Another day in paradise?
A sociological analysis of the effectiveness of Irish governmental policy in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless.

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Finally I wish to dedicate this thesis to my dad who passed away last January. You were a remarkable influence on my very being and you will always be missed.
AUTHOR’S DECLARATION

I, Martin Power, certify that this thesis, which I now submit for assessment on the programme leading to the Master of Arts degree in Sociology (Applied Social Research) is my own work and has not been submitted for any academic purpose other than in partial fulfilment for that which is stated above. All ideas and work from other authors are referenced as per the guidelines for the citation of references in the procedures for the preparation and submission of thesis for taught one year Masters of Arts in Sociology (Applied Social Research) at the University of Limerick.

Signed: _________________________

Date: 03 September 2004.
ABSTRACT

This thesis examines Irish housing policy, and legislation / policies introduced to address homelessness, and asks the question “how effective have Irish governmental policies been in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless?”

A qualitative study framed by social citizenship was undertaken. The data was collected from a purposive sample of ten respondents by means of interviews and a grounded theory approach was utilized as the method of data analysis. The study examines what homelessness, citizenship, and social exclusion are, the requirements for citizenship and exclusion from citizenship. It links exclusion from citizenship to homelessness, and its manifestation in Irish society. Ultimately it examines the effectiveness of how government policy has addressed the social exclusion experienced by the homeless as a result of the denial of citizenship rights.

It finds that Irish housing policy has satisfied the majority of citizens, yet simultaneously it has unintentionally restricted the quality of citizenship for a sizeable minority. Additionally government policy has had a positive impact on alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless on a number of levels. However it appears to have reached its limit and needs to move the next level to continue the progress that has been made.
This thesis seeks to investigate the effectiveness of Irish governmental policies in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless. The first chapter reviews the existing literature in the field of homelessness. It begins by defining what homelessness, citizenship, and social exclusion are. It subsequently considers the requirements for citizenship and exclusion from citizenship. It progresses to link exclusion from citizenship to homelessness, and how this manifests in Irish society. Finally it examines how government policy has addressed the social exclusion experienced by the homeless as a result of the denial of citizenship rights.

Having completed the literature review, my theoretical framework was that of social citizenship. I noted many documents dealing with equality issues in Ireland spoke of the concept of equal citizenship attained through equality of access to opportunities. Thus it was apparent that the homeless are socially excluded from full citizenship rights. However the government had introduced measures with the aim of addressing both homelessness and social exclusion and I wanted to examine whether the policies introduced by the government to combat homelessness have had any success, and if housing policy is indirectly contributing to homelessness in Ireland.

Chapter two gives an account of the methodology used for this thesis. It begins by laying down the rationale for the study, the research question and the aims and objectives of the research. It then progresses to examine issues surrounding qualitative research and to speak specifically about grounded theory as a method of analysis. The final section of this chapter details the research process.
The third chapter presents the findings from the data analysis process. It begins by presenting definitions of homelessness, the respondents understanding of homelessness and their understanding of the citizenship of the homeless. It progresses through the debate over information on homelessness, to how homelessness is addressed and the questions surrounding resources. The final section of the chapter presents the respondents views on the impact of housing policy, health care policy, legislation / policy on homelessness, and any changes suggested for this area.

Chapter four discusses the findings presented in chapter three. It begins by analysing the Citizenship of the Homeless before looking at whether the success in dealing with homelessness comes down to a question of resources. It then progresses to analyse the problems that exist in the area of accommodation. It analyses the impact of health care policy, and housing policy on homelessness before finally analysing the impact of legislation / policy specifically designed to address homelessness.

The final chapter presents the conclusions drawn about the research project and makes recommendations as to changes that should be introduced based on those conclusions, which would help alleviate the social exclusion of the homeless.
CHAPTER ONE
LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Homelessness:
Homelessness is a multi-dimensional, complex social phenomenon and the definition of homelessness is problematic. Without an informed definition of homelessness, it is impossible to find solutions to homelessness. O’ Sullivan (1996: 5) states, “the size of the homeless population will depend on how we define or conceptualise homelessness and this will determine the policy responses to the situation”.

Many inextricably link homelessness with the notion of a direct physical shelter. The traditional bi-polar definition of homelessness narrowly implied that homelessness was a distinction between those with shelter and those without shelter. Under this minimalist definition only those individuals who are living on the street, or without physical shelter are considered homeless. However for others homelessness is about more than simply a lack of a physical shelter, and they argue the meaning of home becomes central to developing a full understanding of homelessness. Without understanding the concept of 'home' in the conventional and material sense it is impossible to understand why a variety of 'homeless' people find themselves without a home and a stigmatised as being homeless. (Cox and Lawless, 1999).

All definitions of homelessness are political in nature. Williams and Cheal (2001: 2ll) emphasise the power of political and popular agenda in determining “what shall count as homelessness, or at least what shall be investigated as such”. Voluntary organisations like Focus Ireland and Combat Poverty continually argue that
homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in homelessness legislation. That argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Generally, policy makers use a minimalist definition with Cloke et al (2001: 264) stressing that “given the moral and / or statutory duty incumbent on central and local government to tackle homelessness, it is unsurprising that government adopts a fairly strict definition in order to minimise the problem with which they have to deal”. Additionally Cox and Lawless (1999) reveal that there is reluctance on the part of government departments to adopt a broad definition of homelessness, as it would force them to accept greater responsibility for the housing problem and homelessness.

Under section 2 of the Housing Act, 1988 a person is deemed to be homeless if there is

“No accommodation available which, in the opinion of the Authority, he together with any other person who normally resides with him, or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or he is living in a hospital, county home, night shelter or other such institution, and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to”.

In contrast to this definition O'Sullivan (1996: 4-5) argues there are three categories of homeless. The ‘Visible Homeless’ are people sleeping rough and / or accommodated in emergency shelters or B&Bs; the ‘Hidden Homeless’ are people reluctantly sharing with family and friends, in insecure accommodation or living in accommodation that is insufficient or unsatisfactory, while those ‘at risk of homelessness’ are people who currently have somewhere to live but may become homeless due to a number of factors such as financial problems.

Cloke, Milbourne and Widdowfield (2001: 262) argue that there are problems with
O’Sullivan’s category of ‘Hidden Homeless’, as “it becomes increasingly difficult to draw a distinction between homelessness and housing need and what is meant by homelessness becomes an increasingly contentious issue”. Cox and Lawless (1999) and Pleace et al (1997) argue that O’Sullivan’s more all-encompassing definition results in the unique nature and distress of actual homelessness becoming lost. I must acknowledge that I have some difficulty with O’Sullivan’s category of ‘at risk of homelessness’ being included in his definition of homelessness. To my mind if somebody is at risk of homelessness, by definition they are not homeless.

Mac Neela (1999: 19) argues that homelessness leads to exclusion from full and equitable participation in society. Those individuals who are considered homeless, both because of housing problems and lack of housing, tend to be victims of social exclusion. As a result of the growing spotlight on social inclusion both nationally and at EU level, many now regard more encompassing perspectives on homelessness as being the most appropriate. For this reason O’Sullivan’s definition of homelessness is in my opinion the most apt when discussing this social phenomena.

