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# Examining Political Parties' Record on Refugees and Asylum Seekers in UK Party Manifestos

## 1964-2019: The Rise of Territorial Approaches to Welfare?

Paul Chaney

### Abstract

This study addresses a key lacuna by analysing political parties' formative policy record on refugees' and asylum seekers' welfare in party manifestos for state-wide and meso-elections in the UK, 1964-2019. The findings confirm relational contrasts in issue-prioritization and the framing of pledges – between parties and across polities. The wider significance of this lies in underlining the need to examine the formative, electoral phase of refugee and asylum-seeker policy-making; and showing how the move to a multi-level electoral system combines with regional party politics to drive the territorialisation of RAS welfare in federal and union states.

**Key Words:** Refugees and Asylum seekers' Policy, Elections, Manifestos, Welfare, Party Politicisation, Territorialisation

### Introduction

This study analyses political parties' formative policy record on refugees and asylum seekers (RAS) in party manifestos for post-1964 Westminster, and post-1998 Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish elections. It thus addresses a key lacuna, for hitherto there has not been systematic analysis of parties' records on RAS in UK electoral politics. Such oversight is, perhaps, surprising given that asylum and migration are reported amongst the top policy issues concerning voters.<sup>1</sup> Not only are they at the heart of party competition but they also shape

voter trust,<sup>2</sup> and were a prominent issue in the 2016 Brexit referendum.<sup>3</sup> Despite accounting for just 6 per cent of immigrants to the UK in 2018 (House of Commons, 2020, p.3), asylum seekers have long been subject to negative portrayal in parts of the popular media (Taylor, 2014; Gabrielatos and Baker, 2008); notably, with a moral panic in the early 2000s over so-called 'bogus asylum seekers' (Welch and Schuster, 2005). In definitional terms the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees defines a refugee as a person who is outside her or his country of nationality owing to a well-founded fear of persecution and who is unwilling to return to that country.<sup>4</sup> Whilst an asylum seeker is someone whose request for sanctuary has yet to be processed (UNHCR, 2020).<sup>5</sup> From an international perspective focusing on refugees and asylum seeker policy in party election programmes is appropriate because it is one of the foremost policy challenges of the age. Current data reveal that globally there are 25.9 million refugees and 3.5 million asylum seekers (UNHCR, 2020).<sup>6</sup> In the UK, there were 35,566 asylum applications in 2019, with the country ranked 6<sup>th</sup> amongst EU28 countries.<sup>7</sup> In terms of the contemporary policy response, a recent report by the UNHCR points to the need to examine parties' record on the issue. It concluded that 'the UK can and is capable of doing more'.<sup>8</sup>

The present study makes a further original contribution by exploring the development of refugees and asylum seekers policy in the wake of constitutional reform in 1998/9 and (re-)creation of Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish legislatures. This has international relevance, for over recent decades there has been a global trend of state restructuring and government decentralisation. It is a phenomenon evident in both (quasi-)federal and union states. As Rodriguez-Pose and Gill (2003, p.334) observe, a 'devolutionary trend has swept the world [... involving widespread] transference of power, authority, and resources to subnational levels of government'. As Dandoy and Schakeln (2014, 14) explain, 'in the post-war era one of the most

significant transformations in the democratic process throughout Western Europe has been the widespread introduction of regional elections'. Notwithstanding this re-spatialization of policy-making, extant studies of RAS tend to offer state-wide perspectives (e.g. Sitaropoulos, 2002). The constitutional reality is that legal and policy responsibilities are shared between the UK, Scottish and Welsh Parliaments – and Northern Ireland Assembly. The UK government is responsible for immigration policy including refugees and asylum seekers; whilst key aspects of policy affecting RAS are devolved to the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments – including, social services, health, housing, aspects of social security, and education.

In summary, the core research aim of this study is to explore the principal characteristics of formative policy-making on refugees and asylum seekers as set out in party manifestos. To do this we address the following research questions:

1. In state-wide elections, how can socio-historically contextualised analysis of parties' pledges inform understanding of the evolving nature of party competition over time?
2. In the wake of devolution in the UK to what extent are distinctive RAS policies emerging in the polities of the UK?

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: first, the research context and study methodology is outlined. In the following sections the research questions are addressed. The article concludes with a discussion of the principal findings and their implications.

## **Research Context**

As noted, RAS policy is a topic that has often been overlooked in the social and political science literature on electoral politics. The limited work that exists has centred on: media

representation (Khosravinik, 2009); manifesto framing and the electoral fortunes of governing parties (Dostal 2017); election campaigning and public attitudes (Flores, 2018); and party ideology and positioning on the subject (Odmalm, 2012). Crucially, extant studies have traditionally placed emphasis on policy implementation and evaluation (e.g. Thomas, 2006). This presents a key lacuna, for, as a range of policy models suggest (Lindblom, 1959; Wildavsky, 1964; Kingdon, 1995, True et al, 2006), the formative phase of policy-making is of equal importance to, and an integral part of, subsequent implementation. It is central to a holistic understanding of public policy and encompasses the crucial point when policy proposals are advanced in elections, political debates and parliamentary procedures. Such a focus aligns with the extensive scholarship associated with manifesto studies and electoral politics (Kavanagh, 1991; Volkens, 2004; Proksch et al, 2011; Dandoy and Schakeln, 2014; Merz et al, 2016). In turn, this furthers understanding of agenda-setting (Cobb and Ross, 1997), issue-definition (Stone, 1997) and framing (Goffman 1974). Examination of these formative processes locates refugees and asylum seekers policy-making in the formal representational structures and processes of contemporary democracies and the dynamic relationship between political actors, ideologies, civil society and government (Cobb and Elder, 1983, pp.103-108).

With regard to the present research context, government statistics reveal that there were 35,099 asylum applications (main applicants only) in the UK in the year ending March 2020 (+11 percentage points over the previous year). In same period, 54 per cent of initial decisions on asylum applications were grants of asylum, humanitarian protection or alternative forms of leave; the highest percentage on record. Thus, the UK offered protection to 20,339 people in the year ending March 2020, (+17 percentage points over the previous year and similar to levels seen in 2003) (Home Office, 2020).<sup>9</sup>

Domestic UK law on admitting refugees and assessing asylum cases (at present a reserved, or non-devolved matter) is shaped by the need to be compliant with the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees,<sup>10</sup> the European Convention on Human Rights<sup>11</sup> and the Common European Asylum System.<sup>12</sup> The latter has been subsequently refined by the incremental evolution of the Dublin Convention<sup>13</sup> on determining the state responsible for examining applications for asylum lodged in EU member states.<sup>14</sup> People seeking asylum are subject to the criteria stemming from the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.<sup>15</sup> *Inter alia*, for an applicant to attain refugee status they must fear persecution in their home country.<sup>16</sup> If granted asylum they are recognised as a refugee under the 1951 Convention and are allowed to remain in the UK for five years ('limited leave'). Subsequently, subject to the outcome of any review, they will be eligible to seek indefinite leave to remain'.<sup>17</sup>

Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 applicants are subject to the government's dispersal policy and can be given accommodation in any part of the UK pending assessment of their claim. As Hynes (2011, p.187) notes this process has, 'added an extra layer of liminality to the already difficult asylum process that asylum seekers negotiated. At each stage of the system [there is] a lack of control over the process, a lack of space for the restoration of different forms of trust and the inability to assume new identities other than that of asylum seeker'. Reform of the RAS system is promised by the Conservative administration elected in 2019 with a Global Resettlement Scheme aiming to resettle approximately 5,000 refugees in its first year of operation. According to its proponents, it 'will be simpler to operate and provide greater consistency in the way that the UK government resettles refugees. It will broaden the geographical focus beyond the Middle East and North Africa' (Wilkins/ HoC, 2020, p.25). It remains to be seen whether this will address the systemic failings identified in relation to the present system (Hynes, 2011).

