to attempt to supplement and add to clients' support. Although one supplementary project had been set up prior to RAP's NASS involvement, these services had primarily been developed since, and RAP was seeking to further extend this diversification of funding and services. There was particular emphasis on achieving a "*balance,*"

> *…it's accessing that very different strand of funding to improve and build on the services that we offer to our clients… to take the uncertainty out of funding that is very much based on what the government is funding you to do, that you feel it's not appropriate to do. That's not an issue at the moment. It could become an issue, so it's really important that we find additional and alternative sources of funding… my role will be to identify the gaps within services…* (**SM,** int.)

> *…there's always that kind of balance between what we would love to see happen and the needs we can see staring us in the face… it's that reality of balancing what we'd like to see done and what we can… what we **have** to do and then, how much scope for developing new projects and things…* (**ED,** int.)

> *…the challenge then is how you **balance** that in terms of other funding for other projects, because asylum seekers needs are very varied and complex… With a focussed strategy, linked to a lot of resources we have not gone for, we will be able to **increase** our capacity to provide and develop services that are not funded by the government, and therefore provide not just financial, but also a service to **balance…** (**SM,** int.)

8.6.1 *Supplementary support services – RAP funded*

There were three services which RAP instigated that it had not fundraised externally for and their exact funding source was hazy, but they operated in defiance of NASS. RAP had identified them as high priority needs with potentially extreme significance for people seeking asylum. One was their well-developed legal referral service, whereby they attempted to identify reputable local immigration solicitors firms and referred those clients who wished for this guidance. They also operated a system of telephone access, at least at Rosehill EA, for clients to phone their solicitors, or for help from a RSW or PW to communicate with solicitors. An SM explained frequent problems with

"*a lot of rogue solicitors touting for clients, doing bad practice,*" going to EAs at night when RAP staff were not present, "*grab all their immigration papers*" or paying them £10 to use their 'firm;'

> *We emphasise the importance of good legal advice to our clients, but still out of ten clients we refer only seven or eight turn up,* (**SM).**

There was also an extremely high rate (38%) of IND refusals of asylum claims due to 'non-compliance,' usually because a person had not returned their SEF within the allotted ten days, or had made some kind of clerical error, such as an incorrect spelling. One SM and one PW co-ordinated these referrals, and this option and advice about the imperative to return their SEF on time was an 'additional' extra in individuals' NASS advice session. The SM in charge had also,

> *…compiled a dossier of rogues, but the ILPA are not interested. We've set up a meeting with the OISCR who will try to investigate these.*

RAP doggedly insisted in defiance of NASS and the IND, on continuing to develop this service,

> *To be honest we shouldn't be doing this. NASS don't like it… NASS won't fund this, the Legal Services Commission won't fund it either…* (**SM,** obs.)

> *We use our own resources to fund the Legal Referral process and we'll continue to do that. We are absolutely committed to that. You can't compromise on that. You can't just have a little bit of advice, either you direct people to legal advice or you don't and we can't possibly sustain not doing it. We will do it, come what may… …that's a great assistance I would have thought, to IND, because obviously the government does not want rogue solicitors working, so we're doing something as usual in the voluntary sector, which we're not getting paid for… …The Home Office have always resisted that. It's a political matter! …they want people to make fools of themselves……So we have always sustained this argument with NASS, because we don't talk to IND… unfortunately… so we do **continually** say this… we are going to make provision out of this, and so*

Another service, of potentially great significance to clients with particular needs, was RAP's MF referral system, begun in 2001 with the appointment of a specialist worker to work with those who had been tortured. This worker had since left and a MF representative visited RAP once a week to interview clients referred, for an MF assessment. RAP's referral process was not foolproof, people were asked during their NASS advice session "*Have you been tortured?"* alongside a long list of information, bureaucracy and completion of the NASS form. These sessions were usually held in the first two days of arrival, not necessarily with a worker of the same gender, and not every worker remembered every time to ask. For instance, women who had been raped would often not wish to talk freely of this at such a time, if at all. However, referral could be requested later. Because NASS had granted a 'concession' to those *accepted* for treatment by MF, allowing them to stay in London, and because a positive assessment of torture by the MF held great sway in the asylum determination procedure, there were large numbers of people wishing for MF referral. Because MF had such high caseloads, they had narrowed their definition of torture to that occurring in detention, so some people obviously traumatised by persecution, such as the man who had seen his twin brother de-capitated in front of him by vigilantes in his town, were not accepted for treatment. However, for those accepted by the MF, the treatment and evidence toward their asylum claim could have great significance for their mental health and settlement. A man rejected by the MF for treatment felt this significance intensely, and put his head through his window, then sat on his bed where a TL found him "*sobbing like a baby"*, his wife accusing *her* of letting him down.

A third service RAP funded, set-up and run by BfS staff and volunteers was second-hand clothes distribution, also usually offered to clients during their NASS session, for which they had developed a 'system' regulating access to the provision, in order to ensure equity. Again, for some people, arriving with very little and no appropriate clothing for a British climate, and also needing equipment like pushchairs, this addressed an obvious need beyond government interpretation of 'basic needs.'

RAP had successfully fundraised for and begun developing several additional support services, financially independent from but integrated with the work of the main organisation primarily in response to service gaps and obvious client needs not being addressed by their mainstream services.

The most well-developed and far-reaching of these was BfS, a befriending service conceived by an SM and set up five years previously, pre-NASS, run by one full time and two part-time workers, co-ordinating over a hundred volunteers who befriended referred asylum seekers and refugees, approximately 80% of whom were RAP clients.

Although BfS was independently funded through the Lottery, which the one of its workers saw as one of its main strengths: "*I do have a lot of independence to develop what I wanna do*" but still "*you're hands are tied by the government legislation, and also on a very short term basis*" without the time to respond to the changes. Pre-NASS, BfS's main aims were, through befrienders, to assist asylum seekers to settle in to the West London area and to understand and access local services and infrastructure (like the library, school, doctors surgery), but

> *…We're all working in the context of legislation, so the main problems and issues are the fact that BfS… needs to be flexible to meet those changes so that, for example when NASS were set up… … all of a sudden they were all moved out of London…* (**BfSW**)

So BfS was forced to change its role, and since NASS they mainly worked with clients who were slow to be or could not be dispersed,

> *…just the really vulnerable ones or the ones who were unusual 'cos they couldn't fit onto accommodation lists… the development of BfS has just been that we deal with a higher need… clients with a higher level of need,* (**BfSW**)

This often included those accepted by MF who could sometimes "*wait fourteen months to see a counsellor.*" Despite this adaptation, BfS befriending still involved a time-specific period of a client being allocated a volunteer for three to six months, in which

the client's identified need was addressed by means of a list of objectives, usually relating to practical issues such as assisting a person to enrol with a doctor,

> *…the volunteers just put a context around them… that empowers them to do it for themselves, so the aim of them is to… make the client more independent… …we set an action plan for them to meet those objectives by the end of the befriending… It's very, very specific…*

In practice, as well as such specific practical help with achievable targets, "*The things that are way down the list of priorities of Project Workers, volunteers can do*" (**BfSW**), befrienders also obviously gave emotional and psychological support on a one-to-one basis, meeting one of the main needs, the **BfSW** stated, "*just to have someone to listen to them,*"

> *…Quite often you meet a client and they've been disbelieved all through the process and then all of a sudden you can just sit there and they can say whatever they want, and they get **really** upset… nine times out of ten, when you do a first meeting, they cry because they're pouring their heart out and somebody's just listening to them and nobody's done that… to them since they arrived…*

Volunteers gave emotional, psychological, practical and advocacy support which could often become quite intensive, depending on the clients' needs and volunteers' capabilities and boundary setting. The STPW, critical of RAP's superficial support service, believed BfS came closer to meeting clients' support needs,

> *I think they're **excellent!** …basically I think volunteers are used as unpaid staff and are expected to do the sort of work I'm doing! … I think it's very good to have volunteers befriending people, and doing whatever is in their capabilities and experience, and just being **there** for clients, but not to do the sort of work that, I mean **I** find it bloody impossible to do! And I've got years of experience! So I don't think you should be expecting untrained people… There are plenty of resourceful people there but I think it's (sighing) a cop out!*

Volunteers could sometimes feel overwhelmed, especially at a first meeting when a client's problems seemed enormous and insurmountable, which was the purpose of setting clear and achievable practical objectives, and doing several days' training importantly including boundaries. Echoing some RAP concerns, a BfSW at a BfS training session for volunteers spoke of,

> *Not to create a dependency. People will go on asking for more, they are testing it out. That's OK, cos they don't know……Don't raise expectations, but equally do not dash them…* (**BfSW**, obs.)

The volunteer who befriended the Nigerian man, who witnessed his twin brother murdered, found the experience challenged all these issues of keeping boundaries and trying not to create dependency, as well as attempting to advocate for his 'friend' with the MF, appealing against their decision not to support him because his experience did not meet their narrow criteria on 'torture,'

> *You want to take him home and make it OK. After our first meeting, he held me and didn't want to let me go. I try to concentrate on the here and now, contacting the Medical Foundation, the next meeting. The client and I are both overwhelmed, so we took it in bite-size chunks. He could have become completely dependent on me. So I try not leaving it too long before the next meeting… going to the library, going out with others, to the park…*(**V**, obs.)

When unable to prevent this client's dispersal, this volunteer found the name and phone number of an individual in a support organisation in the region the client was going to, and informed both about each other, so at least the client would have some support from someone knowing his situation. This kind of intense and holistic support offered by a volunteer, filled an obvious gap in the services RAP workers offered, due fundamentally to the constraints of their role restrictions, site-tied and NASS -dictated work. Other than guidelines on boundaries, on confidentiality, on cultural awareness and not giving legal advice, befrienders could support clients how they chose. Although it was unlikely that all those clients who could benefit from BfS support received it, the support this service offered obviously added another layer of protection to the bare safety-net of NASS-funded support, and also sometimes supported clients in ways social services and other statutory agencies legally had responsibility for,

*…now we are receiving clients who… their needs are much more greater because they need statutory agencies helping them… It's like the hospital saying, 'We don't give treatment', and then RAP is expected to care medically for them, care for cancer… which is sort of **overwhelming** for us!*

Another current additional service, funded externally and its need identified through an external report (*Cold Comfort,* 2001: Save the Children), with RAP at Heathrow being the obvious agency to work with, was a Young Person's Adviser, who filled a gap working with separated children and young people under 18 when they arrived at the airport. The YPA attempted to ensure that the young person was advised adequately, treated with due care by immigration officers, social workers and others, and that these statutory agencies followed the correct procedures, and

*…Immigration have a very high turnover of staff and very often have an influx of very young, inexperienced people… they don't have a very full induction and they are landed with all this… responsibility, making decisions and they actually don't know which **is** the way to go… So I quite often get involved with, 'you need to do this… this level of screening, you're not supposed to do a full interview'…* (**YPA**, int.)

The YPA also assisted a young person with age disputes assessed by social services and attempted to ensure those who had legal responsibility for a young person, took it. As well as informally and formally training voluntary and public sector workers in working with separated young refugees, they had begun to work on intervening in trafficking of children when possible. Sometimes when the YPA had been unable to ensure that social services took responsibility for a young person, perhaps out-of-hours, he ensured RAP prioritised their needs above NASS' rules, so defying them,

…quite often we do accommodate, although we shouldn't do because a) we don't want to place children in accommodation with six or seven hundred adults we don't know, child protection-wise… but we have to weigh up whether it's better for them to be stuck at the airport surrounded by thousands of people they don't know… …You have to make a choice, so at times we do that, although RAP has no funding to do that… (**YPA**, int.)

The YPA working with RAP filled another service gap for this specific, vulnerable group, left unheld in NASS' or RAP's mainstream 'safety net' remit. Towards the end of the research period, RAP announced the appointment of a Child and Family worker, a qualified social work post, for which they had successfully fundraised externally. Having identified an observable need at their EAs where many families, especially single-parent families were accommodated, often inappropriately for several months, where there were obvious child-protection issues and people with special needs, RAP was again compelled to fill this service gap with an 'additional service', as predicted by the Home Office. The social worker at the local satellite agency had applied and been accepted for this position, but decided to turn it down as it involved responsibility for,

> *…five hundred families. It's an impossible job; you would have to be Hercules… I was shocked at the level of importance they gave the position of social worker. I felt this was indicative of the service they'd be receiving…*

Despite its potential inadequacies this at least seemed to be a recognition that their complex support needs required more attention than RAP was able to offer through its mainstream, or core NASS service, It was therefore another layer of weaving to the 'safety net' to catch more people than previously.

8.6.3 External 'satellite' services

The IND (1999) document hailed the involvement of the VS for, "*their ability to draw in other organisations in the sector to provide additional resources or expertise,*" which, as well as providing and fundraising for additional services, could be applied to the apparent magnet RAP and the presence of large numbers of asylum seekers in EA, became to other agencies and individuals either by invitation or their own initiative. Some of these worked closely with RAP or BfS, others seemed entirely independent and peripheral, and probably there were more groups and organisations, such as RCOs operating invisibly around RAP, with their clients, that neither RAP were aware of nor I was able to observe.