However for the purpose of this dissertation O’Sullivan’s definition still proves to be too broad. Due to the practicalities of completing this thesis it would not be practical to use O’Sullivan’s definition in its entirety, as it would not be possible to examine the three categories in the required detail and in the timeframe available. Therefore I have decided to use O’Sullivan’s category of the visible homeless, which is people sleeping rough and / or accommodated in emergency shelters or B&Bs. This category of homelessness is accepted by all, and is the most extreme form of homelessness. Therefore in evaluating the effectiveness of Irish governmental policy in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless population, it is vitally important to examine this
particular group, who are the most socially excluded out of O’ Sullivan’s three categories. Thus the category of ‘Visible Homeless’ will be the homeless population that will be spoken of throughout this paper.

1.2 Social exclusion:
Many would argue social exclusion has become the new buzzword to effectively rename poverty, yet the definition of social exclusion that this paper will advocate is about much more than simply income or poverty. Morris (1994: 80) identifies two general theoretical or ideological positions with respect to an 'underclass'. The ‘cultural’ position sees the source of social exclusion as lying in the attitudes and behaviour of the underclass itself, while the ‘structural’ position sees the source of social exclusion as lying in the structured inequality of the labour market and the state which disadvantages particular groups in society.

Madanipour et al's (1988: 22) definition clarifies the multifaceted nature of social exclusion. He states that social exclusion is a “multi-dimensional process, in which various forms of exclusion are combined: participation in decision making and political processes, access to employment and material resources, and integration into common cultural processes.” (Cited in Byrne, 1999:2) Additionally the Partnership 2000 Agreement (1996) defined social exclusion in terms of “cumulative marginalisation: from production (employment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision-making and from an adequate quality of life”. The homeless are thus by definition socially excluded.
1.3 Citizenship:

Diverse understandings and viewpoints of citizenship have emerged across a range of disciplines (Kazepov et al. 1997). Citizenship can describe who is a citizen, what citizens do, and what they should do. It is assumed ‘citizenship’ refers to a ‘particular bond’ between the people and the state (Poggi 1990, p. 28). It was in this context that Marshall developed his account of citizenship. Marshall identified three elements of citizenship: the civil element, comprising the rights required for individual freedom; the political element, ‘the right to participate in the exercise of political power’ through membership of a political body, or through electing them. The third element, the social, comprised ‘the whole range from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilised being according to the standards prevailing in the society’ (Marshall 1950, p. 11). The denial of any of these three elements of citizenship results in social exclusion. This exclusion becomes more severe when one is denied more than one of these elements of citizenship. I would argue that the homeless are denied full participation in all three of Marshall’s (1950) elements of citizenship and thus face the most extreme form of social exclusion.

All citizens are entitled to both fundamental rights that arise from living in the state and other human rights. The Irish Constitution recognises and declares that we have certain fundamental personal rights, such as entitlement to equality before the law, freedom of expression, etc, and as citizens, we have the right to work regardless of our gender or circumstances. Furthermore Irish citizens, have the right to vote, and thus be included in the political process. However, in order to exercise that right, they must have their name entered on the Electoral Register, and in order for this to happen the citizen must be registered at only one address and must reside at that address on
the 1st September prior to the production of the register. As a result it is clear that
homeless in Ireland are socially excluded from the right to vote, a right that they were
guaranteed as citizens. In the UK the Representation of the People Bill (1999)
introduced a system of rolling electoral registration. Critically it gives homeless
people a clear right and method of registering to vote in local and national elections.
The Bill allows homeless people to vote by allowing them to declare that they have a
significant link with a particular area, and give the address of a place where they
spend a substantial part of their time, for example a day centre.

In addition Pleace, (1998: 48) argues that an individuals citizenship is as much
defined by their economic rights and activities as by their right to vote. Madanipour et
al (1988: 22) argue that a central element of social exclusion is the denial of access to
employment and material resources. It is almost universally accepted that homeless
persons suffer extreme disadvantage in the labour market with the majority being
unemployed. The lack of a permanent home militates against the homeless entering
into and sustaining employment, yet there are also numerous contributory factors
which would include a lack of work skills, not enough access to information about job
and training opportunities and employer discrimination. The nature of homeless
services generally offers no opportunity for productive activity of any kind and indeed
some hostels where members of the homeless population reside actually operate a no
work rule. (McCann, 2000: 44) Thus the homeless population is excluded from the
economic rights of their citizenship through their exclusion from the labour market
and its benefits.
1.4 Social Welfare Entitlements:

To qualify for Unemployment Benefit or Assistance, you must at all times be unemployed, under 66, capable of, genuinely seeking and available for full-time work. A fixed address is not a prerequisite to claims and people sleeping rough are entitled to receive social welfare, assuming they comply with other requirements. However many fail to claim successfully for unemployment assistance, as they are considered not to comply with the requirements of being capable of work and actively seeking it. In such cases they can claim Supplementary Welfare Allowance, which is paid by Community Welfare Officers.¹ Currently those in receipt of unemployment Assistance and Supplementary Welfare Allowance get a maximum personal rate €134.80 per week (Social welfare brochure 19).

The Supplementary Welfare Allowance provides a basic weekly allowance as a right to eligible people who have little or no income. In addition, payments can also be made in respect of urgent or exceptional needs. People qualify for Supplementary Welfare Allowance if they are resident in the State, satisfy a means test and have applied for any other benefit/allowances they may be entitled to. However a central element taken account of for these means tests is the value of any benefit or privilege such as free board and lodging. (Social welfare brochure 54)² This has major ramifications in relation to availing of social welfare, for both rough sleepers and those residing temporarily in B&B’s or hostels, which they are entitled to as citizens.

Finally concerning the issue of the rights of citizenship Somerville (1998: 762) suggests that there should be no exclusion from citizenship on the basis of class/race/gender/etc but disqualification may occur on other grounds. He suggests

¹ [http://www.homelessagency.ie/services/socialwelfare.html](http://www.homelessagency.ie/services/socialwelfare.html)
three possibilities, the first is where a ‘citizen’ doesn't take advantage of the opportunities presented, second, where they commit an illegal act, which results in a loss of entitlement, or third the failure to meet certain obligations (see above for the prerequisites to vote) may mean losing the right concerned and therefore exclusion from the benefits that the right secures. Thus he is in effect arguing that there are many processes of social exclusion, but all are socially constructed and a sense of social seclusion and separation from the institutions of the economy, society, and the state are what is central to all of these processes of social exclusion. A distinction is made by the powerful in society between ‘deserving’ and undeserving’ people (Golding & Midleton, 1982) and it is argued that it is only the latter (the immoral poor) that are socially excluded. This form of thinking is in reality allowing the justification of the social exclusion of sections of our population on the grounds that these people are ‘undeserving’ of our assistance. Indeed Pleace (1998: 54) quotes a homeless man to show how individuals are sometimes refused assistance based on sets of informal rules about who is, and who is not, worthy of assistance even by those services, which are designed for the homeless population to use.

“The social realities have not seeped through to the general awareness and they think that its a self-willed moral weakness, if you like, a lack of moral fibre, and that we have actually put ourselves in this position.”

1.5 Counting the homeless. A mechanism of exclusion:
How else does social exclusion relate to homelessness? Inherent in the absence of shelter is the lack of an address, which limits access to work, health care and social welfare, and to basic hygienic and sanitary living conditions, all of which are rights guaranteed by citizenship. Thus the denial of citizenship rights ensures the social exclusion of the homeless. The census is an important facet of citizenship. The fact that the homeless are not recorded on the census has enormous ramifications. In
failing to count the homeless in the census we are in effect lessening their claims to

citizenship and the rights that go with it.