In terms of the UK's 'devolved' nations, since September 2015, 3,569 asylum seekers have been 'dispersed' to Scotland, 1,411 to Wales and 1,816 to Northern Ireland (Home Office, 2020).<sup>18</sup> We have an incomplete picture of the geography of refugee settlement. Since 2015, 13,818 refugees have arrived in the UK. Of those, 2,562, or 18.5 per cent, have settled in Scotland.<sup>19</sup> Whilst an earlier Welsh Government policy briefing stated that there were 'approximately 10,000 refugees living in Wales' (WAG, 2005, p.7). Following an offer from the Northern Ireland Executive to receive groups of Syrian refugees on a phased basis from early 2016, 1,726 have settled in the province (Northern Ireland Executive, 2019, p.3). As noted, the regulation of immigration and asylum is the exclusive responsibility of the Westminster government, yet devolution has largely transformed the pre-1998 situation when policy was solely based on UK state-wide elections (Bloch 2000). Today, key aspects of policy affecting RAS are devolved matters for the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland governments – including: social services, health, housing, (aspects of) social security and taxation, education, training, arts, culture, sport and leisure, economic development, equality of opportunity and human rights (in devolved areas). Three of the four governments in the UK have published strategies on refugees and asylum seekers (these are given further consideration in 'Territorial Welfare Narratives' – below).

## **Methodology**

Manifestos are an appropriate data-source because they are the principal political texts that reflect a party's priorities and issue positions thereby allowing systematic analysis over time. In terms of periodisation, the principal analysis in this study covers the period since devolution

in 1998/9. However, in order to provide a contextualised account we also examine the emergence of RAS policy as an electoral issue from the first reference to refugees and/ or asylum seekers in post-war Westminster election manifestos in 1964. Accordingly, electronic versions of the manifestos of the leading<sup>20</sup> parties in all 'devolved' and state-wide (Westminster) elections from 1964-present were analysed using appropriate software.<sup>21</sup> This amounted to five electoral cycles in the case of Scotland and Wales, six in Northern Ireland and sixteen in the case of Westminster.

The coding of the manifesto discourse was operationalised by using content analysis in order to examine 'issue-salience' and party politicization. This revealed the incidence, and thus, parties' level of attention to – and thus prioritization of, different refugees and asylum seekers policy issues in the manifesto corpus. References to refugees and asylum seekers policy were divided into 'quasi-sentences' (or, 'an argument which is the verbal expression of one political term, idea or issue' (RePass, 1971; Volkens, 2001, p.96). Splitting sentences in this way controlled for long sentences that contained multiple policy proposals.

Based on the classic work of Goffman (1974, p.27), framing is a 'schemata of interpretation'. As noted, it analyses the language used by policy actors and informs us about the intrinsic meanings in the text – as well as actors' critical thinking in relation to policy ideas and social welfare. Effectively, it humanises quantification of attention to policy issues in the corpus by revealing the meanings associated with the discourse. A hypothetico-deductive – or grounded theory approach was used in coding the quasi-sentences. To increase rigour, this combined inductive and deductive coding techniques (Fereday and Muir Cochrane, 2006). Specifically, the initial (formative) policy codes derived from a close, initial reading of the manifesto texts were applied to the data. During the course of the second-stage of coding,



additional types of refugees and asylum seekers issues emerged from the data and were added to the framework.

In methodological terms, a further consideration that had to be addressed was the best way to measure the changing issue-salience of refugees and asylum seekers over time. Here it should be noted that, as a broad generalisation, over the post-war period manifestos' word length has increased as party programmes have become more comprehensive (Dale, 2000). Yet, as the corpus of manifesto studies confirms, issues such as refugees and asylum seekers do not inevitably gain more pledges over time as a result of the overall expansion of the topics covered in party programmes. Instead, the number of quasi-sentences on different issues is variable, rising and falling over election cycles. Crucially, whilst the long-term trend may be one of increasing length, empirical analysis shows the trend to be inconstant (with manifesto word-length decreasing as well as increasing) over electoral cycles. The elections studied here are no exception.<sup>22</sup> For this reason, this study follows the approach used by a broad raft of electoral studies and analyses the absolute number of refugee and asylum seeker manifesto pledges.<sup>23</sup>

A further methodological issue relates to the asymmetrical nature of devolution in the UK and the status of party manifestos issued in relation to Westminster elections. For the purposes of the present comparative analysis since 1998, on devolved matters Westminster manifestos can be regarded as relating to policy covering England. This is explicitly stated in the manifesto texts. For example, 'we will deliver the... *Strategy for England* in full by 2020' (Conservative Party, 2017, p.48) and, 'This manifesto deals both with Labour's policies which apply across the United Kingdom and, where responsibilities have been devolved, it also sets out our policies *for England*' (Labour Party, 2019, p.8). The key exception to the foregoing is responsibility for applications for asylum and the granting of nationality. As noted, for the

present, these matters are reserved to the UK government. The following analysis takes these distinctions into account.

## Findings

*1. In state-wide elections, how can socio-historically contextualised analysis of parties' pledges inform understanding of the evolving nature of party competition over time?*

We address this question by first examining parties' records on RAS policy in their Westminster manifestos. Specifically, we explore the relational nature of party competition with reference to the level of attention paid to different topics and the way they are framed in party programmes. This is followed by qualitative examination of party competition on the substantive topics that make up RAS policy, noting the shifting nature of competition over time. The latter is contextualised with reference to extant research on RAS.

[Temporary Note – Table 1 – about here]

### *The relational nature of party competition*

Overall, when parties' records in Westminster elections are compared in terms of the level of attention (number of quasi-sentences) they give to RAS policy in their manifestos during the past two decades, the Liberal Democrats predominate, making over a third of pledges (34.5

per cent); followed by the Conservatives (23.3 per cent), UKIP (23.1 per cent), and Labour (20.1 per cent). When parties' top four RAS issues (defined by total number of pledges) are compared there is a degree of concurrence. All agree over the first-ranked topic; namely, the (in)effectiveness of the prevailing system and the need for reform (Table 1). The removal of failed AS is the second-ranked issue for Labour and Conservatives. Beyond this there is divergence in the parties' issue prioritisation. Both the Conservatives and UKIP prioritise legal reforms and tighter regulation. Whereas the Liberal Democrats place emphasis on the rights of children RAS and Labour is concerned with reforming detention policy.

[Temporary Note – Figure 1 – about here]

Party politicization is a relational index of manifesto pledges (Converse and Dupeux, 1962). It refers to shared episodes of increased or decreased attention over electoral cycles resulting in similar party issue salience profiles as parties compete to attract the support of the issue public (Carter, 2006; Green-Pedersen, 2007). In order to test whether RAS policy is subject to party politicisation we employ the index used in earlier electoral studies (██████████).<sup>24</sup> The issue salience 'score' of RAS policy was calculated (using the total number of pledges per election) for each main party in state-wide elections 2001–2019. The scores of the parties in post-1998 state-wide elections were correlated over successive cycles. The closer to +1.0 (the correlation coefficient is always recorded as a number between +1.0 and -1.0), the stronger the positive linear relationship, thereby indicating a significant degree of party politicization (or, shared episodes of increased or decreased attention over electoral cycles resulting in similar party issue salience profiles – as parties compete to attract the support of voters). As Figure 1

reveals, there is a significant degree of party politicization across cycles; with a peak around the 'bogus asylum seekers' election of 2001.

Further insight into the relational nature of party pledges is provided by the following analysis of parties' framing of RAS pledges (Table 2).

[Temporary Note – Table 2 – about here]

Three-quarters of all RAS pledges framed in terms of RAS rights were made by Labour and the Liberal Democrats (e.g. 'Provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary in the UK by resettling 10,000 vulnerable refugees each year and a further 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children from elsewhere in Europe over the next ten years, and expanding family reunion rights', Liberal Democrats, 2019, p.11). The Left also predominated making almost three-quarters of pledges framed in terms of fairness (e.g. 'The key is to hear [AS] cases swiftly as well as fairly', Labour Party, 2001, p.33) and, two-thirds of pledges framed in terms of offering a sanctuary or haven to RAS (e.g. 'a safe haven for those fleeing persecution. Britain has a responsibility to welcome refugees fleeing wars and persecution around the world', Liberal Democrats, 2010, p.21).

In contrast, the parties of the Right predominate in framing pledges in terms of firmness (75 per cent of pledges) (e.g. 'Firm but fair immigration controls are essential for harmonious and improving community relations', Conservative Party, 1987, p.15), enforcement (86 per cent of pledge (e.g. 'These UKIP policies are firm but fair they replace existing policies the lax enforcement of which serve only to reward criminality and to punish the law-abiding, encouraging criminal gangs who prey on desperate people', UKIP, 2001, p.12), and control (82

per cent of pledges) (e.g. 'EU and human rights legislation means we cannot even expel foreign criminals if they come from another EU country. This is why immigration control is so essential and overdue. UKIP will... Regain control of UK borders', UKIP, 2010, p.14).