Church groups came in to run prayer and support groups, including separate clothes distributions, as well as Salvation Army volunteers regularly involved with the BfS

clothes service. Although RAP's Grant Agreement (Appendix B, 'Guidance on Operating Procedures and Standards') stated in 'Emergency Accommodation Standards', "*Access should be available to… Recreation Facilities,"* a SM confessed,

> *Recreation has always been really difficult. We don't have a budget for recreational facilities…I mean, there are lots of interested parties out there that have provided various things. We've had churches come in that have… taken children and mothers out on school trips. The school bus comes in, in the summer for the children… We encourage profusely. We need to do a lot more and again it's resources… someone taking on that role…it's building locally really. But anyone suggesting anything for us, we really have to take it. They come in, churches come in at Christmas or at Eid…*

Onsite at Rosehill (and while it was used, Ayleswood), through the local college, an English language school operated, offering a short accredited course for varying abilities. There was also a nursery for pre-school age children, run by the EA where children could attend **with** their parents, but the nursery nurse struggled to maintain this rule and many parents left their children. Although meagrely equipped and haphazardly run, it gave some children something to do and parents some informal respite.

A male health visitor had held daily clinics at Rosehill for two years and after a long campaign eventually got a room onsite a year previously. Though he felt frustrated at the limited service, equipment and time he could offer, he **was** able to offer a service to some people. A medical centre with one, also male, doctor had been successfully fought for specifically to serve RAP clients, though he had been unable to recruit a second, female doctor and also struggled to cope with the numbers of people needing assistance,

> *Again it's a matter of resources. I think they do really good work given the limited resources that they have… I take my hat off to him, but having that knowledge and understanding of the difficulties they're facing doesn't help the clients who go there and possibly not getting the services they need or having to wait a few days…*

There was also the church funded social work charity, next to Carlton EA, serving single-mothers including RAP clients, with a clothes and baby equipment distribution and, in liaison with BfS, they offered support and social work advice to women who sought it. Some women obviously felt more able to seek help and support here than at RAP.

These were the observable selection of 'satellite' support agencies gravitating around RAP clients. I Independently and sometimes in liaison, they ensured that the 'safety-net' of NASS' support via RAP was more reinforced and, as with the traumatised Eritraen woman and those not shouting loud, fewer asylum seekers with multiple, complex or even simple needs, slipped through the net. There were also plenty of 'invisible' supportive individuals and groups, possibly some less supportive and more coercive with easy access to EAs, a multitude of RCOs in West and the rest of London, able to support asylum seekers from specific communities, and informal support networks some individuals could draw on. Such support was not simply a one-way process of 'benevolence', but the people who were RAP clients also sought out and procured their own support, their own way, such as the woman and her child who attended the local catholic church and school, gaining much support, but also offering those others the benefits of her experiences.

Recent studies have also emphasised the importance of local, informal and grassroots support, where statutory and government funded support has been cut or lacking,

> *One of the major themes of this study has been the vital role played by ordinary people in not only caring for refugees locally but also campaigning for their well being at the level of national and international politics. Grassroots responses at critical moments… have stopped governments from being merely negative…* (Kushner and Knox, 1999: 402).

> *So bad is the treatment of asylum seekers by the Labour government that new organisations and layers of individuals, especially from the voluntary sector, have been drawn into activity alongside the more established anti-racist organisation,* (Mynott, 2002:26).

The Home Office document suggesting VS involvement in implementing the 1999 IAA would attract more voluntary and civil support of the people *they* would only offer a safety-net from destitution, suggests government intended to publicly appear tough, but more quietly believed their stakeholders would ensure asylum seekers received some more holistic support to address their multiple complex needs.

8.7 *Conclusion*

RAP's and RAP workers *"charitable aims"* and service ideals, to adequately address clients' often multiple and complex special needs, were severely challenged by the lack of resources and the character of their NASS role. Despite disagreement over the most appropriate way to address asylum seekers' needs, the services that RAP was able to set up within the constraints of the NASS system, especially the pressure on managers to process bureautically large numbers of clients, meant quantity was prioritised over quality and RAP's service was more superficial than holistic. This was exacerbated by the reluctance of external statutory agencies to accept their responsibility for delivering the formal social rights of asylum seekers, out of discrimination and confusion, according to RAP workers.

Despite these barriers and constraints, RAP struggled to maintain their integrity and offer 'relief' to their clients from *within* the state system by operating the widest possible interpretation of their role, and in places bending or defying NASS strictures to provide welfare anyway. From their position close to NASS and in close daily contact with clients' needs the organisation was able to gain some concessions by pressurising NASS to *give* some leeway and increase the 'gain' slightly in asylum seekers' formal rights. RAP also attempted to protect their clients, acting as a buffer, from the hostility or exploitation of other agents involved in or circulating the 'safety net' system, although this could involve a difficult balancing of interests. Individual workers could also use any discretion they had to increase the civic 'gain' of the safety net in practice, by using persistence and creativity in their advocacy to NASS on clients behalf, sometimes colluding with clients and turning a 'blind eye' to bending rules. Mostly workers attempted to soften the blow of a harsh system by using their personal warmth and humanity, sometimes small touches to promote clients' well-being.

Being part of NASS system obviously involved severe compromises and left RAP's hands tied in many ways in their ability to address people's needs or just offer adequate welfare, however, some believed there were advantages. RAP was forced to become more accountable to NASS, and, even if this was sometimes superficial, it meant they were in some ways more accountable to clients. Their discretionary restructuring that was part of the bureaucratisation process meant individual workers were more accountable and clients were less likely to slip through the net. It enabled development of services rather than crisis management. Managing expectations did not just reduce the demand on the organisation but was very important to protect clients from having their hopes dashed. RAP's transformation also meant it had expanded and was beginning to try to diversify and move away from reliance on government funding, so that *"RAP really could be one of the organisations providing holistic services to our clients,"* (**SM**).

In the meantime, the government prediction that their 'safety net' would be reinforced, free-of-charge, by involved VS agencies driven by their 'service ideals' and ideological commitment to trying to address asylum seekers needs, gathering and attracting civil society agencies and individuals to help, was borne out. RAP provided vital services bending NASS funding, and fundraised to strengthen the safety net and attempt to prevent casualties. Also external 'satellite' agencies congregated underneath and around RAP's services, attempting to break falls. This planned reinforcement of the gaps is evident throughout NASS dispersal 'safety net.'

9 CONCLUSIONS from the ethnography - 'Welfare as Control'

Having explored in detail the lived experiences of this VS organisation, its workers and the people seeking asylum, journeying through Reception, this chapter aims to stand back and consider the conclusions, which may be drawn from the previous three chapters as a whole. To do this, this chapter will briefly revisit the conclusions from chapters 6, 7 and 8. Then, in order to emphasise the theme of Welfare as Control I will separate and highlight the elements of control and of welfare evident in the data, (although somewhat artificial as they are in many senses inseparable). It should then be possible to discuss in Chapter 10 how this research, focussing on a local setting, might inform and aid better understanding of the broader picture and contradictions raised in chapters 2 and 3 (Castles, 2003; O' Neill, 2001).

Chapter 6 asked and addressed what putting the 1999 IAA Reception safety net involved in practice for RAP as an organisation and its workers and how was this presumed contradictory positioning experienced by them. In direct financial and procedural accountability to NASS, RAP's daily work was dominated by their new, close but ambivalent relationship, and they became more NASS' agent than partner. Being NASS' agent, involved flexing massively to 'pick up the pieces' of unintended policy failings, significantly having to give more long than short-term support, particularly for more people with special needs. RAP PWs became the 'front-line', face of NASS. RAP's transformation into a RAA, involved significant change by growth, expansion, restructuring and in work practiced, to become a much larger, more hierarchical organisation spread over several sites, performing far more bureaucratic work. The bureaucracy and bureaucratic failings of NASS fed down to RAP, making their work more routine, less creative yet also more uncertain and frustrating. Workers struggled to treat clients as whole persons, rather than bureaucratic entities. RAP's management of clients' welfare became one dominated by controlling access, determining eligibility, rationing resources, sometimes in conflict and negotiation with clients, especially where room for discretion existed, so workers struggled not to use 'unsanctioned' judgements. Operating NASS Reception also involved overseeing some degrading welfare standards, coercion of clients to comply with their no-choice dispersal and discipline techniques to keep order in EA.

Chapter 7 asked and addressed how Reception was experienced by the people seeking asylum, who became RAP's clients. The immensely diverse people travelling through RAP's Reception came with a diversity of former lives and histories which could affect the way they experienced it. In leaving and arriving, though maybe safer, many experienced multiple dislocations from 'home;' loved ones, former selves and identities, cultures; the familiar. The women testifying acknowledged and were grateful for having their basic needs met. However, one woman's frequent description of herself as *'hanging'* was descriptive of the chronic uncertainties and unknowns many experienced being caught in the bureaucratic systems of asylum claiming, NASS dispersal and the complexity of welfare entitlements, feeling they no longer could control their destinies. Many found these systems obscure, confusing and unfair. People struggled with the loss of autonomy over many aspects of their daily lives experienced in Reception, some feeling forced into dependency and stripped of purpose and basic dignities. It was worse if you had special needs and lived in EA for long. All of the women interviewed had lived in EA for many months. Often with no cash, poverty reinforced people's loss of self-governance and choice. People found many creative and mundane ways of coping with their situations; by reclaiming autonomy where possible over their dispersals and daily living, trying to re-create a type of 'home, for instance. The social networks within EA were a resource for many, and in these transient relationships people found 'surrogate intimates'. Other than relying on RAP, some tapped social support outside EA of their own finding or others offering. Living with hopes and fears, some found religion comforting. Others ran out of coping mechanisms or did not cope; their worst fears realised, powerless and desperate, they turned to self-harm. For some, the final act of losing control and autonomy was government *refoulement.*

Chapter 8 asked and addressed, how RAP and RAP workers dealt with the contradiction between their charitable service ideal impulses to address and relieve many clients multiple and complex needs and their NASS funding and imperatives covering only basic needs. The conjuncture of their unplanned-for longer-term support in their RAA role, meant there were many barriers to helping clients with special needs. Although restructuring to address these, the bureaucratisation of their work, managers' imperatives for quantity over quality, lack of specific expertise and contentions over service ideals meant RAP tended toward superficial rather than holistic service and vulnerable, especially if quiet, asylum seekers could slip through the safety net. The resistance of

discriminatory but necessary statutory agencies guarding their own welfare 'borders,' was a further barrier to helping, together leaving some workers experiencing extreme dissonance. In struggling to maintain its integrity and meet its service ideals somehow, RAP used its position and discretion sometimes bending NASS rules, and lobbying NASS and other involved service providers to gain added benefits, also acting as a protective buffer to extend clients welfare and well being. Individual workers could make "*a difference*" using their language, advocacy skills, and determination, by some siding with clients against 'the system' and in their efforts to treat clients with warmth, humanity and dignity. Despite the severe constraints of operating under NASS, some workers felt this funding had enabled RAP to expand its horizons beyond Reception to fill service gaps. Growth, restructuring, and attempts to stamp order on chaos under RAP's discretion but with NASS funding, worked to *improve* services in some ways and tactics to reduce demand also aimed to provide more certainty to clients. Being co-opted into further legislations, political agendas and global uncertainties led to a greater compulsion to diversify funding to attempt to reinforce the basic safety net and better address clients' needs, and for RAP's own survival. Some immensely valuable supplementary, additional and external services were gathered or attracted to fill the large gaps.

9.1 The contradictory position of delivering welfare as control

Cohen (2002:142) had accused VS organisations such as RAP of "*Dining with the devil,*" by joining the NASS system, arguing that their integrity, independence and capability to protect asylum seekers were compromised by involvement in a system "*directly antagonistic,*" to their interests. Also Duvell and Jordan (2000:3) suggested work such as RAP's was "*the 'dirty work' of social policy... involves intentional and systematic deprivation by officials of the means of a dignified existence.*" These are serious accusations, and it is now worth considering how this research might address them. The data presented shows a deeply complex setting at the heart of many of the contradictions raised in earlier chapters, where human beings struggled to survive and maintain their integrity. The main contradiction people involved struggled with was that of welfare and control. This was a government directed 'control' aimed at deterring people from seeking asylum in Britain, controlling and limiting access to welfare for people who came despite this and controlling movement for monitoring, tracking and spreading the 'burden' and

by denying settlement to increase the ease of returning people. I will address first those elements of RAP's Reception service that were designed as, or in practice concerned, 'control.' I will consider these from the perspectives of the organisation as a whole, from asylum seekers positions and then from those of individual workers, before moving on to discuss 'welfare' in the same way.

9.1.1 *Control*

9.1.1.1 RAP - 'Hands-tied'

In many ways becoming a NASS Reception Assistant was not so very incongruous for RAP. Reception had been their whole purpose and, although there were dilemmas and "*soul-searching,*" over facilitating NASS' system, in some ways this would just be a change of methodology. Before this RAP had already begun dispersing people around the country themselves when the availability of London accommodation was diminishing, and for this particular organisation, without other functions, there was more compulsion in their decision to co-operate, than for some others. In some ways it could be argued therefore, that RAP's hands were tied to an extent even before entry. Also, the initial conditions of RAP's Grant Agreement with NASS involved asylum seekers in staying in EA for just seven days, arguably a bearable length of time, slightly longer than the stay RAP *had* been facilitating.