Therefore it is crucial to look at how the homeless population is counted. There are
major problems with measuring homelessness and social exclusion; with a major facet
being who is counted in and out. While it must be acknowledged that there is a drive
to make services more effective, “achieving this is impossible without current,
accurate information on the nature and extent of homelessness”. (Williams, 1999: 2)

As a result of the 1988 Housing Act, local authorities are required by law to make an
assessment of homelessness in their area every three years at least, yet the results of
the counts held between 1989 and 1996 have in general had little impact on the
development of services to homeless people. It is argued that this is as a result of the
undercounting of the homeless population, which consequently results in political
inaction and a lack of political urgency to address this problem. It is argued that
because of the way these assessments are conducted,\(^3\) they cannot be viewed as
having provided a comprehensive picture of homelessness, as to do so “would require
intensive and extensive research on people who are actually homeless”. (Williams,
1999: 2)

Given the lack of political will for extensive and intensive research it was voluntary
groups who were often left to estimate the size of the homeless population. However
it must be noted that voluntary organisations are in addition explaining the situation of
a sample of homeless persons that use their services and it may not always be a
representative sample. Furthermore 0’ Sullivan, (1996: Xiv) points out that research

\(^3\) The counts are conducted over a period of 1 week and whoever is found to be homeless under the
terms of reference (see Appendix 1) on these specific nights are recorded as the official number of
homeless in the particular local authority area. As a result these estimates of the size of the homeless
population are not based on strong data.
has shown that the style in which homelessness is offered to the public by voluntary agencies may be more an expression of the ideologies of agencies working with the homeless and their funders rather than an objective assessment of the needs and backgrounds of those who use their service.

Added to this is the apparent practice of understating the size of the homeless population not only by local authorities, but also and more worryingly by government ministers. Noel Ahern TD, Minister for Housing and Urban Renewal in response to a Dáil question maintained there were only 79 people sleeping rough in Dublin despite the fact that the most recent 'Counted In' report found 312 people sleeping rough in Dublin (Focus Ireland, Press Release: 2/04/03). Therefore O'Sullivan's argument (1996: Xiii) that “the lack of systematic data in Ireland on the extent of homelessness and the characteristics of the homeless do not allow us easily to unravel the factors that have facilitated the existence of homelessness in Ireland”, still carries great weight. The National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997: 3-4) argues that in the interests of Irish society as a whole:

“No society can view without deep concern the prospect of a significant minority of people becoming more removed from the incomes and lifestyles of the majority”.

Yet this is exactly what is happening, and it is facilitated by the lack of systematic and accurate data on the extent of homelessness, which ensures the invisibility of that population.

1.6 Social Policy and Social Exclusion:
Social inclusion strategies are founded on Marshall’s (1950) social citizenship. Fanning (2001) argues that subsequent developments of this model have provided a
central theoretical basis within social policy for deliberation of welfare rights and entitlements. He further argues that the state institutionalises past dominant constructions of social membership and these are almost always exclusionary. Recently homelessness has been making an increasing number of appearances in the literature on social exclusion, with FEANTSA insisting in its autumn 1997 newsletter\textsuperscript{4} that all homeless people “should be recognised as victims of social exclusion, because having access to decent and affordable housing is an essential condition for full participation in any civilised modern society”.

In many ways the Irish governments' response to homelessness is the same as in the US where the government policy response isolates the homeless from the majority thus furthering exclusion. Additionally the government creates specific programmes and legislation to address Homelessness, rather than problems inherent in the housing or social support services generally. (Marcuse: 1988: 72) Consequently the next section of the paper addresses literature on government policy on both homelessness and housing.

\textit{1.7 The Housing Act, 1988}

The government introduced the Housing Act, in 1988, as an extremely important piece of legislation. It placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. Yet in reality it has made little difference to the homeless with 0' Sullivan (1996: 20) commenting that a 1992 report argued that only 157 homeless people were housed by local authorities directly as a result of the 1988 legislation; six local authorities didn't consider people sleeping rough to be homeless under the terms of the Act, and under half of the local

\textsuperscript{4} \url{http://www.feantsa.org/news/newsletters/newsletterl/nllp4en.htm}
authorities assessed gave the homeless first priority in the allocation of accommodation, even though they were required to do so under the Housing Act. Furthermore it is important to note that under the Act social phenomena such as begging and drunkenness still remain crimes (O’ Sullivan, 1996: 18). This has major ramifications for the most socially excluded of all the homeless population, the rough sleepers. Consequently it ensures that there is a pressing need for wet hostels because even though hostels do provide accommodation for this group, they cannot drink in the hostel and so this particular group within the homeless population are often forced to sleep rough with all that doing so entails.

The Lisbon Summit in 2000 saw the leaders of the 15 EU Member States agree that each country would formulate a National Action Plan to prevent homelessness and social exclusion by means of addressing the range of social and economic factors, which can cause people to become homeless.

1.8 Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy:
In keeping with the National Action Plan agreed in Lisbon, a Government policy document, Homelessness An Integrated Strategy, set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. Many voluntary organisations have argued that responses to homelessness tend to be specific and separate so mindful of this, the policy document states that the government recognise "that a solution to homelessness is not just about the provision of housing or shelter and that there is a need for a comprehensive approach involving health, care and welfare, education, training and support, as well as accommodation, to enable homeless persons to re-integrate into society and to prevent others from becoming homeless" (McCann, 2000: 5). McManus (2002:14) highlights that the report contained proposals in 7 major areas, which included
strategies for prevention of homelessness, the delivery of services to homeless people, clarifying which organisations have statutory responsibility, provision of accommodation, health and welfare needs, work, education, training and funding and interestingly the National Action Plan stated that it will be necessary to provide over 500,000 additional new dwellings in Ireland over the next 10 years.

Yet there are major deficiencies with this policy document and its implementation, which mean that many individuals and families in our state continue to experience social exclusion as a result of homelessness. If we examine one specific aspect of this report, namely the use of B& Bs, we will note that local authorities, and the health boards were to use B& Bs to house homeless people when hostels or other more suitable types of accommodation is not available, bearing in mind that B& Bs are only to be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. However, as a result of the ‘Celtic Tiger’ there is now a major shortage of affordable accommodation for people at the bottom end of the housing market meaning that local authorities have to continue to use B& Bs and house people in them over longer periods in spite of the recommendation that they only be used as a short term measure.

Focus Ireland (Press Release, 2/4/03) claimed a draft report revealing £18 million was spent in Dublin alone in 2002 on using B&B’s as emergency accommodation. They argue this combined with a current average length of stay in B&B’s of 18 months proves the Government is failing to efficiently deal with the core problem of homelessness. Additionally it highlights that insufficient stock of permanent housing is being provided so Homeless people can progress from living in B&B's. This highlights how government is portraying housing as a public issue, which is unrelated to
homelessness, and also how homelessness is being portrayed as affecting a specific group.

Under the National Action Plan (NAP) Homeless Action Plans were to be adopted jointly by each local housing authority and health board and implement the proposals found in *Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy*, yet McManus (2002:15) suggests that because the 3-year Homeless Action Plans do not have a statutory basis, they cannot ensure a discipline on statutory authorities in terms of timescales and allocation of resources. Furthermore, McManus argues forcefully that it is important that the “Irish Nation Action Plan moves beyond its purely descriptive nature of discussing programmes and strategies to measuring actual outcomes in relation to homelessness”. (2002:15) Additionally the joint report on ‘Housing Strategies and Homeless Action Plans’ (2003:107) argue that a key concern must be the failure of the local authorities to produce the action plans on time and the implementation of the Homeless Action Plan’s cannot move forward without the appropriate financial resources from central government.