### *The shifting nature of party competition over time*

The present analysis reveals that first mention of RAS in Westminster manifestos comes in the 1960s in the context of refugees from ethnic persecution in Commonwealth countries like Uganda (Spencer, 1997; Consterdine, 2017). Thus for example, the Liberal Party states: 'On immigration and race problems Liberals will take the initiative in setting up a system of Commonwealth consultation towards an agreed policy for immigration, exclusion and expulsion and the rights of political asylum' (Liberal Party, 1964, p.11). This focus continues through the next two decades although during this time there is only limited reference to RAS in party programmes.

Inter-party competition of this period also comprised Left-Right differences on the impact of the 1971 Immigration Act which removed asylum rights for families of refugees who had settled in the UK prior to the Act's implementation. Thus, for example, the Liberal Party's manifesto notes: 'since 1965... we have supported a system of regulation... While opposing illegal entry we strongly oppose the retrospective provisions of the 1971 Immigration Act ... In the meantime husbands and children from Uganda should be allowed to join refugees who have settled here' (Liberal Party 1974 (February), p.9). In this discourse human rights are seen as integral to achieving a humane approach to RAS. For example, 'Labour will take account of human rights considerations when giving aid. Help will continue to be given to the victims of repressive regimes, including the provision of refugee programmes' (Labour Party, 1974

(October), p.8). Left-Right party politicisation centred on what the Left parties saw as the Conservative Party's deliberate conflation of immigration with RAS. For example, as 'Liberals [we] deplore the Tory policy of inflaming people's fears about unrestricted immigration when the numbers of immigrants are actually falling. We should, wherever practicable, accept *bona fide* refugees' (Liberal Party, 1979, p.12).

In the 1980s and 1990s the Left-Right relational politics continued to centre on the Left's framing of RAS policy in terms of rights, protection and compassion. Whilst for the Right, the Conservatives pledged firm regulation, swifter deportation and tackling so-called 'bogus asylum seekers'. For example, at this time Labour asserts: we will 'take action to protect the status of refugees in Britain... Our policy on refugees will be more compassionate than that of the Tory government. We will not deport individuals who would face arrest or death in their own countries' (Labour Party 1983, p.41). Whilst targeting so-called 'bogus asylum seekers the Conservative Party (1987, p.14) assert': 'We are tackling the problem of those who fraudulently pose as refugees and who seek to exploit Britain's long tradition of giving refuge to the victims of persecution'. In turn, the 1992 general election sees the Party propose revised regulation of immigration and asylum: 'In the new Parliament we must therefore reintroduce the Asylum Bill, opposed by Labour and the Liberal Democrats, to create a faster and more effective system of determining who are genuine political refugees, and who are not' (Conservative Party, 1992, p.11).

The Conservative's critical stance continues through the years when New Labour are in government (1997-2010). For example, they assert, 'This chaos encourages unfounded asylum claims. Britain has gained a reputation as a soft touch for bogus asylum seekers' (Conservative Party, 2001, p.21). The Tories' next manifesto reflects the growing influence of Euro-sceptics

in the party as well as the rise of the United Kingdom Independence Party (UKIP) (see below). It asserts 'we will take back powers from Brussels to ensure national control of asylum policy [... and] withdraw from the 1951 Geneva Convention' (Conservative Party, 2005, p.14). Subsequently, the Party reports to voters that, 'We have introduced a 'deport first, appeal later' rule for foreign national offenders' (Conservative Party, 2010, p.22). It later claims that, 'We will now extend [...] this rule to all immigration appeals and judicial reviews... We will also implement a new removals strategy to take away opportunities for spurious legal challenge and opportunities to abscond' (Conservative Party, 2015, p.19).

In the face of a moral panic over bogus asylum seekers and negative media coverage of delays and a backlog in processing asylum claims, in the 2001 and 2005 elections New Labour sought to emulate the restrictive stance of the Conservatives (Thomas, 2002; Kushner, 2003). For example, 'Asylum should not be an alternative route to immigration... Asylum seekers and their dependants whose claims are rejected will be removed from Britain with the aim of more than 30,000 in 2003-04' (Labour Party 2001, p.16); and we will 'Fast-track all unfounded asylum seekers with electronic tagging where necessary and more use of detention as we expand the number of detention places available. Remove more failed applicants. We have more than doubled the number of failed asylum seekers we remove from the UK compared to 1996' (Labour Party 2005, p.18). Yet after these ballots the party regained its traditional, more expansive stance on RAS policy. For example, 'We will end the indefinite detention of people in the asylum and immigration system, ending detention for pregnant women and those who have been the victims of sexual abuse or trafficking' (Labour Party, 2015, p.23).

The extant literature (Cf. O'Donnell, 2007) reveals a number of issues and barriers in relation to RAS accessing healthcare. The present analysis shows the parties to have been slow to address this with the Liberal Democrats (2019, p.17) finally pledging to, 'provide public health services, including maternity services, to people from the moment they arrive in the UK'. Earlier research (Cf. Darling 2016, p.483) on the UK government's dispersal policy highlighted the 'production of instability within asylum dispersal as an effect of austerity and privatization [... with] a narrative of political neglect, shrinking accountability and the slow recession of support services and expertise'. Again, it is the Liberal Democrats (2001, p. 21) who singularly pledge we 'will review the failing dispersal system'.

[Temporary Note – Figure 2 – about here]

The 2000s and 2010s see a major increase in the electoral salience of RAS policy (Figure 2) in Westminster elections. It should be noted that post-1993 the electoral competition of the three main Westminster Parties was supplemented by the advent of the Right-of-Centre UKIP (originally founded as the Anti-Federalist League in 1991). Its primary goal was to take the UK out of what became the European Union. This period sees an intensification of the Left-Right politicking over RAS policy. Right-of-centre parties increasingly blame the EU for perceived policy failings (Jennings 2009). More significantly, there is growing party political competition between the two main Right-of-Centre parties (Conservatives and UKIP) as they challenge (Labour Party) government policy. For example, 'the government allowed another two hundred thousand people into the country, plus several thousand asylum seekers, many of



whom are simply economic migrants living in our country illegally. This adds considerably to our problems, increasing our social tensions...' (UKIP, 2001, p.5).

This party politicisation of RAS policy between the two parties of the Right is fully exposed at the next election. For example, 'The Conservatives have promised to impose quotas on immigration. Given that Britain has accepted EU control over the treatment and assessment of asylum seekers, this is no more credible than their promise to ignore EU fishing policy' (UKIP, 2005, p.6). At this point UKIP presses for the end to EU influence on RAS policy in the UK – instead promising to, 'Set our own criteria for determining those deemed to be refugees. No refugee status [is] to be considered for asylum seekers who arrived via some other 'safe' country'. It goes on to promise, 'More rigour in deporting those who are refused the right to stay' (UKIP, 2005, p.11). The Party links these proposals to reform of human rights legislation – a traditional *bête noire* of some on the Right (Chaney, 2020). For example, 'Some of these measures will require amendments to our human rights law... and the reinterpretation of parts of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees. However, we believe that greater clarity about the criteria for refugee status, faster assessment and better enforcement will discourage people-trafficking and result in a system that is far more humane than at present'(UKIP, 2005, p.11).

Analysis also shows the UKIP RAS policy to be conflicted over election cycles. For example, having previously affirmed the need to reform the 1951 UN convention in its 2010 and 2015 manifestos, the Party's 2017 programme says 'Asylum Seekers: UKIP will comply fully with the 1951 UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and honour our obligations to *bona fide* asylum seekers' (UKIP, 2017, p.33). A further key finding is increasing attention to RAS policy in UKIP manifestos, peaking in the 2010 election. During this period, compared to

the other three parties, UKIP makes most pledges on RAS.<sup>25</sup> Subsequently, in striking fashion the level of attention to RAS in the party's manifesto diminishes as it seeks mainstream voter support. Consequently, extreme aspects of policy are downplayed in the face of charges of xenophobia. For example, the pledge at the end of the Asylum and Immigration section of the Party's 2005 manifesto of 'End[ing] the active promotion of the doctrine of multiculturalism by local and national government and all publicly funded bodies' is not repeated in later party programmes. Notably, there are only a handful of RAS pledges in the 2015 and 2017 UKIP manifestos and the words 'asylum' and 'refugee' do not appear in the party's 2019 manifesto.