However, once RAP were 'in', the NASS system not working as planned, their hands were tied in many ways and they were co-opted in practice to far greater compromises than they had initially agreed to; "*we've got our hands pretty much tied... they do say, 'Jump!' and you say, 'How high?'"* (TL, Ch.6). One of these elements was the intensely but inefficiently bureaucratic nature of NASS. This constrained RAP's ability to concentrate on clients welfare or attend to their support needs, and the uncertainties and inhumanities it caused such as having to wait all day to have a query answered, being bureaucratically lost, not being sent subsistence vouchers, often became compromising of peoples welfare in itself. In their new position RAP workers felt they and RAP were in a powerless position. They had lost a great deal of their autonomy and were now only 'one-cog' in a system of many others and were compelled to bear the consequences of other agencies actions 'upstream'. Their role being severely constrained and dictated by NASS,

it seemed they could just tinker with clients' welfare and there were many aspects of their role, intended and unintended, that worked against their ability to provide quality welfare.

Under these circumstances, RAP were often only able to attend to the reasonably fair distribution of the very basic welfare, in their hands to deliver, and the welfare support needs of those with "*a higher level of need*" were often dealt with only superficially if they had been identified through the often bureaucratically dominated contacts made with clients. In some ways, this was typical of any "*street-level bureaucracy*" operating under the conditions Lipsky (1980) spoke of, but also resonated with the Government's 'control' by restriction to welfare agenda. However, another aspect of their role involved more explicit 'control' elements, as part of NASS deterrent 'safety net'.

RAP's Reception system resonated with many of the 'control' aspects explicit and implicit within its policy design. These were exacerbated by their loss of autonomy to control the system they were now involved with. One of the elements of the 'control' as deterrent design RAP operated was to make living conditions as basic and unattractive as possible. RAP were constrained to provide only the very bare necessities for 'survival' and prevention of destitution, to find resource-led often institutional, sometimes squalid accommodation and with their hands now tied this was intensified as in practice they were often compelled to oversee clients with special needs living in often poor and degrading conditions, without cash, for long periods of time.

RAP were also obliged to control and monitor the 'borders' of NASS welfare, on peoples' entry and during their stay which could involve cutting back and restricting benefits on NASS behalf, and acting in ways which prevented clients attempts to settle in London (such as restricting cash and not informing clients about local schools, unless asked). RAP became compelled to act as "*enforcement officers*" (Cohen, 2002), coercing clients with no other choice to comply with the system they operated on NASS behalf, and evicting people when their NASS entitlement was terminated. In some ways RAP seemed to turn a *"blind eye"* to the potentially negative effects of dispersal and once clients had left, what happened to them next was 'out of sight and out of mind,' (as one worker had suggested concerning continuing dispersal, despite a young dispersed man's murder in Huddersfield). Again, the compulsion for RAP's control and enforcement of dispersal was exacerbated by the unintended *"bottleneck"* of people in their care, due to

NASS and further 'upstream' dispersal failings. It seems clear that RAP's role did involve collusion with and facilitation of the control elements of the NASS system they assisted with, but RAP had not foreseen just how compromising of their integrity this might be, once their 'hands' were 'tied.'

9.1.1.2 Asylum seekers - "Hanging"

It was obvious that many people who were RAP clients suffered because of the 'control' elements built into the 'safety net' system, and the exacerbation of these by the unintended consequences of the policy. The experience of *"hanging"* out of control, in uncertainty while lost in NASS bureaucracy was intensely distressing to Christine, compounding her sense of *"hanging"* in relation to her asylum claim, and later she feared being *"tossed about"* again by being dispersed to an unknown place. It seemed that the sometimes chaos of RAP offices, and often bureaucratic structuring of relations between asylum seekers and RAP, made it more difficult for very vulnerable people who might find it very difficult to speak out to do so. The woman with deep fears of communal showers only managed to confide this to an outside satellite agency worker, who re-conveyed this to RAP via the BfS. It seems very likely that this woman having found the personal resources and opportunity to 'tell' was a lucky one and many such quiet others would have gone unnoticed, in the bureaucratic environment. Others obviously suffered over the 'forced' nature of dispersal, such as the two women being coerced by RAP workers who wished to stay in London when, as an SM said, *"people have very good reasons for staying in London,"*. The man returning a second time after racist hostility towards him in Sunderland, returning to RAP having nowhere else to turn, was an acute example of the potential suffering caused by the deterrent design of no-choice dispersal. The *"anormalising"* (Geddes, 2002) design of RAP Reception, particularly felt as a loss of autonomy, and related loss of dignity and difficult endurance of a separated and inferior existence, was also part of asylum seekers experience of the control agenda of this safety net. NASS imperative to restrict cash allowances, dictated by political pressure to deny incentives to asylum seekers to stay in London, and enforced by RAP workers, meant Lucy could not eat what she felt she needed to as a nursing mother, for instance

9.1.1.3 Workers – "Hands tied"

How did RAP workers, with personal and ideological commitments to refugees' well being, many refugees themselves, conscionably operate the 'control' aspects of NASS' Reception? How did they experience and live with this compulsion to 'control' or be involved in the control implicit in their work? Most RAP workers attempted to follow official criteria, in obedience to law, which NASS frequently reiterated. When discretion was available, their use of 'unsanctioned distinctions' was borne out of a sense of legitimacy that the 'deserving' (the truly destitute and registered asylum seeker) should be distinguished from the 'undeserving'. In fact RAP workers could sometimes feel that NASS or RAP official criteria were more generous than their own private judgements. There was a general (although not in every case) acceptance that the law must be obeyed. Workers enforcement and coercion of a clients exit by dispersal or eviction was partially explained by this also, but also out of a sense of powerlessness, and belief that clients with no other resources *had* no other choice but to be dispersed. Most workers believed that being dispersed out of EA was in a client's best interests, having witnessed other long-staying clients increasing distress with EA conditions. Coercion was acceptable because workers felt they knew better than the client, what was best for them. Also just as *"the pressure of the day,"* was to *"empty the waiting room,"* so it was to *"empty"* EA places, as there was nearly always a queue. Among some workers, legitimacy for a 'culture' of assertiveness seemed to develop from a need to impose order on chaos especially when clear and standard systems were lacking, and to manage often large numbers of people This could spill over into control to and of welfare.

For a few, the dissonance was just too great; they burnt out or left, feeling unable alone to overcome the overbearing bureaucracy, obstacles and widespread statutory resistance of others also involved in internal controls, where *"everything feels like a deterrent to helping,"* (STPW). Most lived with the contradictions and tensions in their work, dealing with them in different ways. Some managers justified guarding and controlling worker time and cash resources as promoting clients' independence. Many were caught up in everyday technical details and concerns for increased efficiencies of work, and some seemed to view the changes, ethically unreflectively, as those of technicalities in a basic continuation of former work. Others distanced themselves from NASS and the legislation in feeling like powerless mediators; *"This is between you and NASS... We're out of the*

equation;" (TL) feeling on clients' side against a culpable NASS, or experiencing tensions, stresses and frustrations predominantly from being in this intermediary role between 'over-demanding' clients and an impossibly unbendingly bureaucratic NASS; "*the high expectation of the client… on the other hand, my hand is tied,*" (PW). Some experienced clients in their presence most stressfully, generally accepting the legitimacy of a legislation aimed at stopping those they perceived were not refugees, or not destitute from entering and claiming. This was more likely so for some workers, refugees themselves, comparing their own experiences with the person in front of them and occasionally feeling *their* hands tied by RAP's imperative for a criteria-based equitable "*open door,*" (TL; PW). Some workers, some of whom were refugees and structurally constrained themselves, either wished to leave their "*stressful*" (PW) job but found or believed they could not get work elsewhere, or work as well-paid. Also many had found an immensely supportive and valuing community, or "*family*" (SM), working at RAP. In summary, most workers felt tensions in their work, but experienced them in different ways and from different sources. Front-line workers were more likely to feel powerless between clients demanding more and NASS giving less. Those verbalising the contradictions of welfare and control in their work, more often those managers with more responsibility for the choice to operate NASS Reception, rationalised their ambivalent position, "*you will have to get your hands dirty*" (SM), as a compromise worth the difference they would make to asylum seekers lives.

Workers who stayed, daily working in close human contact with individuals similar to themselves, sincerely believed they were assisting asylum seekers (as Cohen, 2002, acknowledged), and felt they were doing a good job in *some* way (Lipsky, 1980). The main reasons most workers were able to live with their contradictory positioning and operation of 'control' was that they were delivering *a* welfare service.

9.1.2 Welfare
9.1.2.1 RAP

There was a strong sense that the thrust of RAP's purpose and work was about facilitating access to and delivering *a* welfare service. While designed as a deterrent to the 'unwanted,' the NASS system, and RAP's own Reception stage of it, *was also* a safety net designed to provide *a* means of survival and basic security to both the 'wanted'

and the 'unwanted,' that came anyway, while the government decided which was which. There was a legitimacy about this 'safety net', because it at least protected people and basic human rights in some way. In *some* ways this safety net, whilst not giving asylum seekers the dignity of independence and autonomy at Reception at least, could be considered a *better* initial protection in the short term, than that RAP provided previously because *some* people were better protected and enabled to be more secure with a little time of dependence for orientation and relocating themselves. On top of meeting their basic needs for survival, as asylum seekers were no longer spread out across London, RAP was able to provide a more ongoing net (even if difficult to access) of advisory support and protection. There was a belief and evidence that the welcoming and friendly approach of generally supportive human others, not formally *part* of the state or immigration service enhanced the well being of people seeking protection.. RAP gave not only a 'human face' and were "*a bit more compassionate*" (TL) to arriving asylum seekers, but they had a level of expertise after 20 years of operating a Reception service, and were undoubtedly able to offer a *more* holistic service than a private sector human management agency. As SM's had stated RAP did have *a* level of autonomy to arrange themselves and organise their work within the constraints of their funding and NASS' requirements. As we have seen, some SM's overstated the degree of autonomy or "*freedom*" (SM) RAP had, but there *was* a degree, in which RAP could exercise "*inventiveness,*" within their constraints. There was *a* space for RAP to decide "*the way in which we provide the services*" and to "*maximise the quality*" (ED). Within NASS funding and constraints, RAP had restructured to include a Support Services Team which gave a *better* chance to protect those with a "*higher level of need*" (AW), and had structured to provide specialisms and greater accountability. This had given RAP the breathing space to further develop the *quality* of its Reception within the constraints. There *was* some space and autonomy for *some* bottom-up needs-led initiatives; for instance the good quality and full information initiative was in this case (Sarah's example) and is evidenced (Robinson et al, 2005) as providing asylum seekers with a significant 'layer' of protection. There was a sense that having emerged from the initial (two-year) chaos of NASS' beginning, RAP were progressively *developing* and improving the basic safety net. This, of course, included their reinforcement of separately funded supplementary, additional protective and creative services. Also RAP was a magnet for satellite agencies to do the same.

The fact that RAP was explicitly faced towards welfare provision and their activities geared as much, if not more, towards *facilitating* (as well as controlling) access to a basic welfare safety net masked the control intent and some of the practices involved with that. RAP was making *a* difference to the lives of asylum seekers. And *without* any state funded safety net asylum seekers would have been worse off.

9.1.2.2 *Asylum seekers*

The people journeying through this Reception did experience a basic level of welfare that met their basic needs, and on this level, enhanced their ability to survive. The women in this study acknowledged the value of the provision of shelter, food and clothing. They also felt a sense of protection and comfort (if problematic) to have an advice service at hand and RAP to *"run to."* For some, this level of welfare, the provision for basic needs, was all the safety net they needed especially if they were dispersed quickly. The movement within and around RAP to reinforce this safety net was also experienced as a source of support and comfort in *some* way, especially to those with a greater level of need. Some people were able to find resources and further ways of supporting themselves, from the basis of this basic survival resource including becoming involved in negotiating.

9.1.2.3 *Workers*

Although workers often found their jobs stressful, demanding and frustrating, and some felt some ambivalence over their roles, and a few felt extremes of dissonance, the majority believed they were helping and supporting their asylum-seeking clients and in their daily interactions they gave advice and assistance and felt they were doing what they could to improve clients welfare. Workers attempted to bring humanity into their work and obviously offered comfort and cultural support, for instance by being able to communicate with clients in their own languages. Many workers gained satisfaction from the small successes and progress they gained for clients. Generally, workers recognised the difficult living conditions their clients endured, especially those staying for long periods, and sought ways within their constraints, to improve them. They could sometimes feel caught between clients high expectations and the standards of living NASS provided, finding it difficult, for instance, when their clients expected Rosehill to

be a *"five star hotel,"* when 'hotel' was not even the most accurate description of this site. However, many workers coped with the low levels of welfare their clients endured by considering them in relative rather than absolute terms, and also by considering them as temporary. For instance, workers often reminded clients that they would not have had been given a roof over their heads from the state they had left. Some workers had worked in other EU state asylum support systems (and some in refugee camps in developing countries) and felt that the NASS system gave better provision.

9.2 *Managing the contradiction of welfare as control*

RAP's contradictory positioning implementing Reception since the 1999 IAA had involved managing the contradiction between welfare and control. In her research and analysis on *"national regimes for rights in their active operation",* where *"They are tied into often complex systems of differentiation which serve as both a statement of rights and a basis for limiting the claims of some groups",* Morris (2002: 158) concludes, *"The area of rights and controls with respect to migration is thus shown to be one of compromise, made inevitable by the management of contradiction."* Although Morris concludes on the national level, having explored in detail several European nations regimes of rights (and controls) in operation or practice, this statement is applicable to the active operation of social or welfare rights (and controls) at the organisational level that RAP operated on. The services they operated in practice, implementing Reception in line with the 1999 IAA, were compromises and compromised by the unavoidable daily (and longer term) management of the contradiction of a system of welfare designed as a mechanism of control (understood in the various senses mentioned). Although this was not expressed explicitly as such by RAP workers, the tensions, dilemmas and stresses they displayed and expressed, in different ways and to differing extents, and the evidence given in the preceding chapters, suggests this conclusion is reasonable.