1.9 Provision of housing, the denial of citizenship rights and social exclusion
Somerville (1998: 772) argues that housing processes can contribute to social exclusion, if the effect of housing processes is to deny certain social groups control over their daily lives, or impinge on their citizenship rights. As mentioned earlier Marshall (1950: 11) identified three elements of citizenship: the civil element, the political element, and the social element. I would argue that housing processes impinge on these three elements of citizenship for the homeless and thus contribute to their social exclusion. Housing tenure can be seen as a source of social exclusion with those who cannot afford to buy being excluded from owner occupation, and as access
to social housing is based on need and the ability to wait, those who cannot afford to wait, those who are perceived as not deserving of a tenancy, and those whose needs don't coincide with a local authorities allocations requirements are excluded (Somerville, 1998: 773). Furthermore owner occupation is deemed to be more exclusionary as it excludes all but those who can afford to buy and does little more than imitate and support established social inequalities and exclusion (Somerville, 1998: 774).

Home ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. In examining Irish housing policy, O'Sullivan (1996: 54) identifies the merciless growth of the owner-occupier sector and the steady erosion of other forms of housing tenure, and it is clear from looking at Figure 1.1 that house prices have rocketed in Ireland. While O'Sullivan argues that this trend has major connotations for the homeless in that housing options available to them are increasingly limited and not geared to those on low incomes, those who are unemployed, etc (1996: 54).

**Figure 1.1**

![Rise in House Prices Nationwide](image)

*Housing Statistics Bulletins. (Figures for 2002 - September Quarter)*

He further states (1996: 71) that while home ownership takes for granted the ability to
obtain a mortgage and continually make repayments over a sustained period we must be mindful of the fact that labour market readjustments mean that people are no longer guaranteed stable employment for the duration of a mortgage repayment. Murphy (1994:196) argues that this raises questions regarding a housing policy that promotes a form of housing tenure “that doesn’t ensure that households will be capable of remaining in that tenure” and in turn is adding to the growing numbers of people at risk of homelessness.

In contrast social housing has a subsidiary position in Irish housing policy and Focus Ireland (Press Release Nov. 21. 2002) revealed that figures released by the department of the environment (see figure 1.2) showed a 23.5% increase in the number of households on the housing waiting lists from 1999 to March 2002, yet despite this increase the government is weakening in its commitment to social housing investment.

Figure 1.2:

Local Authority Housing Waiting Lists

Source: Department of the Environment, Annual Housing Statistics Bulletins, Various Years,
O’Connell (1993: 257) offered the extremely valid viewpoint that government ideology has encouraged an ethos which not only promotes owner occupation above others, but does so in a way that undermines the other forms of housing tenure. By comparison, if we examine figure 1.3 we see a very different trend in other EU countries.

**Figure 1.3:**


In O’Connell’s view the role of local authority housing “is no longer to meet the basic housing needs but to segregate what has become a clearly defined housing underclass” (1993: 258), and in the face of weakening commitment to social housing investment it is hard to agree with O’Sullivan’s (1996:61) assessment that local authority estates have become the refuge for those who do not have the purchasing power to enter into owner occupation, as many are now forced to look to the private rented sector for accommodation, while they wait on housing lists.

While a lot has been written in government publications about making rent allowance available to people on low incomes to enable them to reside in the private rented
accommodation sector, the reality on the ground is that an increasing amount of landlords will not take the rent allowance cheques meaning that an increasing amount of people are being excluded from this sector, therefore 0' Sullivan (1996: 77) was indeed correct in saying that “more needs to be achieved to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner —occupation and not simply a place of last resort for those who cannot obtain local authority housing”.

1.10 Conclusions:
In conclusion, Pleace (1998: 57) makes the extremely valid point that the debate about homelessness and social exclusion is conducted “drawing on concepts that only partially explain it, and that this phenomena should be understood as a set of consequences that arise when social exclusion occurs in a context within which little or no assistance is given to those who experience it”. This is an extremely valid point as if we were to do this we could arrive at an more thorough understanding of what homelessness is and what it represents, than is possible at present.

Powell (1992: 306) stated vociferously “In a society where the majority are preoccupied with home ownership it is likely the possessive individualism will continue to submerge a more humanistic housing policy which would meet the needs of the homeless minority. The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. It is clear from the literature that numbers on housing waiting lists rose by nearly 23.5% between 1999-2002 (Focus Ireland, Press Release Nov. 21. 2002), and has continued to do so since, meaning that increasing numbers of people are finding themselves with no other options but to look to the State to provide housing for them. Worryingly 0' Sullivan (1996: 80) states that the housing options of those
who are unemployed, especially long term unemployed will remain limited and bleak for the foreseeable future and the developments concerning a weakening commitment to social housing investment will result in severe housing deprivation and homelessness for a minority of citizens. (O’ Sullivan, 1996: 85).

Having reviewed the literature it has become clearer that social exclusion of the homeless population is occurring in a variety of ways, and citizenship rights that they were guaranteed under the Irish constitution are being denied to them. It has also become clear that we need to use more holistic and all encompassing means of addressing the issues of homelessness and social exclusion than the more narrow concepts in use at present. Finally it has become clearer that the government policy of promoting owner-occupier housing tenure at the expense of other forms needs to be rethought as it is contributing in a major way to the social exclusion experienced by the homeless population in Ireland at present.
CHAPTER TWO
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter outlines the methodology taken on for this research project. The first section lays down the research question as well as the aims and objectives of the research. The second section examines some of the issues surrounding qualitative research and speaks specifically about grounded theory, while the final section details the research process.

2.1 The research question:
Has government policy and the measures subsequently introduced to address homelessness had any impact on the social exclusion experienced by the homeless, and is housing policy indirectly contributing to homelessness in Ireland?

2.2 Aims and objectives of the research:
The essential aim of this sociological research is to investigate, by engaging with service providers, local authorities, academics and the relevant government department, whether government policy has had any effect in alleviating the social exclusion experienced by the homeless in Ireland. By doing so the objectives (See Appendix II) that were identified from the literature should be accomplished.

2.3 Philosophical perspective.
I used a Structuralist / Marxist philosophical perspective to guide my research project. This holds that there are inherent limitations imposed by the structure of society on individual actors, and the actions of politicians and state officials are merely the
surface materializations of causal structural relations (Bilton et al, 1997: 291). As I was also guided by structural explanations of homelessness I decided this was an appropriate theoretical starting point for examining whether government policy to address the social exclusion experienced by the homeless has had an impact, or has simply ensured “that dominant class interests will … prevail because the state and its personnel are compelled to satisfy the requirements of capitalism”(Bilton et al, 1997: 291).

2.4 Qualitative research:
I felt as a result of the issues that emerged in the literature review around the quantifying of homelessness that a quantitative methodology would not be appropriate to this project. Creswell (1998: 15) described qualitative research as a process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem, with the researcher building a complex holistic picture, analysing words, and reporting the detailed views of respondents. Therefore I felt that the qualitative paradigm was more appropriate for this particular topic as it allowed me to gain an insight into my respondents’ perceptions and beliefs on what homelessness is and how it is being addressed.