Existing research (Burrige and Gill, 2017, p.23) has underlined precarity and failings in RAS' access to justice, with uneven geographies of legal aid across the UK. The present analysis shows how, over recent years this has emerged as a key manifesto topic with Left-of-centre parties highlighting policy failings (e.g. 'Too many people are wrongly denied asylum, with 40 per cent of refusals overturned on appeal', Liberal Democrats, 2019, p.22) and Right-of-centre parties promising a more restrictive approach (e.g. 'We have introduced a 'deport first, appeal later' rule... We will now remove even more illegal immigrants by extending this rule to all immigration appeals and judicial reviews', Conservative Party, 2010, p.18). Having explored the party dynamics of RAS policy in Westminster elections we now turn to explore RAS pledges in Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish elections.

[Temporary Note – Table 3 – about here]

## *2. In the wake of devolution in the UK to what extent are distinctive RAS policies emerging in the polities of the UK?*

To address this question we first compare the issue salience of RAS issues between polities and assess the evidence on the emergence of territorially distinct policies. This is followed by analysis of party statements in their socio-historical context in each devolved nation and consideration of the inter-party relational dynamic in the framing of RAS policy pledges. This section ends with a succinct summary of the emerging territorial welfare narratives in each nation.

### *The Territorialisation of RAS Welfare?*

A key finding is how devolved governance in the UK is characterised by divergence in the issue-salience of refugee and asylum seeker welfare between polities. As Table 3 reveals, there are key differences in the level of attention to different aspects of refugee and asylum seeker welfare. For example, most education pledges are made in Welsh elections (e.g. ‘we will improve integration of refugees, through continued support for ESOL provision or Welsh lessons, and encouraging schools with large numbers of children speaking English as a second language to host English lessons for parents’ (Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2016, p.17). Whilst, English (Westminster) elections give greatest attention to RAS housing needs. For example, ‘We will support radical solutions to the long term decline of coastal towns... and tackle the problems they face in housing asylum-seekers’ (Conservative Party, 2001, p.18). Greatest attention to employment is also found in Westminster manifestos. For example, ‘we will also help those granted refugee status to integrate into the local community, supporting them so they can come off benefits and into work’ (Labour Party, 2001, p.19). However, this issue is

also a core feature of party programmes in devolved elections. For example, ‘we will create a one-stop shop for employers, workers and migrants to provide advice on employment, skills and qualifications’ (Scottish Labour, 2007, p.15); and we ‘Support the right of asylum seekers to work while their cases are processed’ (Sinn Féin, 2007, p.6).

Furthermore, compared to Westminster elections, equalities and tackling discrimination against refugees and asylum seekers is given significantly greater attention in devolved ballots. For example, ‘All departments [of the Northern Ireland Executive] should examine their service provision to asylum seekers and refugees in relation to Section 75 [of the devolution statute] requirements [on ministers to promote equalities in the exercise of devolved functions]. The issue cannot continue to be dismissed as a reserved matter’ (Sinn Féin, 2003, p.14).

[Temporary Note – Table 4. – about here]

Divergence in issue-salience is also accompanied by polity-specific, distinctive pledges leading to the territorialisation of welfare rights for refugees and asylum seekers as parties propose policy and law that is unmatched elsewhere (Table 4). The rise of territorially distinctive RAS policies can also be seen in the following analysis of manifesto statements placed into socio-historical context in each devolved nation.

### *Analysis of party statements in their socio-historical context*

#### *1. Scotland*

As Kelly (2000) notes, Scotland has a long history of welcoming refugees: 'by 1995 the Scottish Refugee Council estimated that there were 8,000 refugees in all in Scotland. In 1997 their clients included 43 from Sudan, 37 from Iraq, 19 from Algeria, 17 from Pakistan, 13 from Turkey and 11 from Kosovo. In 1998, the Refugee Council worked with 250 persons claiming asylum, and had 1,000 ongoing clients in their caseload. Scotland also accepted refugees from European evacuation programmes under [UK] government quotas and planned reception schemes [including] - Chileans fleeing Pinochet's regime, and Chinese fleeing persecution in Vietnam... [as well as] Bosnians'. The present analysis reveals how Syria is the latest chapter in this long history: 'The SNP believes that Scotland must play its part... We will continue to provide support to Syrians who have arrived in Scotland through the Resettlement Programme' (SNP 2016, p.22). Earlier work by Quinn (2012, p.58) explored how, 'migration can have adverse effects on mental health and well-being, due to racism and the asylum process, and [how] this is worsened by stigma and discrimination'. The Scottish electoral discourse reflects these concerns. Notably, from the outset of devolution the SNP pointed to how such matters would only be fully addressed with independence:

The efforts of the Labour-LibDem coalition to tackle racism have been hampered by the fact that control over key policy levers such as immigration, asylum, and equal opportunities are reserved to Westminster. With Independence, however, the SNP will deliver a fair immigration policy without racial bias. And we will support and safeguard the rights of our ethnic minorities, as well as addressing the serious social and economic problems that have been exploited by racists' (SNP 1999. p.28).

In contrast, UKIP (Scotland's) electoral discourse reflects its anti-EU stance and concern to limit migration. For example:

'We know that Scotland hasn't the resources to cope with an endless influx of people. As Scots, we are generous and we should always welcome those in dire need of refuge in to our country. However, those that come here simply to milk our system and abuse our welcome cannot be tolerated. By leaving the EU we would regain control of our borders... We want a fair system that allows in only those who have a genuine need or who we really want to work in our economy' (UKIP (Scotland), 2016, p.9).

Rhetorically, as the foregoing extract illustrates, the party espouses humanitarian concern to support refugees. Yet, its discourse is ambiguous as to what country is being referred to. As the foregoing example demonstrates, it refers to 'Scots... our country' - presumably signifying Scotland; but then proceeds to allude to the non-devolved issue of 'control of our borders'.

Research by Strokosch and Osbourne (2017) has highlighted the relationship between asylum seeker integration and inter-organisational relationships between voluntary organisations and government agencies in Scotland. This has been a trope in the electoral discourse; notably, it has been championed by Scottish Labour. For example, 'We remain committed to the co-ordinated accessible and high quality services provided to refugees by voluntary organisations' (Scottish Labour, 2007, p.19).

Audrey (2000, p.122) has argued that multiculturalism has more prospect of success in Scotland than in England. Three factors are seen as pivotal: that politics in relation to the small BME population – including RAS, has not been racialized and right-wing parties like the BNP are weak; there is fairly broad political consensus supporting the Scottish government's policies of challenging racism and promoting integration; and the fact that Scots themselves

may have multiple identities as both 'Scottish' and 'British' – which resonates with the experience of refugees. Earlier research on the workings of the UK government's dispersal policy in Scotland (Sim and Bowes, 2007) tends to support this, concluding that: 'the multiculturalist approach and the long-term integration of asylum seekers would seem therefore to rely on... political commitment, and the role of the Scottish Executive in making the case for inward migration to Scotland and in combating racism' (Sim and Bowes, 2007, p.743-4). In a similar vein, Schech (2012, p.58) concludes that, 'in Scotland the integration of asylum seekers is considered [to be] in the national interest. The presence of the national factor is also responsible for a greater urge to assert the humanitarian qualities of Scottish society and institutions'. The present findings support these assessments and confirm a general cross-party consensus on promoting integration and tackling racism towards RAS. For example:

We will support initiatives to tackle racial and religious discrimination in the workplace and in communities and will continue support for schemes that celebrate the diversity of Scotland's culture and its people. Scottish Labour will conduct a review of the Scottish Refugee Integration Strategy to reflect on the effectiveness of current action and to explore how integration work can be sustained and developed' (Scottish Labour, 2011, p.17).

As Beland and Lecours (2005, p.681) observe, minority nationalist parties (MNPs) act to 'reinforc[e] regional policy autonomy, which is depicted as an alternative to centralist schemes'. In other words, control is intimately linked to the regional ability to resist central government programmes. This is evident in the Scottish electoral discourse. For example, the SNP states that, 'With legislative control we will deliver a fast and fair assessment of asylum

claims and will encourage successful applicants to contribute to the Scottish economy by removing restrictions on their ability to work' (SNP, 1999, p.11).