The organisation had experienced their position as a VS organisation being pulled between their service ideals of enhancing the social rights of their clients and NASS' directives towards restricting them. Workers struggled between their desires to provide qualitative services and the imperative for the quantitative. Their difficult position was one of a constant balancing of such interests and a struggle to ensure a general fairness within their bit of the system and trying to find the most ethical compromise. However,

with their 'hands-tied' and constrained by their almost entire reliance on NASS for funding, once involved, they were dragged further along into ethical compromise picking up the pieces of the mistakes and new political demands made, where particularly those people with the greatest need had least protection. This could be considered a *"deficit in the right to support"* in practice (Morris: 2002:151). This position involved some serious compromises and their ethical integrity was battered in their struggle to maintain it. In this sense, it seems that they *did* get their hands dirty by colluding with a system in which some of their clients suffered some serious curtailments to their autonomy and human dignity. Workers found their clients distresses distressing but also felt powerless with them, in the face of the power and effects of the state's emphasis on controlling and restricting. Although some of the contradictions and tensions in their position were similar to those of everyday street-level bureaucrats working under any typical street-level bureaucracy work conditions (Lipsky, 1980), and of other social care workers caught between different care and control policy agendas (Sales and Hek, 2004), the *intent* that the care given should maintain social exclusion for this particular group seems particularly compromising.

However, it is also the case that from their contradictory position close to NASS, RAP were able, within the constraints upon them and when sufficiently motivated and resourced, to use any discretion they had, driven by their VS ideals, to expand in practice the minimal formal social rights of their asylum seeking clients, to include some informal gains, (Morris, 2002). This included, for example fundraising to fill service gaps, facilitating access to MF assessment, improving the quality of information given and providing a stronger safety net using volunteers to support the more vulnerable. They were also able, in this position, to have *some* influence over procedural policy in practice and, especially when working with the other IAP agencies, had at least *some* lobbying power with NASS. RAP and RAP workers always presented themselves, and indeed genuinely saw themselves, as an organisation and staff assisting and supporting people seeking asylum, and as "*making a difference to the lives of asylum seekers and refugees,*" (SM, Ch6). To the extent that they had and used their discretion, RAP could be understood to be, in the senses that both Lipsky (1980) and Morris (2002) have discussed, not just implementers, but *makers* of asylum 'support' policy in practice.

But just *"How Low Can You Go?"* as Duvell and Jordan (2000) asked of their social work teams picking up the pieces after the 1996 Act, and Cohen (2002) has suggested in no uncertain terms, that the few VS organisations including RAP, made an ethically poor decision to implement a Reception Service for NASS. The contradictory positioning of VS agencies such as RAP, raises the question Lipsky (1980: xiii) also asked, which may be applied to workers and the organisation in this case; should street-level bureaucrats *"look for other work rather than perpetuate unfair, ineffective, or destructive public practices?"* or,

> *Should they struggle from within to change the conditions under which citizens are processed by their agencies? This path seems the hardest to maintain and is subject to the danger that illusions of difference will be taken for the reality of significant reform,* (ibid: xiv).

Is it possible now, in the light of this research, to address and answer this question in a better-informed way? What is the most ethically sound position for organisations such as RAP and the workers within them: attempts at reform from within or refusal to co-operate in attempt to force revolution from without? Or at which point should such an agency decide the compromise to its ethical integrity is just too great? In some ways, having explored and discovered the complexity of the lived experience of actors and agencies involved with these policies on the ground, as practitioners and 'clients', this question is now *more* difficult to answer. RAP workers, despite some acknowledging the tensions, mostly believed their position to operate 'in' and between the Government and asylum seekers with their expertise and will to act as a protective buffer, *was* the ethical one. But, as we have seen, their effectiveness in doing this was extremely limited by their position and the pressure on them to 'oil the wheels' of the NASS system was often dominant, despite the potentially harmful effect this might have had on their clients. Having ethnographically illuminated this hidden local setting and revealed greater complexity in everyday practices, and also therefore greater ethical complexity than Cohen's (2002), for instance, black and white terms, in order to address this question more adequately it is important to step back and consider the implications of this case study for the broader context it is a part of. That is, having drawn some specific conclusions from the fieldwork, how might these inform some broader and more general conclusions?

10 – GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, it is important now to place and consider the ethnography and the particular selection of ethnographic data presented in the last four chapters in the context of the thesis as a whole, in terms of the initial aims and research puzzles it has set out to explore, and in relation to the broader and more general levels of analysis, and time and space that are its context, as explored in Chapters 1 to 3. Doing this will indicate the broader relevance of this research and its possible contribution to understanding some of the contemporary dynamics around forced migration, and other related areas this research has touched on. It should then be possible to suggest some ways of moving forward.

10.1 Contributing to a Sociology of Forced Migration

To begin with, this research has taken up the argument, premises and challenges that Stephen Castles (2003) laid out in calling for a new Sociology of Forced Migration (in Chapter 2.2) and has attempted to contribute to this project. One of the arguments and challenges that Castles (2003) proposed was that studies concerning forced migration should incorporate and be informed by the many different levels of analysis (and reality) from the global to the individual, that are intrinsic to the phenomena and processes it is made up of. For instance, Castles (2003) argued that studies of local situations, communities and individuals needed to be informed by those concentrating on macro levels of analysis such as political economy, and broader global social processes, such as globalisation, and vice versa. As stated in the Introduction, the literature and contextualising in Chapters 1 to 3, framing the ethnography within a global, regional and national context and a conceptual understanding of these in terms of 'contradictions', is intended to be taken as part of the analysis of the ethnographic data. Therefore, taken as a whole, where the ethnographic illumination of this local setting and the lived experiences of agents within it (Chapters 5-8), is informed by those broader and deeper levels of theoretically and historically informed analysis of the structural processes involved in it (Chapters 2-3), and guided by critical realist and Castles' (2003) suggested methodological principles (Chapter 5), this research thesis has attempted to contribute to what is becoming a blossoming Sociology of Forced Migration. What, then, does this research contribute to this wider project? What might this 'microcosm' say to the broader 'macrocosm'? What is its relevance to the social arena of Forced Migration? How might

it be *"useful public knowledge"* (Castles, 2003:27)? Does it offer any emancipatory potential, as critical realism usually aspires to do?

One of the ways in which this research has approached ensuring that this local case study is informed more broadly beyond its discrete setting, has been to use a critical realist ethnography drawing in a unique way elements from Smith's, Burawoy's and Bourdieu's methodologies for understanding the local and individual in terms of the social general, and extending out wards as far as the global. Using such a critical realist methodology permits understanding of a local and small-scale (or micro) setting in terms of the broader and deeper structural processes implicit within it, and making it what it is. All of the Chapters in this thesis are part of this methodological project (as stated), but to conclude, it is important to explicitly stress some of the broader structural processes which seem to have conditioned and may be considered explanations of the local setting at RAP, and in light of both these and the detailed description of everyday lives, to consider some of the implications of these findings.

Another way in which this research has attempted to contribute to a Sociology of Forced Migration has been to take heed of Castles (2003) warning that research designed around a narrow policy agenda aiming to find a solution to a particular bureaucratic problem, can lead to the development of short-sighted policies that do not work. This research has aimed to develop a more theoretically informed, historically long-sighted and broader view of this social area. Although it focuses around a specific policy agenda and its implementation at a specific point in space and time, it is *not* intended to be an evaluation of this policy which ends listing a series of recommendations, but *does* aim, nevertheless, to offer a *"more useful public knowledge,"* in the manner Castles (2003:27) suggests. Therefore, the research might ultimately raise more questions than it answers.

10.2 The focus and concept of 'welfare as control'

An aspect of developing a more theoretical (and sociological) approach has been the process of focussing in on a particular problematic, from the inklings and inspirations at the beginning of the research (as described in the Introduction), through reading the literature and doing pilot interviews, then in-depth immersion in the field, data analysis and writing up, to develop and use the concept of 'Welfare as Control' as a conceptual

frame to view certain responses of receiving nation-states to forced migration. The research has explored how this contradictory problematic of a welfare system designed as a mechanism of immigration control is experienced and lived out daily by those it most affects. That is, from the perspectives and positions of individuals involved in a contradictory position in implementing Welfare as Control, and from those whose welfare has been at stake because of their being controlled. Particularly, doing an intensive ethnography has helped to reveal the complexity of what these (welfare as control) policies involve in practice, on the ground, illuminating a previously hidden setting and giving voice to some previously unheard voices within it, and so, it is hoped, giving greater substance and better understanding of this 'concept', Welfare as Control.

In these senses the research adds to previous research and literature, which has explored this problematic more generally in terms of the links between state systems of welfare and those of immigration controls, historically and politically (Cohen, 2002; Hayes, 2002; Mynott, 2002), theoretically (Bommes and Geddes, 2000) and in some interview research with public sector social work teams (Duvell and Jordan, 2000; Sales and Hek, 2004). This research has developed the concept of "welfare as control" to describe the intent and subsequent practices behind policies, such as Part VI of the 1999 IAA, devised by governments attempting to control the number of asylum seekers entering their territory and then internally controlling those people's subsequent trajectories whilst asylum seeking, through exploring how this concept is lived out in daily practice. The practices that it involved and the experiences of the welfare as control recipients were not expressed as such by the research participants, nor the writers of the policies it incorporated, but the concept was developed through this theoretical and ethnographic research, data analysis and critical realist reasoning (abductive, and retroductive), as a useful interpretative framework to aid understanding. Taking this research as a whole, from the theoretical and ethnographic explorations, this concept seems to carry some weight or, as Danermark et al. (1997:122) put it, "*has 'punch'… should be sharp and forceful… functions in practice… provides deeper insight… explanatory power*". Welfare as Control may therefore be a useful concept to think about and research further settings where agencies and individuals are negotiating these contradictory elements in their daily lives. For now, how might this in-depth case study exploring and identifying Welfare as Control be relevant beyond the setting and offer some more general

conclusions? It is necessary to revisit the critical realist understanding of 'general' laid out in Chapter 4.

10.3 A general contradictory position?

How may this research be concluded in terms of the national policy in practice it is an example of? What is its relevance to or, what does it say about the enactment of safety-net Welfare as Control since the 1999 IAA, in more general terms?

As stated in the methodology Chapter 4.14, a critical realist approach accepts the prerogative that science and social science should be able to make generalising claims, but argues that this does not involve empiricist extrapolation from small to larger populations but involves instead, claims of *"more or less universal preconditions for an object to be what it is,"* (Danermark et al, 1997:77). In this sense of generalising from this case study then, it is argued that the numerous complex 'universal' preconditions, or underlying generative structures, influencing the everyday setting at RAP to be the way it was, spread out through the meso and macro levels, or from local, national, regional, global and mediating between them-processes. Many of these, important in terms of this interpretive frame and the specified problematic, have been identified in the earlier Chapters (2 and 3) of this thesis and highlighted where appropriate through the data chapters (6-8), and it would be unnecessary to restate these in full here. However, those considered most important, which allow any new conclusions or illuminations, will be discussed. It seems prudent to move from the everyday personal and local, outwards again.

Those preconditions that seem the most striking and necessary in making the setting at RAP what it was are obviously its contradictory positioning at the hub or 'nexus' (Cohen, 2001; 2002) of delivering a policy of welfare which was at the same time a policy of immigration control. More specifically this positioning involved both their aims, ideals and status as a Voluntary Sector organisation and their financially and procedurally binding relationship of 'partnership' or in practice as an 'agent' to NASS. Also conditioning this setting was its specific position and role in the process of Welfare as Control support for destitute asylum seekers, as a Reception Assistant Agency and all that involved in practice. In practice, RAP was conditioned by the spaces for discretion and

independence it found, for *making policy* (Lipsky, 1980) in its contradictory position and the influences driving it to use these spaces in particular ways to increase the gain or deficit of the formal social rights of asylum seeking clients. This could involve oiling the wheels of the system for NASS or sticking spanners in the works in protection of clients, although these do not simplistically or necessarily map onto 'deficit' and 'gain', and these outcomes were not always intentionally reached. The out workings of this position found at RAP suggest some broader conclusions in terms of policies for receiving forced migrants (specific to Britain, and possibly more generally), of Third Way social policy arrangements and implications generally for Voluntary Sector and welfare workers, involved in implementation of these. (These will be explored a little further on).

Also evident, to use the valuable conceptual framework developed by Morris (2002), was the structure of civic stratification, found in this research to be intensely bureaucratic in practice and involving many further complex layers of often shifting *strata* of rights (and their conjoined, or inverse, controls), sometimes through formal expansion or, more usually, contraction, and sometimes informal gain or deficit, *within* the broader status of 'asylum seeker.' This more complex bureaucratic structuring of civic stratification (constructed in order to limit welfare rights as a means of immigration control) was at least partially caused by the initial poor and heavily centralised design of NASS and the NASS system and its subsequent semi-collapsing and adapting in practice. It was evident in the number of acronyms, of formal and informal categories NASS created to try to organise its work in line with policy, and to distinguish between statuses of asylum seeker and associated rights or disentitlements, daily negotiated and fought over and processed with RAP workers who in turn negotiated these with their clients. This bureaucratic structure weighed heavily on all involved in the setting; dominating and structuring time and work, and individuals' well being. For people seeking asylum, this structure of minimal rights (designed also to control), predominantly served to *anormalise* (Geddes, 2001:143) their lives and hold them in suspense ('hanging') from settling psychologically or physically, as it was intended to do ("*designed to hinder the possibility for asylum seekers to live a 'normal social life'",* ibid:143). On top of the structure of bureaucratic civic stratification was that of more generic street-level bureaucracy, (Lipsky, 1980), where the struggle to cope with the structure of 'public service' work made it difficult for workers to use their available discretion to serve

clients better, rather than serve the bureaucratic purposes of the management agency (ultimately, NASS).