There is an often-assumed conflict between the positivist approach of Structuralist Marxism and the subjectivity of qualitative research. While the Structuralist / Marxist perspective holds that there are innate restrictions imposed on individuals because of how society is structured, qualitative research doesn’t suppose there is a common reality experienced by everybody. However I felt qualitative research would compliment my philosophical perspective, as I believe that even though the structure of society restricts individuals, they experiences those restrictions differently.
Additionally Creswell (1998:78) argued we can use theoretical perspectives “in different aspects of a study such as in a conceptual perspective at the beginning of a study”, and we should use such perspectives based on our personal concerns, which may reflect a heartfelt need to promote social action and the right of marginalized people to be heard (Creswell 1998: 78), which were ultimately two of my concerns.

2.5 Grounded theory:
Strauss and Corbin (1990: 24) describe grounded theory as “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon”. As I wanted to examine how Irish governmental policy has impacted on the social exclusion of the homeless, I decided after consultation with my supervisors to use grounded theory as my chosen method of data analysis. We felt it was most apt for developing emergent theory, even if my generated theory conflicted with findings from previous research on this subject. The study was framed by social citizenship, focusing on Marshall’s (1950: 11) three elements of citizenship: the civil, the political and the social, and how the denial of any of these three elements of citizenship results in social exclusion.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued that we should allow theory to develop from data interpretation but we are inevitably faced with the problem of making sense out of vast amount of data. Mintzberg (1979) described two essential steps in inductive research, firstly where we search through a phenomenon looking for order, following one lead to another and ultimately followed by a creative leap, where we generate theory from the data.
When considering the performance of grounded theory, it was vital to recognise the assumptions and biases about homelessness that I had internalised. I must acknowledge that I believed homelessness to be the result of how our society is organised, as it limits some peoples’ ability to improve their social position and recently has made it harder for them to even maintain their current social position. In essence having been informed by the literature, I believed that homelessness was not the result of individual failings and should not be addressed as such. While the research design was theoretically driven, the use of grounded theory as a method of data analysis, combined with bracketing my assumptions enabled me to gain an enhanced understanding of the experiences and beliefs of my respondents.

There was some conflict between the fact that I was theoretically driven and the purist qualitative / grounded theory belief that the theory should emerge from the data. Nonetheless I believe both viewpoints are compatible as the ‘facts’ that emerge from the data speak for themselves and are separate from a researchers’ theoretical framework and prior understanding. Parry (1998) argues that comparing the emergent theory with existing literature helps us to avoid the possibility of existing theories or biases being forced onto the data we collected. Additionally Corbin and Strauss (1990: 7) believe that theories cannot be constructed only from actual incidents / themes emanating from the raw data. Instead these incidents / themes are analysed as potential indicators of phenomena, and are consequently given conceptual labels.

Silvermann (1993) argues, that issues of validity and reliability apply to qualitative studies in the same way as they do to quantitatative studies. To ensure the credibility of my research, I employed a number of steps. Firstly I ensured by using purposive sampling and the procedure of triangulation, which allowed me to collect information
from many different areas of expertise, that the generalisability of my findings was enhanced. Additionally I used member checks by e-mailing a copy of each individual’s transcript to them to check the data for accuracy. I clarified my biases and included elements of the raw data in the report in order to provide a rich thick description of what was occurring, which should provide transferability. The findings were then compared with the existing literature as the final step in seeking verification of my research. This process involves seeing similarities and contradictions that exist between the existing literature and the emergent theory. We must not ignore conflicting findings, as it would lessen a readers’ confidence in our findings. However conflicting literature can represent an opportunity for greater understanding while literature that has similarities to our findings can strengthen the confidence a reader has in those findings (Eisenhardt, 1989).

2.6 Selection of participants:
Most qualitative research is guided by purposive sampling (Lindloff, 1995) with the sample chosen to present conceptual richness. My sample consisted of 10 individuals who I felt were theoretically meaningful, (see Appendix III for a profile of the respondents) and would reflect important aspects of my research question. When choosing the sample I decided against interviewing homeless people as I felt this group were ‘over researched’ and often inappropriately. Instead I selected participants from four of the main homeless service providers, Threshold, Simon, Focus Ireland, and the Homeless Agency. Additionally I chose respondents from both Cork and Limerick City Councils, and the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, which has responsibility for housing. Finally I selected two leading academics to participate, which are specialists in homelessness and housing policy.
The criteria for inclusion used to select my sample were that respondents be information rich and theoretically meaningful respondents. Additionally as my sample had conflicting positions represented it meant that I could produce true to life explanations as my sample may contain deviant cases. Once approval for this sampling strategy was obtained from my supervisors it was implemented. I contacted the groups mentioned previously and asked if somebody would be willing to participate. Once I had an individual in each organisation chosen, I made contact with them.

2.7 Ethics
I had an ethical responsibility to safeguard the interests of the respondents and to report my findings truthfully and accurately. It was necessary and appropriate that informed consent was obtained from the respondents before commencing data collection. Consent forms were drawn up which included a brief description of the purpose of their involvement, etc (See Appendix IV). These informed consent documents ensured participation was voluntary by telling each individual as much about the research as possible and allowing them time to think whether they wished to participate. Each participant was given three options as to how they wished to be referred to in the research, those being (a) by name, (b) by job title, or (c) anonymous. Additionally each was offered the opportunity to check their respective interview transcripts to ensure that I reproduced the data accurately, and they were assured that nobody outside of myself, my internal supervisors and the external examiner would see the full transcript of their interview.
2.8 Data Collection Process:

I organised my data collection for June 2004. As I was utilising a qualitative methodology I decided that interviews were the most appropriate method of data collection, given the flexibility that they offered and their potential for obtaining rich data about how the respondents interpreted homelessness.

I made contact with the respondents via either telephone or e-mail and during this initial contact the respondents consent to participate in the research was established. Every individual contacted agreed to participate. A suitable date and time was arranged to meet for a face-to-face interview. The interview guide (See Appendix V) was made up of a series of open-ended questions but for this project the guide was semi structured. I felt this would enable the respondent and myself to discuss issues that arose from a critical reading of existing literature but also allow the flexibility to deviate as other issues emerged. These new emerging issues were included in subsequent interview schedules. This fits well with the adaptability provided by a qualitative methodology. Furthermore, as the interviews were to be recorded, I tested and familiarised myself with the recording equipment so as to ensure no delays during the actual interview.

In line with the emphasis on theory development through iterative work on the data, I resisted the temptation to complete as many interviews in as short a time as possible. The participants were interviewed for between forty-five and seventy five minutes to obtain the views of the local authorities, government department, academics and service providers on the effectiveness of government policy in alleviating social exclusion with regards to the homeless. When the respondent said something of interest on the key themes, additional questions were asked to guarantee elucidation of
their answers. Gaskell (2000) explains that with appropriate probing and targeted questioning, the researcher can obtain clarification and amplification of interesting points. At the end of the conversation all respondents were thanked for their time and responses to the questions¹.

2.9 Analysis and writing up:
Having obtained the interview data, I duplicated each tape so that in the eventuality of encountering any problems with the original, the data would not be lost.² I listened to each interview in order to identify key themes and the main points of the discussion, which were incorporated into the interview schedule for subsequent interviews if they were found to be absent. Quinn-Patton (1990, p.353) states, “the period after an interview is a critical time of reflection and elaboration. It is a time of quality control to guarantee that the data combined will be useful, reliable and valid”.