Existing work also highlights how the uncertainty caused by the asylum process and resultant delays in support provision can lead to destitution (Scottish Parliament EHRC, 2017) and be highly stressful for pregnant asylum seekers, resulting in poor mental health and high levels of anxiety (Fassetta and Quinn, 2018). Such concerns link to pledges to use newly devolved social security powers in the Scotland Act (2017) to support RAS. Thus, for example:

Refugee families and individuals who currently move to Scotland to be with their family under Family Reunion laws are entitled to crisis grants whilst they get settled. However, settling in a new country, with a new culture and language and getting to know your family again after many years of separation, is a difficult process that we want to make easier. We will therefore set up a fast track crisis grant fund for refugee families who settle here under Family Reunion rules. We will establish a £1 million a year fund to respond to future humanitarian emergencies, and help provide emergency aid to refugees and displaced people fleeing war and persecution' (SNP, 2016, p.27)

Hopkins and Hill, (2011) underline the specific challenges facing RAS children, particularly unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and young people in Scotland. Amongst the issues they highlight are shortcomings in inter-agency working. It is an issue that is reflected in the manifesto discourse. The exact nature of the pledges depends on parties' views on the best governance arrangements for Scotland. In the case of the separatist SNP this means independence, whereas for the (unionist) Scottish Labour and the Liberal Democrat Parties the solution lies in improving the devolved arrangements. For example:



Asylum seekers: there has to be a more sensitive, integrated approach involving the education authorities, social work departments and the UK agencies when children are involved. We will continue to press the Home Office for changes to the system to recognise this. In calling for more powers for the Scottish Parliament, we believe in working with the UK Government. The Steel Commission recommended the creation of a joint committee of the Scottish and UK Parliaments, and a new category of powers where the two parliaments should work in partnership [including the...] strategic planning of welfare services (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 2007, p.14).

## *II. Wales*

There is a long, often overlooked, history of immigration in Wales, notably with Irish, English, Chinese and Jewish migrants settling in Wales in the 19th century. More recently, in 2001 a wave of refugees and asylum seekers began to arrive following the 1999 Immigration and Asylum Act. Cardiff, Swansea, Newport, and Wrexham all became “dispersal” areas. Welsh attitudes to immigrants and RAS has often been articulated in terms of what Evans (2015, p.228) refers to as ‘the myth of tolerance’. Whilst there is a welcoming culture, it is not universal and a dark history of intolerance and ethnic riots needs to be acknowledged (Williams et al, 2015). Thus, at the outset of devolution ‘race’ equality and inclusiveness were seen as a key goals (Williams and Chaney, 2001). Worryingly, recent research points to a failure to fully realise this goal. For example, Parker’s study (2018, p.111) found that RAS ‘interviewees appeared to negotiate a dilemma when talking about experiencing potentially racist incidents within the [research] interviews, constructing them as trivial so as not to appear critical of the protection they have received in Wales... [His...] findings also highlight the more every day and

banal forms of racism that are regularly experienced by refugees and asylum seekers living in Wales'. Other research also found community fear and apprehension about the housing of RAS in their areas (De Silva, 2001). The present analysis reveals parties' electoral competition to address these issues. For example, Plaid Cymru (2003, p.15) asserted 'We will put particular emphasis on protecting members of vulnerable ethnic minority communities. Racially-motivated attacks are beyond the pale and must not be tolerated. We will work closely with the Wales Refugee Council on positive approaches to the issue of refugees and asylum seekers so as to counter any danger of persecution'. Whilst the Welsh Liberal Democrats (2016, p.14) promise, 'We will support schools in tackling discrimination against refugees and asylum seekers [... Furthermore, we will:]

Establish Wales as a 'Nation of Sanctuary': We are privileged to live in relative security and liberty - and we must show our values of compassion to those in greatest need. Immigration and asylum are the responsibility of the UK Government, however there is much more that could be done to create a culture of hospitality and welcome for people seeking sanctuary. We will use devolved powers over equalities, housing and social care to make sure that all people living in Wales, including asylum seekers and refugees, are treated with equal respect and care across the country (Liberal Democrats, 2016, p.15).

Since 2009, access to healthcare has been free to all RAS in Wales, including failed asylum seekers (Cohen 2009). Yet research by Khanom (2019, p.e3) reveals continuing unmet health needs and that 'language barriers and poor knowledge of UK health systems mean asylum seekers, refused asylum seekers and refugees use emergency health services to meet

needs which could be seen and treated in routine primary services'. The present analysis shows such issues are a feature of party programmes (e.g. 'Ensuring equal access to services for refugees and asylum seekers', Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2011, p.8). Although, evidently there is more work to be done in this regard.

The Welsh Government has prioritised children's rights, notably by incorporating the UN convention on the Rights of the Child into Welsh law<sup>26</sup> and creating the post of Children's Commissioner for Wales. Yet research reveals that whilst generally, 'Welsh people were seen as welcoming and supportive of asylum seekers. We found instances of generosity and the children spoke positively about the friends they had made. However, we also found that over one-third of the children and young people interviewed had experienced racism and harassment, predominantly verbal abuse' (Dunkerley et al, 2006, p.488). Extant work also highlights the negative effects of housing children, in "detention" centres (Maegusuku-Hewett, Tucker and Williams, 2013). In response the current analysis reveals party competition to address this issue – as well as civic nationalist parties' resistance to central government's policies. For example:

We condemn the practice of housing recently-arrived asylum seekers, especially children, in "detention" or "removal" centres, as punitive and cruel, and we will continue to lobby the Westminster Government to ensure that they keep their promise to shut these centres' (Plaid Cymru, 2011, p.27).

A recent cross party report by the Welsh Parliament's Equality, Local Government and Communities Committee highlighted language barriers to RAS inclusion and called on the Welsh Government to, 'Improve integration of refugees, through continued support for ESOL provision or Welsh lessons, and encouraging schools with large numbers of children speaking

English as a second language to host English lessons for parents’ (ELGC Committee, 2017, p.8). This resonates with a key trope in the manifesto discourse. For example, ‘Welsh Conservative Government will work with community-based organisations to help members of minority language households improve their skills in English and/or Welsh, giving priority to refugees and asylum seekers’ (Welsh Conservative Party, 2016, p.19).

Existing work by Hubbard et al (2013, p.7) found that ‘gender-based violence was a serious issue for women and girls within asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant communities, which was complicated through barriers to accessing support and protection’. The present analysis shows that parties could do more to address this issue with only one manifesto promising action: we will ‘Protect refugee services’ funding and ensure a sustainable funding model for refuge and other independent specialist domestic and sexual violence services’ (Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2016, p.12).<sup>27</sup>

### *III. Northern Ireland*

As Vieten and Murphy’s (2019, p.176) study of RAS in Belfast notes, ‘In the Northern Ireland context, questions with respect to the notion of difference and the situation of newcomers continually arise, specifically about the ways in which social and political divides anchored in sectarian mindsets impact newcomers to Northern Ireland’. They add: ‘We argue all newcomers are impacted to some degree by sectarianism in Northern Ireland, adding a further complexified layer to the everyday and institutional racism [... and linked to] the triangle of nation, gender and ethnicity’. In a similar vein, Schulz and Taylor’s (2018, p.311) study of Syrian RAS in Northern Ireland found that policy ‘programs that help neighbourhoods to support the resettlement is paramount to ease the stress of the transition for a refugee in a new country.

In particular, their findings highlight that interventions to improve intergroup attitudes may have a secondary transfer effect that can facilitate support prior to and during resettlement'. This resonates with a core trope in the province's electoral discourse spanning the sectarian divide. Thus, for example, the Ulster Unionist Party (2016, p.14) asserts we will,

'Support efforts by organisations like the Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers (NICRAS) to engage local BME and migrant communities in the political process and encourage politicians to understand the issues facing local BME and migrant communities [we will] Have a zero tolerance approach to racist attacks'.

Whilst Sinn Féin (2003, p.14) promises:

'Multiculturalism: An all-Ireland policy for asylum seekers and refugees to be developed within the framework of the all-Ireland bodies; [... with] Responsibility for asylum seekers and refugees to be devolved to the [Northern Ireland] Assembly'.

Newbigging and Thomas's (2011, p.374) study of child RAS in the province concluded that, 'The primary component identified [as integral to effective policy] is a clear commitment to seeing the wellbeing of children and young people as the primary focus of practice, rather than the demands of immigration policy. Others include provision of safe and appropriate accommodation, support for engagement in appropriate education and leisure pursuits, attention to emotional well-being, good support and information for families, and inclusion of families and communities in the safeguarding agenda'. The present analysis shows the electoral discourse in the province to be alive to these issues. For example, Sinn Féin (2007, p.9) promises to 'Develop an all-Ireland policy to ensure the protection and welfare of refugee

and asylum-seeking children’. Whilst the Alliance Party (2017, p.14) states it will ‘provide support to refugee families in relation to housing and access to training courses and education provision’.