Of course, extending out, there were many broader *global* preconditions contributing to the setting at RAP to be the way it was. The many complex processes which can be understood as globalisation, as discussed in Chapter 2, were at least part of the causes responsible for inducing and forcing the arrival of many of the forced migrants at Heathrow and the other London Airports (as well as by other means), who then journeyed through RAP's section of their Reception in Britain. Just being at any RAP office for any length of time felt like being at a global hub, at the hub of twenty-first century transnational and globalisation processes. There were hundreds of people from hundreds of places around the globe in one place, with a multitude of different cultures, languages, personal histories and journeys, idiosyncrasies, forced (in that grey area that is 'forced') to migrate to this place where we all were, to find greater security. Through the complex interactive processes between these individuals' agency and the social, political and economic forces compelling them, people arrived in Britain and at RAP and journeyed on from there.

10.3.1. RAP as emblematic of similarly positioned organisations

The conceptual frameworks mentioned here have aided a more *general* understanding of the setting to be the way I found and have interpreted it, and I believe, this research also lends more weight and adds something to these particular theories. However, I argue that it is also possible to make some generalising claims in the other sense mentioned, that is, treating this case study organisation and the individuals in specific positions involved with it (workers and asylum seekers), as emblematic (Bourdieu, 1999) of a wider universe (Mason, 1996) of similarly positioned organisations and individuals. There were a lot of factors about RAP that made them unique, and indeed about each of the six similar organisations that were in Grant Agreement to NASS to provide some degree of Reception Assistant Service. They each had different strengths and fields of expertise, each conditioned to an extent by their geographical position and each with their own idiosyncratic histories and trajectories as Refugee Support Agencies, in social space.

However, there were also many important similarities between these organisations, including their initial purposes and stances as Refugee Support Agencies, their Voluntary Sector statuses and their statures among British Refugee Support NGOs (although the Refugee Councils and Refugee Action were considerably bigger than Migrant Helpline and Refugee Arrivals Project). They were obviously also similar in the other most important aspect to this research, in their relationship to NASS and roles in the safety-net welfare as control system of 'asylum support' (see Chapter 5). Therefore, to the extent that the general underlying conditions of a contradictory positioning of Voluntary Sector Refugee Support aimed agencies were involved in delivering welfare as control for NASS, particularly, but not only, Reception Services, it seems extremely likely that such similar agencies would have experienced some similar contradictions, dilemmas and compromises, and would have *been* compromised in the types of support they were able to offer to their clients, in similar ways.

There obviously would have been *some* complex differences between these agencies' abilities to provide welfare, which can only be hinted at from this research with one of them. For instance, as the Wackenhut Transport Co-ordinator confided, the agencies among this group she dealt with all seemed to have somewhat different stances towards NASS authority and their role, and seemed to use spaces for discretion they had in different ways, but it seems unlikely they had significantly different degrees of power to defy NASS in favour of their clients interests, when the other conditions of constraint remained similar. During my research period, gossip filtered through at RAP that the RC had closed down their London Reception Assistant Service and role, that it was chaotic and unworkable over there, and not enough asylum seekers travelled to their dispersal regions. Whether this was by RC intention or NASS edict was not clear, but this and the hints from the dispersal coach co-ordinator, suggests that some scuppering of the dispersal system was possible. However, RC were in a very different position to RAP in their capability to do this, in that they had many other successful services (such as information, campaigning, training and research facilities) to fall back on, were much bigger, older and had a more prominent public status. RAP had only ever been a Reception Agency. Also, RC withdrawal from their RAA role, did not result in any fundamental scuppering of the dispersal system overall.

I also contend that other VS and Public Sector agencies with some similar and some different features, including differing (but with at least *some*) relationships of service delivery to NASS, within the system of welfare as control, would also have struggled with some of the same contradictions, dilemmas and compromises RAP did, as well as interesting different idiosyncratic ones. Griffiths et al (2005) give detailed evidence of the co-option of RCOs by NASS, and particularly relevant here, their co-option into spending time and resources in crisis management, especially around NASS inefficiency and bureaucracy. There is further literature touching on the work of some of the agencies in the multi-agency partnerships that form the Regional Consortia, mentioning their difficult relationships with NASS, (for example, Wilson, 2001). This also suggests the hugely important role a wide variety of Voluntary Sector organisations is playing across Britain, reinforcing the dispersal safety net, either as funded members of Regional Consortia, or as self-propelled satellite 'agencies' (some, loosely organised networks), which have formed in response to big holes and gaps in the basic state funded survival net, (Wilson, 2001; Mynott, 2002; Griffiths et al, 2005), and to 'pick up the pieces' from asylum policy (Dwyer, 2005).

This research case study with RAP suggests that the more tied an agency is to providing direct services to NASS (and some of those are more compromising than others), and the more reliant an agency is on NASS for its funding, the less autonomy and spaces it has for using its discretion to increase the civic gain of asylum seekers formal rights in practice. This, and it is likely to be true of other, *agents* of NASS were strongly propelled to use the majority of their resources (time, staffing, expertise) in fulfilling NASS' agenda, which was often detrimental to asylum seekers well being, and dealing with the fall-out from its failings. However, there were *some* benefits to this position, in that a fairly secure reliance on funding and the ability to use its integral position (especially with other agencies), together with the will and drive as a VS agency, allowed *some* directive development of *more* holistic services appropriate to asylum seekers needs, to provide a buffer of sorts and towards procedural change benefiting clients. What, then (as Lipsky, Duvell and Jordan and Cohen have asked, mentioned earlier) can be said in terms of the decisions organisations and individuals make to work *for* NASS as an integral part of the safety-net system, to accept full or partial funding, to fulfil a NASS agenda or just to co-operate with NASS?

There was evidence from this research that agencies which had chosen to remain entirely financially independent of NASS, in this case the MF and RAP's befriending service, also had their service provision and work agendas substantially dictated and directed by policy changes and NASS' agendas. The Befriending Service working closely with RAP were forced to change their service provision, the purposes of their befriending liaisons, and to re-train their volunteers when the 1999 IAA introduced dispersal, and their volunteers' ability to support clients was frequently curtailed by the uncertainty and lack of warning of clients' dispersals. The BfS worker spoke of the benefits of working autonomously from NASS funding, but at the same time their service having its 'hands tied' by government policy agendas. The MF, which had steadfastly refused government funding in order to retain its integrity and independence, had also had its service provision and ability to support the victims of torture it worked with, significantly affected by the 1999 IAA welfare as control provisions and agenda. With the concession NASS allowed that MF clients could stay in London for treatment, and the known proviso that people who had their experiences of torture verified by the MF were more likely to succeed in their asylum claims, the MF were forced to spend their resources assessing large numbers of asylum seekers, so having to cut back on the amount of therapeutic work they could do. From these examples, and those in the literature (as mentioned), it seems that any agency attempting to support and work with asylum seekers were constrained and shaped in certain ways by needing to work with or around the policy of 'welfare as control', again picking up the pieces and reinforcing the safety net. This makes answering the question of the most ethical path for Voluntary Sector agencies somewhat more hazy. Although an agency bound by funding and contract (or Grant Agreement) into providing specific services for another (such as the Home Office) would seemingly have less autonomy to decide what services to offer and how to operate them than one fundraising from other sources, if this latter type must shape its service provision around and use its resources supporting clients negotiate that policy system anyway, does it make a substantial ethical difference?

Lipsky (1980) argued that efforts to change processing systems from within an organisation might not amount to the significant reform necessary to change harmful practices, and Cohen (2002) suggested Voluntary Sector organisations should refuse to co-operate with a system detrimental to the interests of asylum seekers, but what is the

evidence that attempting to bring about that refusal to co-operate can instigate the collapse of a policy (as Cohen suggested it would)?

While the VS agencies such as RAP did not believe that refusing to co-operate with the 1999 IAA would mean a restoration of social rights to asylum seekers, only a change of personnel to the private sector, there has been some evidence since this time that refusal to co-operate can lead to a Government stand-down, withdrawal or reform of harsh policies. After the 1999 IAA a RA branch in Liverpool closed its offices unable to cope with the exceptionally high demand of people dispersed there who were in trouble due to NASS failings (such as not receiving their vouchers), which action contributed to reviews and a regionalisation of a centralised NASS. Oxfam and other shops refusing to accept asylum seekers' NASS-issued vouchers, helped bring about the collapse of that system. Both of these organisations' actions seemed detrimental in the short term to asylum seekers seeking their services, but brought obvious long-term gains. Also, social workers have refused to co-operate with the 2004 legislation attempting to introduce the separating of children from parents into social services care after their asylum claims were refused, in attempt to induce them to return to their countries of origin, and this section of the Act has been abandoned. There is therefore some evidence that a case for non-cooperation from without, *can* force the government's hand in abandoning pieces of asylum legislation and policy. Although this research has explored one organisation in-depth and in doing so has been able to generate some rich and revealing data, further research would be necessary (and interesting) with some of these other organisations in different positions to reveal a more general picture in the sense of the 'wider universe' RAP was one example of.

10.4 RAP's part as a 'cog' in the machinery of national 'welfare as control' dispersal

However to consider this issue further, it is essential to place this research and the further questions it raises, in the wider context of the NASS dispersal system as a whole and in terms of some of the issues around Reception policies raised in Chapter 3, because RAP (and the other organisations like it and in a similarly contradictory position) was a discrete Reception element in a much bigger and more complex 'machinery' of asylum seeker 'support' and processing. What conclusions can be made from this case study about the wider, national system of 'welfare as control' policy in practice? Although it

has been possible to explore how RAP's position and practice of policy impacted on the everyday lives of asylum seekers while staying with RAP, in order to consider any longer term consequences of experiencing their Reception in these ways, it would be necessary to look beyond RAP's Reception to see how it fits and feeds into the broader NASS system and welfare as control policy as a whole. This research has not followed up individual asylum seekers into their dispersal and beyond their stay with RAP, and therefore it is only possible to speculate on the impact of RAP's contribution to their well being further on along the processes of asylum seeking and beyond, in general terms from the literature.

Bommes and Geddes (2000:2) argued that the types of welfare an asylum seeker might receive in a country of asylum "*mediate efforts by immigrants to realise their chances for social participation*" and contribute towards "*pave*[ing] *the*[ir] *social options.*" Also, Castles et al. (2003:126) suggested that, "*Long-term outcomes may be influenced by early experiences*" and those "*with limited rights and opportunities may integrate in ways that lead to disadvantage and marginalisation.*" Korac's (2003) research demonstrated some of the differentiated ways the early experiences of 'Reception' of asylum seekers in Italy and Holland, paved their later social options and later experiences of integration in those societies. As we have seen RAP were obliged to make it difficult for destitute asylum seekers to settle or stay in London and played a part in *anormalising* their lives by enforcing a cashless system and dispersal around the country. People seeking asylum differed in their resilience and ability to cope with this anormalised life in EA and in their contact or integration with social networks outside EA, as well as in their ability to demand or gain the support that they needed. How might their experience of Reception at RAP therefore, have paved the future social options of people seeking asylum travelling through it?

There will obviously have been similarly variable experiences of life after dispersal, however it seems fair to say that the contradictory position of RAP during the research period, and the necessity for them to crisis manage and concentrate so much of their resources on negotiating the extremes of bureaucracy, meant their ability to prepare people adequately for this transition seemed severely compromised. My observations at RAP fit with other research that has found an immense paucity of information given to people about their dispersal regions, and between Reception agencies and NASS and

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Local Authorities and agencies in dispersal regions about the needs of asylum seekers due to be dispersed into their care, (Robinson, et al., 2003). There is plenty of evidence that this has contributed to causing the experience of dispersal for many asylum seekers to be extremely distressing, with cases of severe isolation, inappropriate accommodation and seriously unmet special needs, as well as inadequate infrastructure (religious facilities and legal advisers) and racist victimisation, (ibid:145).