Notes made after each interview were used to identify developing themes, facilitating the development of theory after the first few interviews and informing the next batch of interviews. As issues arising from the interviews developed, I felt that in most cases the interview data became denser as the interviews proceeded.

¹ I felt the respondents willingly shared their thoughts about the issues raised; however there were two interviews in which I felt respondents was defensive. A possible explanation for one interview was that the respondent was referred to me by a third party and may only have agreed to do the interview as a favour. In the other case I found the respondent to be extremely defensive from the first moment of the interview and I am not entirely sure why. When the interview finished and the tape stopped recording the respondent seemed much more at ease and spoke in more detail about a number of the areas we had just discussed. On reflection I feel that the answers given by this respondent to a number of questions may have been politically correct and not what the person actually believed. Thus as I was aware that certain answers given may not have been what the respondent actually believed I was particularly careful when examining those transcripts for emergent themes and categories.

² The tape used during the interview with the research officer from Focus Ireland malfunctioned and did not record. In this instance I contacted the respondent again, explained what had happened and they very kindly agreed to do the interview again. I was not aware of any perceptible differences between the first and second interview.
The data collection generated a massive amount of information, which consisted of over 9 ½ hours of audio taped interviews, which were transcribed verbatim and resulted in a body of data consisting of approx 170 pages of interview transcripts. Therefore my analysis was based on data reduction and interpretation of that data. Once the transcription process was complete I used Nvivo computer software to assist in the analysis of the data.

My analysis was based on immersing myself in the data. Grounded theory provides a procedure for developing categories (open coding), interconnecting the categories (axial coding), building a story that connects the categories (selective coding) and ending with a set of discursive theoretical propositions (Creswell, 1998: 150).

Figure 2.1 was a useful guide for reducing the data into themes and creating a theoretical account to explain this social phenomenon. Through a process of reading through the transcripts line by line, time after time, I looked for emergent themes, codes and categories. Meta data and data referring to issues outside of those being investigated were eliminated at this stage.³

Figure 2.1

³ For example people spoke about asylum seekers when asked about citizenship. This was discarded.
I paid particular attention to issues that had not appeared in the literature review and had most flexibility in generating new categories in the earliest stages of this research as my analysis began with open coding. Strauss and Corbin (1990: 97) described open coding as the process that “fractures the data and allows one to identify some categories, their properties and dimensional locations”. In this phase I examined the transcripts for significant categories supported by the text, and continued reducing the data set using the constant comparative approach until I had reached saturation point and ended up with a set of themes and categories that characterised the phenomenon being explored (Creswell, 1998: 150).

I then concentrated on three criteria (Creswell, 1998: 302) to select core categories from the data, those being (a) the centrality of a category in relation to the other categories, (b) the frequency with which it occurs in the data, and (c) the simplicity of its inference for producing the emergent theory. Once I had these categories I identified my central phenomenon. I then read the transcripts horizontally and through the process of axial coding, described by Strauss and Corbin (1990: 97) as putting the data “back together in new ways by making connections between a category and its subcategories” I explored the inter relationship of categories. From here I set about building a story that connects the categories through selective coding in order to end up with theoretical proposals (Creswell, 1998: 150).

2.10 Reflections on the Research Process

As mentioned previously a central characteristic of this project was self-reflexivity (Strauss, 1987). Creswell (1998) comments on the necessity of being reflective as our

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4 I continued looking for instances that represent the category until all the new information didn’t provide further insight into the category (Creswell, 1998:150). This was done for each of the categories identified during the open coding of the data. (See Appendix VI for coding scheme).
values and ideologies replicate in our work, while Peshkin (1988) warned subjectivity is inevitable. I previously stated my prior assumptions about homelessness and while this was coupled to the research on both conscious and unconscious levels, I don’t feel the research would have been possible without the infringement of my own prejudices, past history, etc. Additionally as I was mindful of this fact it allowed me to compose questions that limited how my biases might influence the information respondents gave to me.

I logged my prior assumptions etc, so that any implicit biases I may have had were taken into account during the process of analysis. I feel that by undertaking this rigorous and systematic process I ensured as much as possible that the theory generated was contextually sensitive, persuasive, and relevant. However I must acknowledge that my prior expectations may have influenced the results of this project and there may have been some unconscious interpretations that were influenced by prior assumptions. Therefore my interpretation of the data that emerged may not have been entirely precise, however as all interviews are mutually constructed the reflexivity and transparency of the researcher is core to the analysis, and I would argue that it was only through this process of reflexivity that I could understand completely what my respondents taught me about the day to day realities of how government policy impacts on homelessness.
CHAPTER THREE

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the data analysis process. It begins by presenting definitions of homelessness, the respondents understanding of homelessness and their understanding of the citizenship of the homeless. It progresses through the debate over information on homelessness, to how homelessness is addressed and the questions surrounding resources. The final section of the chapter presents the respondents views on the impact of housing policy, health care policy, legislation / policy on homelessness, and any changes suggested for this area.

3.1 Defining homelessness:

Eoin (p.5) stated

“the current figures the government give out is 48,000 so you can either have a figure of 88,000 or 26,000 depending on how you want to define it...these are all just socially constructed.”

Therefore how homelessness is defined has implications for how it is dealt with. All respondents from homeless services work with the definition of homelessness in the 1988 Housing Act, with Focus Ireland and Simons’ respondents agreeing, “as definitions of homelessness go specifically in Europe it’s a very positive one” (Noeleen, p.1).

Homelessness is said by some\(^1\) to include the categories of hidden homeless and those at risk of homelessness, yet broader definitions are in the main contested by central Government. Focus’s representative (p.1) said they would like to see the definition “broadened in a number of ways” to include “people who would be at risk of

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\(^1\) Six respondents. Three were from local authorities, 2 were from service providers and the DOE respondent
homelessness”. In contrast to this view, the Homeless Agency felt the legislative
definition is already

“as broad as any definition of homelessness can be because... potentially it
includes any situation including people who are at risk of homelessness,
leaving institutions and all of that”. (Mary, p.1)

At Risk of Homelessness:
Eoin (p.1) felt there was a benefit to including the 13 categories at risk of
homelessness and quantifying the size of those populations as it can help predict
future trends in homelessness. Additionally he did not feel that including this category
diminishes the unique nature of distress experienced by those who are physically
homeless and felt that while the focus is on visible homelessness

“there is no point in providing services for that group only if at the same time
there are certain factors that need to be taken into account in homelessness.
Unless you have preventative strategies as well as ameliorative forms for
people who are actually homeless then you are constantly playing catch
up”(Eoin, p.1).

Hidden Homeless
The respondent from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local
Government (p.5) acknowledged that

“in an ideal world everybody living in this country would have the type of
accommodation that they wanted but we are not living in an ideal world in that
sense”.

Aisling (p.6) highlighted the problem, stating

“there are a huge number of people within their own homes that I am calling to
that need to be looked and dealt with, again because they are seriously on the
poverty line. They have the four walls and that but they might as well be
homeless”.
Contested

Several viewpoints\(^2\) were expressed as to why the government contested broader definitions of homelessness. Local authority respondents felt in some ways it was done to reduce costs. Rob (p.6) expressed the opinion that

“If there is less money in the country they say well this is the act; this is what we have to operate, aren’t we giving them shelter….Whereas if it was redefined certainly or spruced up or beefed up a little to kind of encompass everything there would be more demands on government to provide funding”.