In the case of UKIP, the Party’s electoral discourse devotes a significant amount of attention to ‘Controlling and managing our borders’. The majority of the discourse is concerned with limiting migration. The only direct reference to RAS is the opaque statement: ‘UKIP will return to principles of the Convention of [sic] Refugees which serves to protect the most vulnerable’ (UKIP (Northern Ireland), 2016, p.18).

[Temporary Note – Table 5. – about here]

*The inter-party relational dynamic in the framing of RAS policy pledges in the devolved nations*

In Northern Ireland the civic nationalist Sinn Féin frame most pledges in terms of RAS rights (e.g. We ‘Support the right of asylum seekers to work while their cases are processed’, Sinn Féin, 2007, p.8) (Table 5). Their nationalist colleagues the SDLP lead on fairness (e.g. ‘Fair treatment of asylum seekers, including an end to the use of prison accommodation for those awaiting hearings’, SDLP, 2003, p.7), and the Ulster Unionist Party leads on tolerance and humanitarian approaches. In Scotland, the SNP leads in framing in terms of sanctuary and Rights. Scottish Labour frames pledges in terms of humanitarian approaches (e.g. ‘We will work with local authorities and third sector organisations to welcome and support refugees and we will continue to argue that the UK should take a more humane approach to welcoming those fleeing conflict and persecution’, Scottish Labour 2007, p.19). In Wales, Plaid Cymru leads in

framing in terms of rights (e.g. 'We support the right of asylum seekers to work in the UK while they wait for status decisions to be made', Plaid Cymru, 2011, p.15).

[Temporary Note – Table 6 – about here]

### *Territorial Policy Narratives*

The territorialisation of refugee and asylum seeker policy in the foregoing analysis of manifesto discourse is the formative phase underpinning the three separate national strategies in England, Scotland and Wales. In 2008 the Welsh Government launched its Refugee Inclusion Strategy, followed by 'Nation of Sanctuary – Refugee and Asylum Seeker Plan' in January 2019. In 2014 and 2018 the Scottish Government published successive 4-year strategies, 'The New Scots: Integrating Refugees into Scotland's Communities'. In the case of England,<sup>28</sup> in 2017, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Social Integration published a report calling on the Westminster government to establish a national government strategy for the integration of immigrants (APPGSI, 2017).<sup>29</sup> In response, the following year the Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government published the Integrated Communities Action Plan.<sup>30</sup> Reflecting the fragility of devolved governance in the province - as well as extended post-1998 periods of direct rule from Westminster, Northern Ireland currently does not have an overarching strategy on refugees and asylum seekers.

Textual analysis of these strategies (Table 6) reveals the territorial welfare narratives of the different nations. The Westminster government's Strategy makes limited reference to international obligations and does not directly refer to the United Nations. In contrast, the

'devolved' strategies engage with the UN and its work on refugees and asylum seekers. Whilst critics may view the second New Scots: Refugee Integration Strategy as a knowledge production exercise involving migration scholars and NGOs on behalf of Scottish government, the UNHCR Representative to the UK has welcomed the Strategy, calling it: 'an extremely valuable initiative... the UNHCR commends the fact that refugees and asylum seekers are active in shaping its concept and delivery' (quoted in Scottish Government, 2018, p.3).

In the case of the Welsh strategy the UN commended the Welsh Government 'for its person-centric approach' (quoted in Welsh Government, 2019, p.4). Further key contrasts between the devolved and Westminster strategies centre on the latter's greater emphasis on refugee and asylum-seeker policy fitting in with 'British values', whereas the former underline the reciprocal benefits of refugees settling in Scotland and Wales.

On welfare payments, the Westminster strategy is silent on issues of poverty and destitution. Whereas the ambition to counteract Westminster policies is explicit in the devolved strategies. For example, 'Welsh Government will continue to monitor and seek to mitigate the worst effects of UK Government welfare reforms, as far as possible, to identify barriers for refugees and potential solutions' (Welsh Government, 2019, p.13). Thus, the Scottish Government signals its intention to use newly devolved welfare powers to make additional welfare payments to asylum seekers. This is also implicit in the Welsh Government strategy (although the Welsh Government has fewer powers in this area, though it can make emergency payments through its Discretionary Assistance Fund).<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion



Whilst extant work on refugee and asylum seeker policy tends to concentrate on implementation and evaluation. This study addresses a key lacuna by analysing political parties' formative policy record on refugees' and asylum seekers' welfare in party manifestos for state-wide and meso-elections in the UK, 1964-2019. The findings confirm a significant rise in the electoral-salience of RAS policy since the 1960s when the first party pledges appeared in relation to Asian refugees fleeing Uganda. They also reveal the party-politicization of RAS policy in UK electoral politics - with party cleavages on issue prioritisation and welfare expansion, as well as relational contrasts in the framing of pledges – between parties and across polities. Key areas of inter-party competition include RAS numbers/ quotas, cost, efficacy, detention and dispersal. A Left-Right cleavage is also revealed with Right-wing parties more likely to frame pledges in terms of restrictive policies and Left-of-centre parties more likely to advance refugee and asylum seekers' rights and equality.

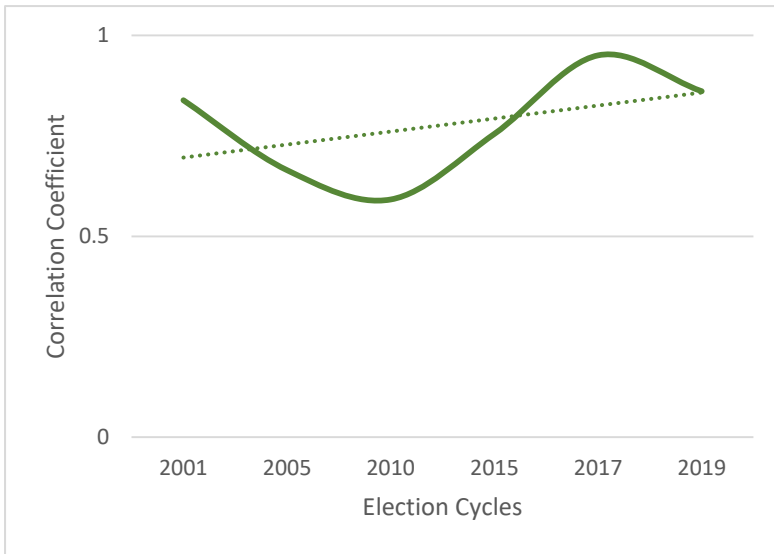
The present analysis also makes an original contribution by revealing how electoral politics in the post-1998 era is leading to the territorialisation of refugee and asylum seeker policy in a devolved UK. This is not only driven by divergence in the issue-salience of different aspects of refugee and asylum seeker welfare between polities but also by territorially distinctive pledges as parties propose policy and law in a polity that is unmatched elsewhere. This has implications state-wide parties. Our analysis reveals variation in the issue-salience of different aspects of RAS welfare (health, housing, education) and contrasting policy positions between territorial divisions of individual state-wide parties. The data also reveal how since 1998, policy on refugees and asylum seekers' needs to be seen in the context of territorial politics and the party dynamics in and between polities. Notably, minority nationalist parties (all of which have held government office since 1998) predominate in framing their manifesto pledges in terms of calling for the devolution of political control of RAS policy<sup>32</sup> and resistance

to central government programmes; notably, the practice of housing recently-arrived asylum seekers, especially children, in 'detention' or 'removal' centres. Furthermore, the present analysis shows how the territorialisation of refugee and asylum seeker policy in the manifesto discourse is the formative phase underpinning the three separate national strategies on refugees and asylum seekers in England, Scotland and Wales. These evidence a determination on the part of the devolved administrations to use their powers to countermand Westminster policies through measures such as devolved welfare payments, increased funding for health, housing and education; and the provision of legal aid. Further key contrasts between the devolved and Westminster strategies centre on the latter's greater emphasis on integration and 'British values' – whereas the former emphasise international obligations, co-working with the United Nations, as well as the reciprocal benefits to local communities of refugees settling in Scotland and Wales.

