

CES Travel Grant -- Final Report

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The main focus of my research is the study of the history of refugees and asylum-seekers in Europe, specifically in relation to the interplay between the process of asylum-seeking and its effect on the European Integration project. Many of the research questions associated with my PhD dissertation include: Is Europe, by all accounts and purposes, the exemplary safe-haven that it professes to be? How do EU officials and member states justify the shifts in their respective asylum policies (e.g. towards more punitive treatment of refugees, or a growing tendency to classify would-be asylum-seekers as illegal migrants)? How has the process of supranational harmonization of asylum policy affected the overarching ambition of achieving an integrated Europe? In order to help answer these questions, I undertook a four month research trip (September-December 2013) that included, among other things, conducting in-person interviews with a diverse range of actors involved in the refugee and asylum process, consulting various national and supranational archives and maintaining a Visiting Researcher position at a relevant research institute.

With the generous financial contribution of the Centre for European Studies Travel Grant from Carleton University, I was able to use these funds to help ease the cost of transportation to Sweden, which served as the base during my time in Europe, as well as where I maintained a Visiting Researcher position at the *Institute for Research on Migration, Ethnicity and Society* (REMESO) at Linköping University (Campus Norrköping). While I received guidance and mentorship from prominent experts in the field of migration and asylum, this only accounted for a minor component of my research trip.

The main focus was to conduct in-person interviews with past and current refugees and asylum-seekers, not to mention other actors involved in the process such as NGO and refugee network staff workers, EU officials and migration and asylum lawyers. In total, I conducted nearly seventy-five interviews in a wide range of countries, which included: Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Belgium, the Netherlands, France, Germany and Greece. The personal narratives evoked in these interviews will serve as the main primary source material required to fulfill the oral history component of my methodology. In addition, the information collected from other actors involved in the process will provide for a more wide-ranging comprehensive overview of the personal narrative angle of my research. The need to exhibit and demonstrate the human element at play was an important part of my main thesis, as the documentation of personal and professional experiences in relation to Europe's asylum policies was critical.

Secondary to this, but equally as important, was the need to consult various national and supranational libraries and archives. My time at the British National Archives in London, UK allowed me the opportunity to consult important primary source Documents and Records of the Home Office. Additionally, the Central Archives at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France provided me with ample information concerning its take on matters of asylum, refugees and migration, dating back to the 1950's up until the 1980's. My time in Brussels, Belgium also proved to be very productive as I was able to conduct some research at the Archives of the EU Parliament (i.e. issues of migration and illegal employment, refugees and human rights) as well as at the Official Library of the EU Commission.

Finally, I wish to sincerely thank the Centre for European Studies at Carleton University for their financial support in the form of the Travel Grant as it helped ease the costs associated with my research trip. In particular, I wish to extend my gratitude to Joan DeBardeleben and Brigid Bedard-Hinz for their assistance with the application process, as well as Natasha Joukovskaia and Cathleen Schmidt for their subsequent efforts upon my return. Lastly, I would like to add how invaluable such a financial commitment is to the endeavours of researchers in the field of European studies and I hope to see it continue in the immediate future and beyond to help those such as myself achieve their academic goals.