Aisling (p.7) stated that while it is probably the case that broader definitions were contested to reduce the numbers and therefore costs,

“You can’t have 3 or 4 definitions. Local government has to stick to one because if they don’t there will be just chaos… local authorities… all need to be …singing off the same hymn sheet, the same definition, calculating and counting the same way”.

Additionally Rob (p.7) felt it might be that the government “don’t want to make it too easy for people”.\(^3\) Focus and Threshold however both expressed the view that to accept a broader definition would involve a bigger commitment to address inequality.

Focus’s respondent (p.2) highlighted this when stating that

“Noel Ahern the Junior Minister for the Department has said publicly that he doesn’t believe in a rights based approach and I suppose that by broadening it or by encompassing those social, economic and cultural rights… you then increase the onus on the state to respond in a rights based way, which they do not seem to be willing to do”.

\(^2\) Six respondents expressed opinions, three from Local Authorities, two service providers and the DOE respondent.

\(^3\) “There is a theory within government that the more services you provide the larger the number of homeless people you will see”. (Rob, p.7)
### 3.2 Understanding Homelessness:

It is clear that there are two schools of thought as to what causes homelessness. Five respondents believe it has structural causes, which

> “include things like a lack of access to social housing, poor supply of social housing, you look at the structural issues around poverty, unemployment, poor education, disadvantage etc”. (Focus Ireland Respondent, p.1)

However the DOE representative (p.1) contested this.

> “To say it is because of lack of housing per se doesn’t give the correct impression... its not always housing policy that affects homelessness as directly as people might make out”.

Three believed homelessness is the result of individual problems, with Aileen (p.1) stating, “Addiction… seems to be a lot of the problem”. The DOE respondent (p.1) argued that many homeless have been housed before and failed to keep that accommodation because of mental health problems, drugs, alcohol, anti social behaviour etc.

Conversely three respondents argued that while individualistic factors cause homelessness if there were adequate social nets in place it would not have the same impact, and individualistic factors are more likely to result in homelessness “if you have someone who is already living on the margins, either in their community or financially” (Noeleen, p.2)

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4 Four service providers and one local authority respondent.

5 Two respondents were from the local authorities & the other was the DOE respondent.

6 Two respondents were service providers and one was a local authority respondent.
Deserving and undeserving poor:
The homeless are seen as either deserving or undeserving poor. Six respondents\(^7\) felt they are seen as deserving poor as “everybody knows what having a home means, so they have an inkling that if you didn’t have that it must be pretty crap” (Lillian p.5) particularly given the inappropriateness of it considering our Celtic boom (Focus Respondent, p.9).

Conversely five respondents\(^8\) felt that people viewed the homeless as undeserving poor, highlighted by Aileen (p.6)

“I think a lot of people feel that these people should be more inclined to help themselves, that they don’t look kind of further and see that there are an awful lot of deeper problems there”.

Noeleen (p.12) stated a dominant government ideology is if people haven’t benefited from the economic boom it is partly their own fault and consequently “among some senior civil servants and some politicians you will still hear the language… these people don’t want to be housed”. Worryingly Noeleen (p.10) also spoke of how Simon had responses of

“Which homeless do you deal with? It’s not the blacks or the Romanians? ... people are more tolerant... if they are Irish homeless people”.

Additionally Focus’s respondent (p.9) highlighted that its more difficult for people to have sympathy for people who are in B&Bs or in long-term hostels because there is a sense shelter has been provided.

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\(^7\) Four respondents were from service providers, one was from a local authority & one was an academic.

\(^8\) Three were respondents from the local authorities, 1 was from a service provider & the DOE respondent.
3.3 Understanding the citizenship of the homeless:

Citizenship:
Five respondents⁹ felt citizens have certain rights and entitlements, with Aileen (p.5) stating, “everybody has the right to accommodation, the right to a living”. Noeleen (p.9) argued, “social and economic rights should be as fundamentally enshrined as civil and political rights but the DOE respondent (p.4) believed having rights like these are sometimes worthless, a point illustrated by Tony (p.2).

“There are certain constitutional rights which are provided for in our constitution, for example there is this business in the constitution that a woman shouldn’t be obliged by economic necessity to work outside the home. Now as far as I know nobody has taken this up”.

⁹ Of nine respondents five (3 from local authorities, and 2 service providers) felt citizenship brings certain rights and entitlements.
However citizenship must be adapted to individual need because

“for a rough sleeper... where their next meal is coming from is far more important to them than whether they are a citizen because they don’t feel to some degree that they are a part” (Aisling, p.5).

Social exclusion:
Social exclusion is strongly connected to the concept of poverty and all respondents described it in terms of exclusion from society through “exclusion from housing... education... health care... your family... your community and from involvement at that level” (Focus respondent, p.8). Interestingly the DOE respondent (p.2) felt that social exclusion stigmatises people in designated socially excluded areas as they often “become socially excluded whether or not the people themselves felt they were”.

Nine respondents expressed the view that there is a relationship between citizenship and social exclusion. Several felt some Irish citizens are socially excluded as a result of not getting their citizenship entitlements.

“It doesn’t feature that they are citizens of Ireland because they are so much excluded from housing, from jobs, from other facilities. So to those people the fact that they are a citizen of Ireland or the moon, it doesn’t really matter to them” (Aisling, p.4)

Noeleen (p.8) argued homelessness is the most extreme form of social exclusion, and highlighted “the fact that people who are currently homeless are denied absolutely everything is rarely acknowledged”.

Manifestation:
How does social exclusion manifests for the homeless? On a simplistic level they are excluded from knowing where they can wash, when they will next eat, etc. There are

10 All seven respondents (4 service providers, 2 from local authorities and the DOE respondent).

11 Of the 10 respondents who answered that question only the respondent from the DOE didn’t think there was a relationship between citizenship and social exclusion.
issues around developmental and educational delay, socialization and on a higher-level exclusion from access to housing, education, employment, etc. The criminalisation of homelessness through the remnants of the Vagrancy Act is causing difficulties, mainly in Dublin and worryingly “people who did not have a permanent address were more likely to get custodial sentences… when compared to the general public” (Focus respondent, p.14).

On the subject of social welfare Mary (p.4) explained there were numerous reasons why social welfare officers might decide that homeless individuals should be refused unemployment assistance and instead given supplementary welfare allowance. On the issue of SWA means testing it emerged that while some hostels are free it would not have any impact as “we don’t have the hostel not charging people and social welfare penalizing them… we are trying to work together” (Mary, p.4-5).

Finally while it emerged that there is a mechanism whereby homeless can vote via joining the supplementary register of electors, but there is a difficulty in that the person must sign on at a Garda station and as they may have negative views of the Gardai they are quite unlikely to use this system. (Noeleen, p.16)

Social Inclusion:
In keeping with these problems around voting Lillian (p.11) felt measures such the Representation of the People Bill (UK, 1999) if introduced here would recognise the exclusion of the homeless and “would be progressive in the sense of a civic society recognizing that failure on their part”.
Both local authorities respondents referred to now having social inclusion units and it emerged that there is now a cabinet sub committee on social inclusion. Additionally the DOE respondent stated (p.2) the department have been “promoting local authority houses…shared ownership and affordable housing which is an effort to build a more socially inclusive society”.