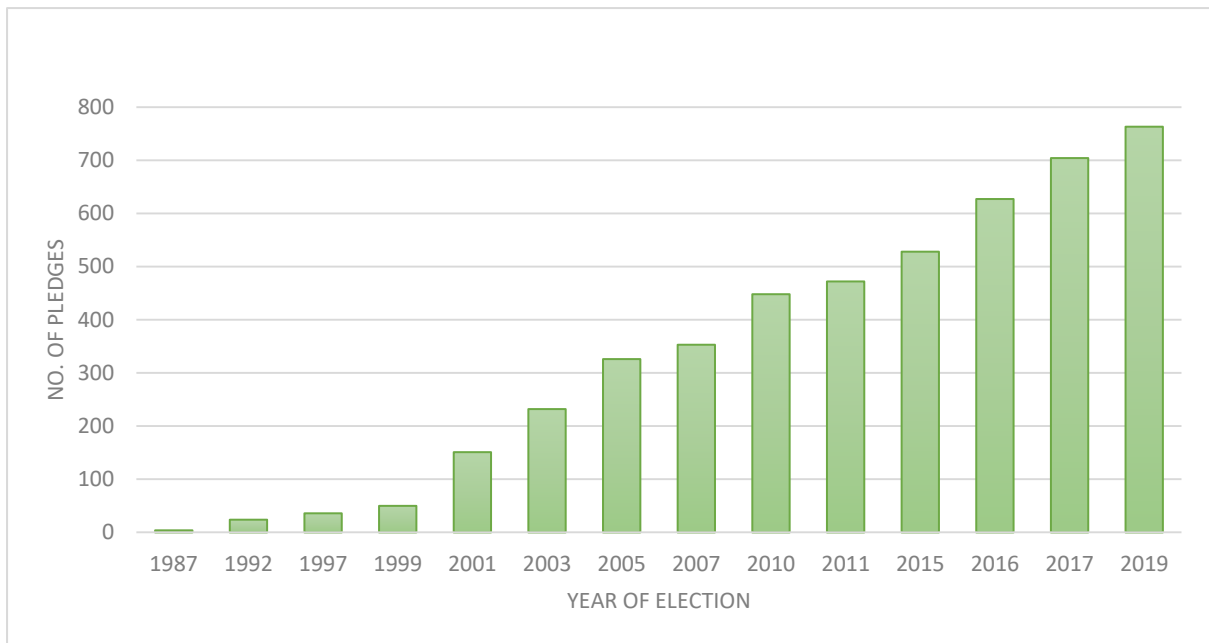
The limitations of party manifesto research to explore RAS-related politics also need to be acknowledged. As noted above, the formative phase of RAS policy-making has tended to be ignored: a key lacuna addressed here. Not least, with such a highly politicised policy issue the present approach grounds the subject in its party political roots. However, it should be emphasised that this mode of analysis does not claim to be holistic; rather it complements studies of policy implementation, ethnographies of refugees' experiences and other approaches. The wider significance of the foregoing analysis is threefold: it underlines the need to examine the formative, electoral phase of refugee and asylum-seeker policy development; it reveals the way that RAS policy is highly party-politicised; and it shows how the move to a multi-level electoral system combines with regional party politics to drive the territorialisation of welfare refugee regimes in federal and union states.

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**Figure 1. Party Politicization Coefficient over successive Electoral Cycles: Westminster Elections 2001-2019**



**Figure 2. Cumulative Issue Salience of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Policy Manifesto Pledges in UK (State-wide and Meso) Elections, 1987-2019 (N= 763). †**

†From 1964 to 1983 there was intermittent attention to RAS policy, not exceeding 4 pledges (all parties) per election.

	LAB	LIB	CON	UKIP
Children/ splitting families in detention		3		
People smuggling/ trafficking			4	
Removal failed AS	2		2	
Bogus asylum seekers/illegal immigrants				4
(In)efficiency of present RAS system/ need for reform	1	1	1	1
Detention/ reception centres	3			
No. of AS applicants/ quotas	3			
Social security		4		
Employment		2		
Governance/ powers				2
Law (inc. appeals & advice)			3	3

**Table 1. Relational Party Dynamic: Ranking of Parties' top Four RAS Policy Pledge Topics 2001-2019 (N=329)**

	LIB	LAB	CON	UKIP	Total
Firmness	1	0	2	1	4
Fairness	11	7	5	1	24
Dignity	3	0	0	0	3
Rights	12	10	2	6	30
Safety	6	1	6	3	16
UK as haven/ sanctuary	8	1	5	0	14
Vulnerability	3	1	0	0	4
UK's International obligations	1	5	0	2	8
Tolerance	2	0	0	2	4
Moral obligation	0	1	0	0	1
Humanely/ Humanitarian	3	2	1	3	9
Enforcement	0	1	3	3	7
Control	1	3	8	10	22

Table 2. Framing of RAS Pledges in Parties' Westminster Election Manifestos 2001-2019 (N=124)

	Westminster	Scotland	Wales	N Ireland
Housing/ resettlement	1.6	0.4	1.0	0.4
Education & training	0.4	0.9	4.0	0.9
Social security	4.9	1.3	0.9	1.8
Employment	10.6	1.3	1.8	0.9
Rights	17.7	5.3	0.4	0.9
(Tackling) discrimination/ equalities	0.9	2.7	2.7	2.7
Governance/ powers	1.8	7.1	3.5	5.8
Law (inc. appeals & advice)	10.2	2.7	0.4	0.9
Health	0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Participation/ consultation	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.4

**Table 3. Comparative attention to different aspects of RAS welfare across UK polities 1964-2019 (Percentage of all pledges, N=226).**



	Scotland	Wales	N. Ireland	England
'We will offer safe and legal routes to the UK for refugees to prevent them from making dangerous journeys, which too often result in the loss of life' (Liberal Democrats, 2017, p.22).				X
'Resettling 10,000 vulnerable refugees each year and a further 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children from elsewhere in Europe over the next ten years' (Liberal Democrats, 2019, p.25).				X
'End indefinite immigration detention by introducing a 28-day limit' (Liberal Democrats, 2017, p.18)				X
'We will introduce a Refugee Integration (Scotland) Bill setting out refugees' rights to access services, enshrine national standards for integration in law' (Scottish Labour Party, 2016, p.17).	X			
'We believe in working with the UK Government. The Steel Commission recommended the creation of a joint committee of the Scottish and UK Parliaments, and a new category of powers where the two parliaments should work in partnership... applying this approach in areas including regulatory powers... asylum and immigration' (Scottish Liberal Democrats, 2007, p.14)	X			
'Ensure that all people seeking sanctuary in Scotland are fully afforded the provisions set out in the UN Charter of Human Rights' (SNP, 2003, p.7).	X			
We will... provide non-monetary short-term support for refugees and asylum seekers who are left destitute in Wales as a result of systematic delays out of their control' (Welsh Liberal Democrats, 2016, p.19).		X		
'A Welsh Conservative Party administration would... retain asylum seekers in secure accommodation until they have been assessed for any potential security threat' (Welsh Conservative Party, 2003, p.8).		X		
'We will promote Wales as a land of creativity, with equal respect for native artists and those who have come here to practise their talents. We will explore the possibility of providing sponsorship for artists who are political refugees' (Plaid Cymru, 2003, p.12).		X		
'We will establish an integration policy for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland' (Alliance Party, 2003, p.12).			X	
'An all-Ireland policy for asylum seekers and refugees to be developed within the framework of the all-Ireland bodies' (Sinn Féin, 2003, p.17)			X	
'All asylum seekers should receive legal representation and legal aid should extend to appeal cases' (Sinn Féin, 2003, p.16).			X	

**Table 4. Territorially Distinctive Manifesto Pledges on Refugees and Asylum Seekers.**

	N. Ireland	Scotland	Wales
Fairness	Alliance	SNP	W. LibDems
Dignity	-	S. LibDems	-
Rights	= Sinn Féin & SDLP	SNP	Plaid Cymru
Safety	-	-	Plaid Cymru
Devolved nation as haven/ sanctuary	-	SNP	Plaid Cymru
Vulnerability	UKIP	UKIP	W. LibDems
UK's International obligations	-	-	-
Tolerance	UUP	-	Plaid Cymru
Moral obligation	-	-	-
Humanely/ Humanitarian	UUP	Scot Labour	W. Labour
Enforcement	-	-	-
Control	UKIP	SNP	-

**Table 5. The Relational Dynamic in the Framing of RAS Pledges in Parties' Devolved Election Manifestos: The Lead Party for each Frame, by Polity.**