The bureaucratic inefficiency of NASS particularly during the first few years of implementation, was not just evident at Reception but was continuous through the dispersal process, and there were numerous cases of people failing to receive vouchers to meet even their most basic needs, and even greater pressure on VS agencies and voluntary networks to 'pick up the pieces,' (Stansfield, 2001; Robinson et al. 2003). Also, the fact that the so-called 'intelligent' dispersal planned, instantly became a system based on expediency and accommodation availability rather than of grouping people in regions according to language, cultural and religious needs, caused obvious isolation and distress for inappropriately dispersed individuals. There has been a great deal of research around the many details of post-1999 IAA dispersal policy in practice, predominantly aimed at improving this practice, commissioned and conducted by agencies from the VS, Charitable Trusts (such as Wilson, 2001) and the Home Office (Audit Commission, 2000; Home Office, 2001). Some of this details examples of 'excellent practice', where the multi-agencies of Regional Consortia and newly forming organisations, agencies and networks including RCO's have worked together, shared information and resources without over-duplication efficiently and effectively, in addressing the support and welfare needs of dispersed asylum seekers, (Wilson, 2001). There have also, of course, been many criticisms, particularly centring around the workings of NASS, its centralised decision-making and inefficiencies, including its failure to collect or distribute information on asylum seekers needs prior to dispersal, (Stansfield, 2001), which would have been the work of Reception Assistant Agencies, such as RAP. Some of the lead academics in the Forced Migration field were commissioned by the Home Office to research the workings of different aspects of the policy in 2001 (including Robinson, 2001; Harvey, 2001; Johnson, 2001; Griffiths, 2001, all cited in Robinson et al, 2003), and then again in 2002 to research ways in which dispersal could be made more 'efficient and effective', (Zetter, et al., forthcoming and Robinson, forthcoming, cited in Robinson et al., 2003). Overall, this research has suggested that the NASS dispersal system *has*

improved to an *extent*, over time, and the fact of its commission suggests some willingness by the Home Office to make improvements, or at least to listen (or appear to listen) to suggestions based on research evidence.

For the purposes of understanding how RAP's work in practice fitted into the wider system of NASS dispersal, the key factors from these pieces of research include the necessity for producing and sharing more and better information, both for asylum seekers about their dispersal regions and their rights and entitlements and *about* asylum seekers needs for agencies along the dispersal line to help facilitate better, adequate or even any provision of support, (Zetter, et al., forthcoming and Robinson, forthcoming, cited in Robinson, et al, 2003; Anie, Daniel, Tah and Petruckevitch, 2005). Zetter (forthcoming, cited in Robinson et al. 2003) stated that the system was over-centralised, overly bureaucratic, lacked a sense of coordination and partnership and that the systemic weaknesses impacted heavily on voluntary sector organisations and OSS. These conclusions fit with the picture of policy in practice found in this research. Zetter (cited in, ibid) also concluded that where dispersal was fully implemented as initially planned it worked well, consortia were effective bodies for implementing policy and there were examples of excellent practice, but that this was insufficiently widespread, and he made 39 recommendations for improving the system.

Wilson's (2001) criticism that the practice of keeping people in EA in London for long period's of time made their dispersal (in this case to West Yorkshire), when it did occur, particularly disruptive for them especially in relation to legal advice and schooling children, making it harder to settle once dispersed, is relevant to this research as well. As we have seen from the mother and daughter distressed to be dispersed because leaving a local supportive church community and school near RAP, and RAP's policy of discouragement to parents to enrol children in schools locally, their practices had consequences for people further along their asylum seeking journey. Taking this longer view, RAP's policy of discouragement to settling in London can be seen in two lights; as complying with NASS and the Home Office intent to prevent asylum seekers integration (and colluding with their forced, unwanted dispersal), but also as a way of protecting their clients from the distress of uprooting when the inevitable dispersal (beyond their control) did occur.

It can be deduced from these later pieces of research that asylum seekers dispersed on from RAP would have had very variable experiences dependent on the lottery of NASS' fundamentally accommodation-led dispersal selection process and the quality of the services provided, dependent on which place and which formal Consortium and less formal development of agencies operated there, (Griffiths et al., 2005). Some would have met appallingly difficult circumstances, strongly maintaining their *anormalised* existences, others would have found some of the support structures they needed to enable the processes of reconstruction and settlement, especially if also gaining their refugee status, and undoubtedly many would have had very mixed experiences. It would seem that RAP's contradictory position, (and that of other integral RAAs) compromised their ability to prepare their clients adequately for their forward journeys on dispersal (as well as their support during Reception) as it was not until early 2003 that they found the space and resources (combined with the initiative and drive of a particular worker) to begin producing information about dispersal regions to give to clients. RAP's position also left them compromised in lacking the resources or expertise to conduct thorough needs assessments and to require NASS to share this information to enable agencies in dispersal regions to adequately support their clients with special needs.

However, in considering this research in its wider national and policy context it is important to acknowledge and recognise its specific historical juncture. 2002-2003 was quite early on in the establishment of an entirely new Home Office bureaucracy and enormous national infrastructure of multi-agency regional consortia, and complex procedural and practical processes of dispersal (which involved the development and maintenance of the rights and controls in practice, of asylum seekers civic stratification). It could be argued therefore, that some of the factors compromising RAP's ability to support their asylum seeking clients and the extremes of chaotic crisis management that obviously occurred before gaining extra resources for staff and restructuring, and immediately before the research period, were due to teething problems with the fairly 'young' NASS' system, which might be ironed out in time.

It could also be argued that the dispersal system as it had originally been designed, with a short period for orientation in Reception and EA before dispersal to a region based on language, pre-existing multi-ethnic communities and the availability of appropriate support services including increased expert VS involvement, and legal advisers, would

have been a generally tolerable and supportive process for asylum seekers waiting for the planned six month period for a verdict on their claims. Putting aside the explicit intent and inbuilt measures of deterrence, control, easing 'community relations' and, as Robinson et al., (2003) have highlighted, 'burden sharing', it could be argued that if the dispersal system had worked as planned, it might have been a creative and positive experience for both people seeking asylum and local communities benefiting from the enrichment of new multi-ethnic populations and encouraging national 'ownership' or responsibility for providing asylum to global refugees. Perhaps the Third Way design of 'modernised' welfare with centrally controlled multi-sector, multi-agency co-ordination would form a dynamic machine of co-operatively functioning parts to support asylum seekers? After all, dispersal programmes for asylum seekers were typical throughout Europe, for instance in Holland, Sweden and Germany, (Robinson et al., 2003). In anticipation of these measures working as planned, it could be argued that VS organisations such as RAP were not choosing the compromising path Cohen (2002) argued they were, in participating so integrally with NASS. However, as one of RAP's managers had said,

> *Most of the difficulties are because the whole concept is…not very well thought through… The **idea** of centrally planning the arrival, reception, information, decision, accommodation for 70,000 asylum seekers from all over the world, with needs and what have you… it just speaks for itself really! It's a **mad** concept!*

This and other warnings (Audit Commission, 2000) suggest that it was or should have been *obvious* to organisations like RAP and the RC and RA that the NASS system would not work as planned in practice, that this rushed through policy and giant piece of social engineering, seemingly more concerned with political expediency than practical success, was doomed to collapse in parts and cause considerable collateral damage in doing so (on top of the hardship it had planned to include).

However, it seemed that the VS agencies, and perhaps particularly RAP as a solely Reception service, felt powerless in the face of a seemingly unstoppable government agenda to restrict access to territory and welfare, other than to offer a limited protection, alongside their implicit control role from within. On their entry at that time it seemed as

though there was a sense that 'there is no alternative' than to be dragged along by New Labour's Third Way and immigration control agendas, trying to minimise human damage where possible. Towards the end of the research, RAP became increasingly concerned to have the capacity to diversify and so withdraw itself, having gained new strength and confidence to do so in their new shape, as the threat of becoming implicated in increasingly compromising legislation threatened their integrity further. However, during it this ethnography shows, RAP had become part of the 'dispersed state' operating internal control policies, with their 'hands-tied' with *some* welfare still intact. What then, might this research 'say to' this wider policy project of New Labour, of Third Way welfare in general?

10.5 Welfare as Control as an experiment in 'Third Way' welfare

It can be argued that the 'qualitatively' and radically new arrangements of support for destitute asylum seekers introduced by New Labour with the 1999 IAA, was the ultimate experiment in Third Way welfare design and practices. The government could afford to be this brashly experimental, introducing and constructing radically new institutional arrangements in a hurry because its policy objects were asylum seekers, with tentative claims to welfare rights in the eyes of a hostile electorate who would not problematically protest over any human 'fall-out' of these particular people, who in turn were not in a position to protest themselves. This was a giant piece of social engineering, possible because its welfare was mixed with and driven by principles of control. As discussed in Chapter 3.4.2, the welfare provisions of the 1999 IAA enact New Labour's Third Way or 'modernised' (Home Office, 1998) design of 'joined up' government and a mixed economy welfare state of 'partners', based on communitarian principles stressing active citizenship, responsibility for oneself and one's community and welfare independence, (Etzioni, 1993; Blair, 1998). Although New Labour has introduced Third Way welfare arrangements throughout its social policy, the infrastructure created since the 1999 IAA seems a particularly 'gung-ho' and radical example of these principles in practice.

Initially this involved the regional Consortia of multi public, private and voluntary sector agencies expected to cooperate and joint-work to effectively and efficiently establishing the services and strategies to support dispersed asylum seekers in accordance with NASS policy. As structures and services were established over time and refugee and asylum

seeker communities developed, new organisations and networks sprung up at various relations to policy and government, variably across regions, and (as we have seen, Robinson et al, 2003) to varying degrees of 'success' in terms of efficiency and supportiveness to asylum seekers and integration with local populations. As noted and research shows, many of these 'organisations' have developed to 'pick up the pieces' from policy, sometimes independently struggling with no funding (Dwyer, 2005), and sometimes encouraged and funded by the Government to form in a particular way and fulfil specific functions, such as RCOs (Griffiths et al., 2005). Therefore civil society has been heavily incorporated in all its forms from individuals and the most loosely organised networks of individuals to the large formal Voluntary Sector organisations such as RAP and the RC, 'factored in' either by seemingly intentional default (for instance, government reference to the VS attracting volunteers), or by direct and fully funded design to provide services as government 'partners'.

These new types of relationships between the state, civil society and the private sector at local, regional and national levels have been explored and explained as a network of control by governance theorists, some of whom have argued that national state power has been dispersed and devolved, (Daly, 2003). However, many argue that the national state still retains significant (if dispersed) power in the process of policy implementation (Jessop, 1999; Clarke and Glendinning, 2002; Dwyer 2005). Dwyer (2005) found in his research, which uses a governance frame to understand social policy for forced migrants in dispersal regions that the 'partnerships' of the organisations and networks forming the 'dispersed state' did not seem to enhance the welfare of forced migrants who were often forced into self-reliance, as the state retained ultimate power in its 'separation and erosion' of welfare.

This research, by exploring in all its complexity how this Third Way welfare (as control) policy was lived out in practice with one integral Voluntary Sector 'partner,' may enable more general illumination of civil society, particularly Voluntary Sector, roles and involvement, in both Third Way welfare policies for forced migrants and in general. As we have seen, RAP's example (which also resonates with other research; Robinson, et al 2003) demonstrates the lack of 'partnership' in practice, and the ultimate, top-down and heavily constraining power of the national state, in the form of NASS (although *some* elements of this *was* inevitably due to its new and hurried formation). It also illuminates

the potential for necessary negotiation and compromising with and being compromised by other public and private sector agencies, in their position. This research also demonstrates the ethically and practically difficult position such VS agencies are placed in when agreeing to be integrally involved in Third Way (particularly welfare as control) policy and service delivery. The organisation and workers were obliged to take on the frontline 'face' of the state but as advocates both for state and client, their abilities to act as a protective 'buffer' from state policies and to enhance their clients welfare was severely limited, by their having become part of New Labour's *"technocratic force to implement its programme,"* (Duvell and Jordan, 2000:30).

Third Way emphasis on individuals' independence from state welfare and the drive to take responsibility for oneself and one's own could be witnessed on the ground, as debates and negotiations between and among workers and clients over beneficial levels of 'dependency' and the empowerment of 'independence'. These struggles were resonant of wider debates over the ideal ways of 'helping' people who were seeking asylum (Ch.3.1.4), as well as those around Third Way (and previously neo-liberal) aims and emphases on individual and community obligation, responsibility and independence from the state.

My research suggests some possible conclusions about government use of the Voluntary (or Third) Sector in the delivery of Third Way welfare (as control) policy. This ultimately seemed a very clever move by the Government and to serve a number of purposes. Firstly, with the larger and more powerful VS organisations 'onside' and integrally involved and financially *needing* NASS, their power to protest was diminished, their resistance significantly strangled, and in their involvement the VS were arguably 'emasculated' in their ability to fight the government for forced migrants rights. Like RAP, VS organisations of all shapes and sizes, in their differential involvement with the policy in practice were likely to be forced to use the majority of their resources in servicing the bureaucracy of the system and/ or picking up the pieces from it, (as Dwyer, 2005, and Griffiths et al., 2005 have found). The Government seemed to have rightly predicted that when withdrawing and diminishing the social rights of asylum seekers, if the VS were involved, they would be compelled to try to increase these using their own voluntary, or attracting and seeking other (non-state funded) resources, as RAP did. The Government's aim of *"harnessing"* (Home Office, 1998) the expertise of the Voluntary

Sector could be seen in practice as taming and tying the Sector up (both metaphorically and literally, in their resource utilisation), as well as utilising their expertise. But also, using an expert and welfare-focussed VS, as one RAP worker said, made them seem a "*caring Government*" to those who wished to protect and enhance asylum seekers social rights, including asylum seekers themselves.