	Scotland	Wales	England
Framing of Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <b>welcoming</b> Scotland where RAS are able to rebuild their lives</li> <li>• A place of <b>safety</b> ... where people are able to live free from persecution as <b>valued</b> members of communities.</li> <li>• Enables everyone to pursue their <b>ambitions</b>.</li> <li>• Has strong, <b>inclusive</b> and resilient communities,</li> <li>• Everyone is able to exercise their <b>rights</b>.</li> <li>• A country that <b>values diversity</b>.</li> <li>• Integration as a long-term, two-way process, involving <b>positive change</b> in both individuals and host communities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>integration</b> of refugees and asylum seekers should begin on day one</li> <li>• The actions in this plan are intended to provide <b>holistic support</b> to individuals.</li> <li>• Safeguard <b>mental health and the employability</b> of individuals.</li> <li>• A <b>true Nation of Sanctuary</b> for refugees and asylum seekers.</li> <li>• A <b>person-centred approach</b> which ensures</li> <li>• Welcoming refugees... brings <b>positives to all</b> ... refugees contribute to dialogue, and to social and economic life.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Integrated communities</b> where people – whatever their background – live, work, learn and socialise together</li> <li>• <b>Shared rights, responsibilities and opportunities</b></li> <li>• Improve <b>communities’ ability to adapt to migration</b></li> <li>• playing a <b>full part in community life</b></li> <li>• <b>Equal rights</b></li> </ul>
Selected actions	<p><b>Legal Aid.</b> In Scotland, anyone requiring representation for a case at the Immigration and Asylum Tribunal can access legal aid support in the form of ‘Assistance by Way of representation’ (ABWOR). In most cases, only a means test is applied, and applications from asylum seekers will be passed on their merits.</p>	<p>Ensuring: Refugees and asylum seekers can access <b>health services</b> (including mental health services) which they require throughout the ‘asylum journey’. This includes health assessments on arrival and during the dispersal and post-trauma phases. Welsh Government will: <b>Fund advocacy forums</b> in the four current dispersal areas in Wales.</p>	<p>We will work with all public authorities so that their equality objectives, which they are required to develop and publish, also include activity to <b>promote integration</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Policy, strategic planning and legislation</b>, which have an impact on refugees and asylum seekers, are informed by their rights, needs and Aspirations.</p>	<p>Welsh Government-funded Wales <b>Asylum Seeking and Refugee Doctors</b> (WARD) Group, has been supporting refugee doctors to have their existing medical qualifications recognised and find employment in the NHS for the past 15 years.</p>	<p>Work with Ofsted to ensure there continues to be strong coverage of integration through schools’ <b>promotion of fundamental British values</b> within their new inspection handbook</p>
	<p>Fair Start Scotland (FSS), the Scottish Government’s <b>devolved employment service</b> [is...] required to recognise the specific support needs of people from minority ethnic communities and be sensitive to cultural issues which affect them, particularly women and refugees.</p>	<p>The Welsh Government promotes a <b>person-centred approach</b> which ensures that individuals are supported to achieve integration, regardless of their background or circumstances. This should prevent ‘one-size-fits-all’ approaches which can leave some communities behind.</p>	<p>Welfare Payments: We will ensure integration challenges are fully factored into the <b>rollout of the Universal Credit Programme</b> (p.16).</p>
	<p>Influence future <b>devolved welfare powers</b> to address the needs of refugees and asylum seekers (p.38).</p>	<p><b>Promote financial inclusion</b> for refugees and asylum seekers to <b>avoid destitution</b>, reduce or mitigate the impacts of poverty (p.13).</p>	<p>We will publish new guidance on effective practice in coordinating local <b>ESOL provision</b>, to support greater join-up of different providers and types of provision.</p>

Table 6. The Territorialisation of Welfare: Comparative Analysis of the Three National Policy Frameworks on Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Great Britain.

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## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/key-issues-mps-will-be-focussed-during-election-and-new-parliament> [Last accessed 09 September 2020]

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/conservatives-hold-12-point-lead-over-labour-heading-final-week-election-campaign> [Last accessed 09 June 2020]

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ipsos.com/ipsos-mori/en-uk/4-ways-anti-immigration-vote-won-referendum-brexit> [Last accessed 09 September 2020]

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/4ca34be29.pdf> [last accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-seekers.html> [last accessed 09.05.20]

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-seekers.html> [last accessed 09.05.20]

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.unhcr.org/uk/asylum-in-the-uk.html> [last accessed 09.05.20]

<sup>8</sup> UNHCR 'UNHCR's priorities for the UK Government' 04.05.2017

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/protection/basic/590b09ca4/unhcrs-priorities-for-the-uk-government.html> [last accessed 09.05.20]

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/immigration-statistics-year-ending-march-2020/summary-of-latest-statistics> [last accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>10</sup> UN General Assembly, Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, 28 July 1951, United Nations, Treaty Series, Vol 189, 137

<sup>11</sup> Council of Europe, European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms, as amended by Protocols Nos 11 and 14, 4 November 1950.

<sup>12</sup> This stated that:

1. The Union shall constitute an area of freedom, security and justice with respect for fundamental rights and the different legal systems and traditions of the Member States.
2. It shall ensure the absence of internal border controls for persons and shall frame a common policy on asylum, immigration and external border control, based on solidarity between Member States, which is fair towards third-country nationals. For the purpose of this Title, stateless persons shall be treated as third-country nationals ...

<sup>13</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european\\_migration\\_network/glossary\\_search/dublin-convention\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/dublin-convention_en) [last accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>14</sup> For example, Regulation (EU) No 604/2013 ([2013] OJ L/180/31) ("Dublin 3") establishes the criteria and means for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in the EU

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1999/33/contents> [last accessed 09.05.20]

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/claim-asylum/eligibility> [last accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>17</sup>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/513585/Po\\_int\\_of\\_Claim\\_English\\_20160401.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/513585/Po_int_of_Claim_English_20160401.pdf) [last accessed 08.05.20]

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<sup>18</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/asylum-and-resettlement-datasets#local-authority-data> [last accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-47597458> [last accessed 08.05.20]

<sup>20</sup> Defined in terms of share of the popular vote.

<sup>21</sup> Where necessary, hardcopy only versions of early manifestos were transcribed. The software used was Nvivo 9.

<sup>22</sup> For example, in the present study, the word-length of Sinn Féin's manifestos over successive cycles is: 4,234 (1998), 23,152 (2003), 19,097 (2007), 5,601 (2011), 6,896 (2016), and 5,437 (2017).

<sup>23</sup> As opposed to ratio measures of the number of pledges in relation to manifesto word length.

<sup>24</sup> Values calculated according to the formula:

$$\text{Correl}(X, Y) = \frac{\sum (x - \bar{x})(y - \bar{y})}{\sqrt{\sum (x - \bar{x})^2 \sum (y - \bar{y})^2}}$$

The Sigma symbol indicates summation and x and y stand for the two data ranges (based on the issue-salience of RAS policy in each election 1997-2019). The correlation coefficient measures how strong a linear relationship exists between variables x and y. It is always a number between -1.0 and +1.0. If the correlation coefficient is close to +1.0, there is a strong positive linear relationship between x and y.

<sup>25</sup> 78 pledges compared to 58 (Con), 51(Lab) and 58 (Lib).

<sup>26</sup> See <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/mwa/2011/2/contents> and <https://gov.wales/childrens-rights-in-wales> [Last accessed 28.09.20]

<sup>27</sup> UKIP's manifestos for the Welsh Parliament are unlike those for Scotland and Northern Ireland. They do not refer to RAS, immigration or border controls. Rather they mainly concentrate on reforming the model of Welsh devolution.

<sup>28</sup> 'This Action Plan is for England. As the Green Paper set out, the majority of the policy proposals are in areas where responsibility is devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. There are some actions which relate to the immigration system, which are reserved matters, and the UK government will engage the devolved administrations as policies develop', p.5.

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/resources/refugees-welcome-the-experience-of-new-refugees-in-the-uk/> [Last accessed 27.06.20]

<sup>30</sup> <https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/librarydoc/integrated-communities-action-plan-mhclg> [Last accessed 27.06.20]

<sup>31</sup> <https://gov.wales/discretionary-assistance-fund-daf/how-apply> [Last accessed 27.06.20]

<sup>32</sup> For Sinn Fein and the SDLP this the precursor to Irish reunification. For the SNP and Plaid Cymru it is the precursor to independence.