However, to the perceived as intolerant and hostile electorate, the Government's use of the VS could be considered to appease feelings of hostility and injustice over welfare rights as it might seem (rightly to an extent) the funding for the minimal rights which existed came from the VS rather than national or local government, or the tax payer. Therefore the Government could play up to the electorate the harsh and control-oriented aspects of their policy, whilst playing up its 'caring' aspects to those protecting forced migrants rights. Cornelius and Tsuda (2004:42) have argued that some immigration policy is more liberal in practice than in rhetoric, as national states

> *…tolerate – indeed, often create- large gaps between policies and policy outcomes in this area… Ineffective and 'symbolic' immigration control measures are thus perpetuated because they reduce the potential for a broad public backlash.*

Duvell and Jordan (2002:513) also suggest (at the time though in relation to the small number of forced removals and lack of counting those leaving willingly, not to welfare restrictions),

> *The UK prides itself on being an open society and economy, with freedom and tolerance as its most widely shared values; in practice, this means that xenophobic political rhetoric is often combined with laissez-faire implementation…*

These conceptions were echoed in the words of a RAP worker who suggested that the Government introduced harsh measures such as Section 55 of the 2002 NIAA in order to appear 'tough' with the electorate, knowing they would be brought down in time by actions of the judiciary using Human Rights legislation (as S55 later was). It could be suggested that reinforcing the safety net was the intention of Government in its devising

of this Third Way structure of policy, by utilising the VS either by request or in the knowledge of likely voluntary or civil society 'satellite' movement in to provide protection and additional non-state funded services. This could be seen as both or either a more liberal policy in practice, in which the deterrent aspects of this policy were knowingly (but quietly) to be softened by humanitarian rather than profit motivated agencies involved, or as the state cutting back (in line with its broader welfare retrenchment), on its responsibility for welfare, and devolving the 'dirty work' of this particularly punitive policy, in a move that served several functions for the state, onto the Third Sector.

Overall, it can be concluded that this research and the highlighting of the contradictory positioning in practice in all its complexity, of VS organisations implementing specifically 'welfare as control' but potentially other Third Way policy and service delivery, demonstrates some of the problems with this approach to social policy. It might seem that co-opting the contributions of many different partners into a functionalist-type policy delivery 'machine' of many co-operating parts, would produce dynamic, creative and effective strategies and services utilising shared expertise and resources, and as several pieces of research have suggested, results like this *can* be at least the partial outcome of some Third Way welfare structures under certain conditions (Wilson, 2001; Zetter et al, forthcoming, cited in Robinson et al., 2003). However, this research also suggests that when the underlying policy agenda is fundamentally punitive and involves the restricting of social rights, and of deterrence and control, (which includes the 'gung-ho' rush to push through a practically unworkable policy and implementation structure), then this Third Way welfare design more sinisterly hides some of these elements and ties civil society into fulfilling *this* agenda, so strangling their resistance to it. It would seem that the Third Way agenda for social inclusion through encouraging active involvement and citizenship in taking responsibility for welfare, ties civil society up in this instance into an agenda of social exclusion, can leave the welfare of those in need of humanitarian protection in the hands of those with minimal resources who may also be socially excluded, and can have a compromising effect on those involved agencies and individuals within them attempting to increase service users welfare. This conclusion fits with Duvell and Jordan's (2002:514),

These policies have direct effects for public sector and NGO workers involved in provision for asylum seekers and refugees. Intentionally deterrent conditions require services to be well below standards deemed suitable for citizens, and restrictions on liberty go beyond those tolerable, even under the tough new regimes applied to indigenous claimants. Issues of professional ethics, as well as wider considerations of social justice in a global context, are at stake for those who will staff services for asylum seekers and refugees all over Europe.

This leads on to another possible contribution this research has made to a broader consideration of the issues it has raised.

10.6 Engaging with ethics

The highlighting of 'welfare as control' in this local setting may serve to illuminate some of the underlying power differentials (Ch 4.1.2), and encourage different ways of thinking about the issues and action to challenge injustices. Also, as O'Neill (2001) has argued, listening to the voices of people seeking asylum, and in this case also those others, the VS workers involved in and affected by 'welfare as control',

…encourages us to engage with ethics, with people similar to our 'selves', within a moral order based on thinking and feeling and compassion. Thus, precluding the possibility of objectifying, classifying and categorising as faceless, nameless and less than our 'selves', and may inspire praxis instead of adopting a 'bystander' role, (O' Neill, 2001:18).

I have attempted, as far as is possible as an 'inside outsider' (Hammersley and Atkinson, (1995) not doing participative research, to understand the 'points of view' (Bourdieu, 1999) and take up 'standpoints' (Smith, 2005) alongside these 'expert knowers' in their everyday worlds, and to see it or re-present it as they have, to an extent. I have aimed not to 'obliterate' "*the presence of subjects as knowers situated in their own lives,"* (Smith, 2005:36), and to recognise them as experts in their life 'fields', despite having used an interpretive framework to understand their positions and everyday worlds as part of a wider ('extended,' Burawoy, 2000) social 'field.' Listening to the voices of these expert knowers, these people similar to our 'selves', might encourage engagement with ethics

'based on thinking and feeling and compassion', enabling identification with them in the situations they are in, which might, in turn, encourage 'praxis' of some kinds. Also, in itself, the re-presenting of these usually hidden voices attempts to re-dress some power imbalances (if in a small way), to the effects of the dominant, powerful discourses found particularly in the media.

As well as encouraging an engagement with ethics by listening to the voices of people seeking asylum, this research has participated in engaging with the complex and difficult ethical dilemmas it has raised, evident in the contradictions and competing interests, for instance, of the particularist national interest sovereignty and the universalist recognition of global human rights, of the exclusionary and inclusionary aspects of citizenship and the further complexities of recent civic stratification. This research has highlighted the ethical dilemmas governments, politicians and policy writers grapple with when devising policies. It has particularly highlighted the dilemmas of potential organisations then faced with dilemmas over their involvement with such policies and how to manage the subsequent contradictions in their roles, to balance competing interests and to distribute their resources fairly, and also the individuals working within those over their most ethical courses of daily and longer-term action. People seeking asylum also face ethical and practical dilemmas over how to present themselves, how to best protect their families, whether to be assertive or meek in ascertaining their rights, who to trust, how to negotiate with the bureaucracies and systems that treat them as guilty until proved innocent, for instance. In focussing on these contradictions that involve engaging with ethics for the subjects of study, this research (and this researcher) has engaged and attempted to grapple with these ethical dilemmas itself and so aims to encourage further engagement with the ethics of the field, in academic research and study, by those directly involved with it, and especially those with the power to change it. It is hoped that, at least, by firmly highlighting (though in all its complexity) that social policy for asylum seekers *is* and how it is Welfare as Control, this research might encourage more thought and engagement with the issues it has raised, and attempts to find more ethical and just solutions to dilemmas around receiving asylum seekers, than the ones described here.

By illuminating the everyday difficulties of those experiencing these policies as welfare providers and receivers and the complexity of the policies in practice, as well as the underlying and broader influences conditioning 'welfare as control', this research has

raised more questions that could be addressed by those who *are* experts in the field, and by doing further research. Academic research of this sort has a particular place, and as stated earlier, the research is not intended to be an evaluation of policy, accepting problematic definitions of policy makers, that gives a series of recommendations designed to solve a particular policy problem (Castles, 2003). However it seems important, having drawn some broader conclusions from the research, to return to the questions raised by Cohen (2002), Duvell and Jordan (2000), and Lipsky (1980) and attempt to answer these again. It also seems important, in light of the research as a whole, to suggest some possible ways forward.

10.7 Moving on – thinking forward

The biggest ethical dilemma raised and explored in this research is that facing the Voluntary (and Third) Sector (although it is also relevant to public sector agencies and workers) over the type and level of their involvement in the face of Third Way policy agendas, but particularly this Government's agenda to modify a system of welfare into a system of immigration control. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, internal immigration controls infiltrate *many* aspects of welfare delivery, and not just that designed for people seeking asylum, and therefore agencies and individuals may be potentially compromised in their long term and daily work and will need to reflect ethically on their involvement. To return to the question at the end of Chapter 9, in the light of all the evidence and exploration of the issues this research has given, should RAP (and the other organisations like it) have agreed to co-operate with the Government to operate and maintain their Reception Assistant Service? Was this 'too low,' as Duvell and Jordan (2000) have put it? It is still immensely difficult to pass judgement on this question. As this research has shown, this is an extremely complex area and the ethical dilemmas multiple. It is still not clear what might have happened if these VS organisations had refused to co-operate. As we have seen, there is some evidence that their resistance *might* have forced a positive change in restoring asylum seekers rights. However, without a sea change in political and public attitudes towards asylum migration, therefore little perceived public support for this at the time, this seems an unlikely outcome. What is more a failure of the policy might have caused a right-wing media backlash and therefore the Government seeking a

more authoritarian solution, than even the fears of the VS that private sector organisations would have been used in its place.

It can be argued, just on the basis of the known suffering and hardships the Welfare as Control system *did* cause individuals and families (some of which this research bears witness to), that VS and welfare agencies should not have had any involvement in perpetuating and so legitimising this policy (as was Cohen's, 2002, position). However, although the position of an organisation such as RAP was obviously compromising, to assess just *how* compromising it was would need consideration of the wider consequences of the system as a whole. For instance, it is not clear what the long-term outcomes of this particular dispersal policy might be for people who go through it, although past research would suggest that 'anormalising' and withholding the right and the facilities to integrate early on, contributes to later marginalisation if asylum seekers are granted refuge. There seems to be mixed evidence over the relative harms versus benefits (Robinson, et al., 2003) being dispersed and living on minimal subsistence might cause, in the long term. There is also mixed evidence over just how safe or unsafe the safety-net was, even when patchily reinforced by the best efforts of civil society. My research alone shows that some fell through the gaps, and it seems these were more likely to be the most vulnerable and those the Government might have considered the most 'genuine' and had stated the safety-net was designed to catch. Further and wider afield, the evidence suggests the safety-net seemed very variable and dependent on the lottery of where a person might end up in it, and whether its civil society reinforcers had the resources, and the autonomy and space from central Government to fill the gaps.

In a sense, the most I can hope to have done in this research is to have highlighted some of these complexities and problems by having explored, from a new angle, previously unexplored lived experiences of them. I am not an expert asylum seeker, VS or welfare practitioner, nor writer of policy nor politician and it is inevitable that each of these experts from their positions and with their expertise would find gaps and provisos and wish to raise new questions and arguments in answer to this research. Each of these experts is also likely to be in a better position, with their expertise, to devise some creative and workable solutions to some of the problems raised. However, I suggest that it is important that research which attempts to be "*publicly useful*" in the way Castles (2003) has laid out, is considered and may change ideas of what exactly the *problems* are,

when experts in the field attempt to find more longer term, and also more *just* solutions. Having said this, I will make some suggestions from *my* position as a student sociologist and student ethnographic researcher, on the basis that I have aimed in this research to be reflexive and transparent about my position and interpretive frame and have aimed to produce *more* rather than *less* truthlike knowledge, (Danermark et al., 1997).

To return to Cohen's (2002) charge. Should VS organisations such as RAP have refused to go 'in' with the Government's policy? I would suggest that VS agencies like RAP had good intentions but were naïve (and arguably for good reasons) in deciding to enter into Grant Agreement with NASS. I would argue that perhaps RAP and the other VS organisations could have joined forces and together have held out for longer to try to *at least* slow the policy down (if they were unable to collapse it, which they *may* have been able to do) and force proper preparation for such a massive operation to take place in a way that was able to *support* asylum seekers and *enhance* their welfare more. As stated, it seemed *obvious* that the *way* it had been planned and rushed into action in political haste strongly indicated the likely problems the system did encounter (and its policy objects would therefore suffer from), as the Government's own Audit Commission (2000) had warned. However, this ignores the explicit intent of the policy as a mechanism of immigration control, which was the main focus of the charge Cohen (2002) brought against such organisations' 'collusion' with the 1999 IAA. He argued that the 'support' provisions of the Act were "*directly antagonistic*" to asylum seekers' interests (ibid:142). If this premise is accepted, as raised earlier, surely it *does* make an ethical difference whether organisations operated the system from within, enforcing its deterrent aspects (such as no-choice dispersal and minimal living standards), than if it operated from without, following an independent welfare agenda but being constrained and curtailed in it by NASS (such as the MF). However, as we have seen, in such circumstances RAP was unlikely to have been able to continue in its existence as Refugee Arrivals Project and its many workers (many of whom were refugees) may have lost their jobs. Therefore a strong partnership with broader-based VS agencies might have been able to carry them into finding a new role. These are tentative speculations. What seems more certain, taking this research as a whole, is that the VS and civil society needs to become much more alert to and aware of the potential dangers of 'partnership' with the state.

My research would suggest that organisations such as RAP and the other RSAs, and indeed the Voluntary Sector, and looser elements of civil society generally, need to take a longer view, become less naïve, more ethically reflective and politically astute, mobilised and aware of the potential problems they may face when participating in Third Way welfare. This seems necessary in order for them to assess their ethical positions and generate the resources, where necessary, to resist government agendas that may be extremely compromising to their values, integrity and most importantly, their ability to protect their clients' rights. As the organisation of welfare generally becomes more designed around Third Way governance, these issues are likely to become more rather than less salient, suggesting that the 'Third Sector' will be under more pressure to operate 'within' the dispersed state. This necessitates their development of new methods of resistance to policies that are as double-edged, and potentially harmful to those whom they exist to protect as this one, and civil society will need to find new ways of building power to shape policy 'from below'. It seems that this Third Way, and 'active citizenship' inclusiveness can mask hidden and very powerful underlying central Government agendas which *may*, (but also, it has to be said, may *not* as Cohen, 2002, assumes in terming the Government, 'the devil') be antagonistic to their policy objects' interests, and suggests that extra vigilance and awareness is necessary. Statham's (2005) research suggests that there is some hope in that although British governments dominate and shape public discourse on asylum, which comes more from the top-down than in response to public pressure, it is *pro*-asylum civil society actors which are organised and dominate civil society political action in the field:

> *Counter to the 'racist public' thesis, our findings show that to the extent that they get involved, civil society actors do so with a pro-migrant stance. The main challenge to the British state's anti-migrant stance comes form specific pro-migrant NGOs (16.7%…) and human rights and welfare NGO's (4.7%…). Taken together, these NGOs account for six tenths of all civil society demands (57.9%) and have a highly pro-migrant position,* (Statham, 2005:6).

Statham (2005:6) argues that on this basis, if a Government with a large electoral majority were to take "*a more pro-migrant stance on asylum politics, and emphasised Britain's obligations to asylum-seekers,*" they would not necessarily lose public support to those promoting anti-asylum sentiments. He suggests that if a Government were to

change its stance in this way, civil society groups may be in a better position in taking financial and legitimising support from Government to create "*a buffer zone against any potential xenophobic political entrepreneurs. To achieve such a situation, the government could remain publicly quieter on asylum, and try to manage the objective problems away from the public domain*" (ibid: 6). However, Statham (2005) concludes that the Government's restrictive stance seems unlikely to change soon.

This leads on to questioning the initial policy agenda of New Labour (and previous Conservative governments, governments across Europe, and the EU). It has been well established and verified in research, that people migrating to claim asylum overwhelmingly do *not* base their decisions about which country to migrate to (if they make a decision), on the relative welfare provisions they might find there (Audit Commission, 2000; Robinson and Segrott, 2002; Robinson et al., 2003). Robinson et al., (2003:127) found that few asylum seekers had much prior knowledge of their entitlements to UK benefits, fewer still knew how these compared to other countries, most expected to have to fend for themselves, earn their own living and find their own accommodation, and none interviewed in late 2000 to early 2001 knew about the UK's dispersal system. It seems that this premise for the policy was based more on, as Geddes (2000:167) put it, the potent "*myth*" of "*the immigrant welfare scrounger.*" Just based on the evidence from the numbers, it is clear that cutting welfare benefits to asylum seekers has a very limited deterrent effect. After the 1996 AIA, there was only a very transient change in the numbers of people coming to the UK, and 60% of people continued to make in-country claims despite being offered no welfare assistance, (Audit Commission, 2000). After the 1999 IAA, the numbers of asylum seekers arriving at UK ports and claiming overall, increased dramatically to peak in 2002-2003 (the year of my research), from when they have steadily begun to fall. The reasons for this fall are likely to be multiple and complex, but the evidence suggests they are unlikely to include the deterrent effect of Welfare as Control.

As well as being based on one false premise, Robinson et al. (2003) suggest another of the Government's motivations for introducing the dispersal system, that of 'burden sharing' by supposedly spreading the cost of asylum seekers to local infrastructures (with the 1999 IAA in the UK this was away from London and the South East), is also of dubious efficacy. He argues that the dispersal system as it stands in Britain is based-on

very short-term, non-evidence based decision making over areas chosen, is assimiliationist in intentions and is inherently more expensive *overall* than allowing asylum seekers to 'cluster' in places of their choosing. Allowing people to choose where they lived from a carefully chosen selection of places *known* to have the resources and support systems conducive to their needs, would not only be more ethical but *more* practical for the Government. Leading geographer in the field and researcher for the Home Office, Robinson (2003:171) argues that the concept of 'spreading the burden' of asylum seekers is based more on media-stimulated moral panics, that seek to "*protect the purity of national and local space,*" than on evidence-based policies which suggest dispersal 'works' well for either local populations or asylum seekers.

Both of these seemingly dubious premises for introducing the Welfare as Control dispersal system uncover what seem the overwhelmingly political motivations based on misconceptions and misperceptions of asylum seeking (and other) migration as a problem and crisis, as a threat and "*mass invasion*" (Sassen, 1999:2). Ultimately, it seems that these misperceptions must be changed, and policies based on better understandings of the global dynamics of forced migration, of global responsibilities and so emphasising welfare rather than control.

Other than an overthrow of the entire system of Control oriented Welfare in the particular shape of dispersal, my research suggests some possible improvements to current arrangements. The denial of autonomy to people in Reception over their everyday lives and in choice over their dispersals was found to cause distress and curtail human dignity and is criticised by others, including Robinson et al. (2003:154) who argue,

> *…the policy disempowers the asylum seeker and removes a basic human right. Despite obvious practical difficulties, there is a strong ethical argument that all dispersal policies should incorporate an element of informed choice and there are powerful **and** practical reasons for allowing asylum seekers some choice over their own destiny.*

The practical reasons Robinson et al. (2003) refer to here include the fact that people who have been denied all choice, and forced to live in a region they are unhappy or isolated in, have migrated again (secondary migration) back to cities where they have connections or

feel more comfortable. This was wide-scale in past dispersal programmes, and has occurred to a lesser extent since the 1999 IAA (although Griffiths et al. [2005:210] point out in the context of their research on developing refugee communities and RCOs that there have also been significant numbers of people who have stayed in dispersal regions following a positive decision on their claim).

Again my research fits with Robinson et al.'s (2003) in that it highlights the need for much more and much better information *for* asylum seekers and *about* asylum seekers. In the former case, people need information about dispersal regions and much greater clarity about their rights and entitlements, and in the latter case, information sharing between agencies based on thorough needs assessments is needed in order that they may properly prepare and be resourced to address the specific needs of people dispersed. The evidence suggests that a short Reception period to assess newly arrived asylum seekers' needs and provide an orientation and more assisted period was beneficial, and as RAP (2002) documentation stated a quality service at Reception could, "*enhance people's ability to survive*". However, as found at RAP, this would involve radical systemic change to ensure that the Reception period *was* short and of *quality*, rather than months long, designed as deterrence and under-resourced. Reception should be based on evidence that listens to people who have experienced it and based on how it *has* enhanced their ability to survive and thrive in this or any country of refuge.

Ultimately this research points to a need for radical change of thinking about Forced Migration and migration in general. It would seem that policies such as this 1999 IAA Welfare as Control, are grounded in false premises based on false theories and understandings of migrations and are heavily motivated politically to appease the perceived electorate's misperceptions of asylum seeking. To refer back to Chapter 2.6, Government's, such as Britain's, have allowed a particularist agenda to dominate any universalist solution. There has been a perceptible change in the UK Government's (and also variably among EU member states) attitude to and moderated promotion of specific economic migration, particularly since the 2002 NIAA, which introduced 'Managed Migration' (Duvell and Jordan, 2002; Griffiths et al., 2005). This does not seem to have spread to asylum seeking, although the shrinking numbers of arrivals deflate the perceived political need, and, as Duvell and Jordan (2002) point out, the former attitude is motivated by economic and labour market priorities, whereas approaches to the latter

are based around the 'modernisation' of welfare states and continued restriction, as well. In the UK, there has also been some change in approach to those granted refugee status since the 2002 NIAA and the 'Integration Matters' agenda introduced in 2004 (Griffiths et al., 2005). However, asylum seekers are still very much separated in terms of social rights and attitudes towards them, and still considered 'guilty' until proved innocent. There are more people being detained, including more children, and there is a greater emphasis on reaching targets for forced removals. Asylum seekers within the NASS system are taking increasing responsibility (such as sharing their accommodation) for a growing strata of forced migrants who have not been granted leave to remain, but for many reasons cannot or choose not to return. When comparing themselves to these migrants with *no* social rights to meet even their most basic needs, those within the NASS system are counting themselves lucky, (Dwyer and Brown, 2005).

I argue that it is an *ethical duty* of the Government to take responsibility for properly informing and educating the electorate on the facts and realities around asylum seeking, such as the reasons and causes why people migrate, ensuring that it is understood that asylum seekers are exercising their legal and human rights to seek asylum. Considering the New Labour Government's adeptness at media 'spin' and manipulation, positive media campaigns around asylum issues (which every piece of research into asylum policy stresses is essential to ensure just treatment of asylum seekers and understanding among local populations to ease two-way integration), should be *more* than possible. Welfare policy should be considered as a means to enhance people's protection rather than control their migration. This of course includes stressing the benefits asylum seekers bring to a country, a society and a locality (which *are* publicised to some extent for people granted refugee status). Although what a person can contribute is not just economic, as Moorehead (2006:289) has pointed out, a more ethical stance includes acceptance that not all people will contribute to the economy,

> *It has to be accepted that not all asylum-seekers will ever contribute anything to the West's economy: some will be too frail, too damaged, too inflexible to achieve a productive life. But to rail at that is to misunderstand the nature of asylum, because asylum in the end is not only about responsibility and interdependence but about morality; in an age of globalisation, it is simply not*

possible to ignore the world's dispossessed. How a state deals with its refugees should be a measure of its social and political health.

This last statement echoes with that made by Rabbi Hugo Gryn, quoted in the introduction. It is time to reinstate the 'innocence' of the asylum seeker. Robinson (2003) talks of this as re-legitimising asylum seeking.

I also argue that the ethics of how nations should respond to the migrations of people seeking their asylum is the responsibility of all citizens (and inhabitants), not just their governments, and in a globalising world, national citizens need to look beyond national boundaries at their global responsibilities for solutions to the type of ethical dilemmas this research raises. This points towards encouraging and nurturing global citizenship, which would involve promoting understanding of the types of interconnectedness of nation-states, of processes of globalisation, including as Sassen (1998:xxxi) argued, that "*major immigration countries are not passive bystanders in their immigration histories.*" (As could be directly witnessed on the ground at RAP in the effects the British Government's policies to prevent the forced migration of Zimbabweans, and historical relations with that country, had on the individuals seeking asylum and RAP workers attempting to receive them). But also, moving towards building global citizenship would involve efforts to dissolve borders of responsibility (and rights), and towards developing new concepts of global belonging. Sassen (1999:6) suggests one new way of understanding migrations in this era of globalisation,

> *…I call immigrants and refugees 'today's settlers' to indicate that old concepts of belonging do not fit present realities. Migrations are acts of settlement and habitation in a world where the divide between origin and destination is no longer a divide of Otherness, a world in which borders no longer separate human realities.*

Developing global citizenship should involve education and would encourage action at a local level to develop creative and positive responses and interaction *with* people who are forced migrants, but also encourage ownership and responsibility towards finding solutions to the immense global inequities and processes which have caused people to try to find exile. There are many efforts to begin such a program and to suggest conceptual,

philosophical and practical ways forward, which could be tapped into and developed. Castles and Davidson (2000:209) suggest multi-cultural citizenship within nation-states has been a move in this direction, but should be considered just a "*stop-gap,*" and supra-regional (such as European) citizenship, which is also necessarily multi-cultural, encourages more than just national notions of belonging. They also discuss UN projects for global citizenship, the importance of new global civic values and civic education, but suggest that there is much work to be done,

> *…despite the thinness of global citizenship… some set of values greater than those demanded of a nation-state citizen is clearly required. The major problems of the twenty-first century – migration, pollution, crime, global epidemics – will be uncontrollable within nation-states. These are issues that cannot be coped with by a Periclean citizen ready to defend his or her national patrimony, even if it is democracy or human rights. The warrior-citizen is not enough if it means no more than a defence of what is ours against the Other.*

Castles and Davidson (2000) stress the need for realism when working towards a global citizenship, that huge structural changes would also need to occur.

Lister (1997:57) also discusses and gives suggestions for developing a global citizenship, which embraces feminism, especially ideas of a multi-layered citizenship, "*operating on several frontiers from the local to the global, in which people can express multiple and overlapping identities.*" Such a global citizenship should stress the inclusionary rather than exclusionary side of the citizenship 'coin', and should be underpinned by notions of rights and responsibilities. This should include a project towards distributive justice and a more equitable sharing of global resources, and Lister (1997:58) quotes Doyal and Gough (1991:294) who argue that those living in the developed world, as beneficiaries of the world order, have "*a duty to participate in some way in organisations with feasible strategies for challenging those world politico-economic structures which deny millions their most basic needs.*"

Lister (1997) argues that the concept of a multi-layered global citizenship could free citizenship from the nation-state but also recognise its continuing power

…to delineate and control the boundaries of exclusion. Such boundaries will always operate to some extent in a world of scarcity… The challenge then is how to use international human rights law and the development of an infrastructure of global citizenship to substitute a more just 'order of inclusions and exclusions', in the name of global citizenship rights and responsibilities, (Lister, 1997:63)

The principles Lister (1997:64) promotes towards such a global citizenship, she suggests should be regulated by international powers able to ensure nation-states are held to account on them and govern admission and membership at a national level. Although international human rights laws (including of course the Geneva Convention) already exert pressure on nation-states from above, the regulation and enforcement of these would need to improve significantly, Lister suggests, as well as their being added to. The principles Lister suggests are, *"non-discrimination… observance of basic human rights …autonomous legal status… internationalism… transculturalism… democracy,"* all of which, she argues are important for an ethical response to refugees and asylum seekers. She suggests (as have others) an important role for global civil society in developing and demanding greater and better global citizenship. Which brings us back to this research. This ethnography revealing a complex and contentious setting where human individuals were at the heart of and experienced the global, national and local contradictions and social relations implicit within it, gives no easy answers. However, answers must be sought and this research suggests the important role each of us and each civic organisation has in the development of a better world for all, the necessity to engage with ethics and work out real, practical solutions, and to fight for change.

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Appendix: Diagram showing organisational structure of Refugee Arrivals Project (Courtesy of Refugee Arrivals Project)

RAP Organisational Chart October 2002-NASS Funded Posts