The need for services that suit the client rather than vice versa emerged. Eoin (p.12) felt that in the past service providers prioritised themselves but respondents from Simon and Focus were adamant their services are now client centred with the focus on empowering people so that clients value “the contribution they can make to their family, to themselves, to their community”(Focus respondent, p.6). This should mean that they can “realise their potential and rights as Irish citizens. And that is about participating in society”(Mary, p.6).

3.4 The information debate:
Eight respondents\(^{12}\) referred to a shortfall in accurate information on the nature and extent of homelessness. Noeleen (p.7) highlighted how in NAPS incl. the government acknowledged the data deficit in homelessness without saying what they were going to do about it. The DOE respondent felt the LINK system will give us better information on who is homeless, why, and for how long, but Noeleen disputed this.\(^{13}\)

Issues around measuring hidden homelessness emerged, so much so that Rob (p.7) admitted that their actual homeless figure is possibly 100 higher than the official

\(^{12}\) Three respondents were from local authorities, three were from service providers, one was an academic and the other was the DOE respondent.

\(^{13}\) Noeleen did this on the basis that LINK is meant to ensure that clients get a good service and that’s its primary tool. (p.6)
figure because of people in misplaced accommodation. Some respondents\textsuperscript{14} felt the need for a complete revision of how the homeless count is managed and Rob (p.8) suggested that the count in Dublin should be done over a 3-day period every month instead of every three years.\textsuperscript{15} However Eoin (p.6) argued that he would only take the figures from Dublin seriously as the returns from the rest of the country are nonsense.

An issue emerged over whether all people in hostels should be included in the figures. Eoin (p.17) stated some people living in hostels would not consider themselves to be homeless but Aileen (p.20) refuted this suggestion.

\begin{quote}
“I know there are people who long term, will spend their lives there and probably never get out and to them it probably is but it still is ... a person who is homeless because they haven’t been provided with an independent home.”
\end{quote}

Eoin (p.2-3) maintained fund raising has become more important particularly with Focus and Simon\textsuperscript{16} so they have to present a certain image of homelessness to the public to aid fundraising, however Noeleen (p.3) defended Simons’ position,

\begin{quote}
“Our policy agenda is very much informed by being solutions orientated... by working in partnership with government where we can but also by being a critical voice where we have to”.
\end{quote}

Five respondents\textsuperscript{17} stated that they had seen an increase in the numbers wishing to avail of services. It was further reported that there were increases in numbers of single women with alcohol or drug dependency, families and young men.

\textsuperscript{14} Four respondents, two were service providers, one was from a local authority and one academic.

\textsuperscript{15} Rob believes that you can’t justify or quantify things over just a set 3-day period as it is at present.

\textsuperscript{16} Eoin is a board member of the Simon Community.

\textsuperscript{17} This included both local authority respondents and three respondents from service providers. Rob (p.1) felt part of the reason for the increase is because they were providing more services and there is a theory within government that the more services you provide the larger the number of homeless people you will see.
In contrast Mary (p.3) stated numbers have distinctly fallen.

“The numbers of families has gone down to practically nothing, the number of beds in the sector is far more than we need and we are beginning to reduce reliance on the private sector as a provider of emergency accommodation”.

Eoin (p.7) stated data in Dublin shows that they have managed to stop the increase in homelessness, and it must now be stabilised and pushed down. However while three other respondents\(^\text{18}\) acknowledged there have been reductions in numbers of rough sleepers Noeleen (p.6) stated they have probably seen more people overall.\(^\text{19}\) Finally it was noted that homeless figures are seasonal and differ from winter to summer.\(^\text{20}\)

**Necessity of accurate information:**

Eight respondents\(^\text{21}\) felt accurate information is essential for identifying core groups and needs and addressing those needs based on that information. Additionally Aisling (p.6) highlighted the need for accurate information as it was being fed back to the Department and influencing policy and legislation.

Mary (p.5) spoke of developing “a system, which is used by most of the services in the sector and which records information on a daily basis or on a contact basis on individuals who are homeless”. Aileen (p.8) stated they have bed returns every month providing names and the number of nights stayed. They also document rough sleepers through their outreach worker, meaning they can build up an accurate picture on the

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\(^{18}\) Three service providers’ respondents.

\(^{19}\) The explanation offered is that NGO’s are developing projects that actually meet the needs of those being forced to sleep rough, with the result that in the main their lifestyles are more stabilized and they are able to move on to other forms of accommodation (Noeleen, P.5).

\(^{20}\) People come into the cities during the summer so you will have transient extras.

\(^{21}\) Two respondents were from local authorities, four were from service providers, one academic & the DOE respondent.
nature and extent of homelessness. Noeleen (p.7) summed up the need for accurate information perfectly

“Until we have an accurate housing needs assessment, that measures not only peoples housing needs, but their other needs such as their need for health services etc, we are not going to solve the problem”.

Figure 3.2:

3.5 Addressing homelessness:
Four respondents\(^{22}\) felt current diverse means of addressing homelessness were preferable to a central national method. The general view was that “services are better delivered the more local they are” (Mary, p.11) and if everybody becomes “one agency in some ways… you lose the impact because the public knows the different names and appreciates the backgrounds of those organisations” (Lillian, p.2).

\(^{22}\) All four were respondents from service providers.
Three respondents in contrast felt it would be better to address homelessness from a national level with Eoin (p.16) questioning the need for so many local authorities. Interestingly it was argued that the Department of the Environment is far too interfering with local authorities. Moreover three respondents implied a combination would produce the desired result, as “you need to have a strong policy at a national level if you want to be able to do anything at a local level” (Focus respondent, p.13).

A question of resources?
Half the service providers require more resources to continue providing present levels of service. Where local authorities are concerned Mary (p.10-11) argued most council’s don’t prioritise homelessness and thus don’t prioritise resources accordingly. Three respondents felt resources were adequate, however while Rob (p.13) agreed funding for new building projects was forthcoming it was tighter where funding for day-to-day operation costs are concerned. Noeleen (p.14) summed up the opinion of four respondents when saying

“One of the big problems is the issue of resources and often human resources. Often the staff... responsible for housing policies or for homelessness policies have very little expertise in the area... and... don’t have the resources to pull in the expertise that they need”.

23 Two were from service providers and the third was an academic.

24 Their real role should be about setting the strategic framework for housing and providing supports and clear information to local authorities to deliver on the strategy. Its responsibility should be about monitoring and making sure that people are doing things according to the principles of the strategy. (Mary, p.11)

25 Two respondents were service providers and the other was from a local authority.

26 Two were from local authorities and the third was the DOE respondent.

27 DOE respondent (p.2) states funding has increased from €12 million in 2000 to €50 million last year and €51 million this year.

28 Three respondents were from service providers and the fourth was an academic.
There is a need for wet hostels but the DOE respondent (p.11) argued not every county needs one. Rob (p.14) felt they are beneficial as the old hostel mentality can damage clients’ health. Interestingly three respondents highlighted the belief that homelessness is an urban phenomenon confined to large towns but Focus’s respondent (p.13) reasoned that people “move to those urban areas to avail of services that are not available in their local community”. Consequently four respondents stated certain local authorities simply export their problem with the DOE respondent (p.14) confirming a dim view is taken of those local authorities. It was suggested local authorities provide services such as wet hostels on a regional basis and Rob (p.14) highlighted Limerick City Council serving the mid west area with their wet hostel but argued other local authorities should pay their fair share for providing this service.

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29 You can turn street drinkers around to becoming dry within the hostel. The old hostel mentality had a curfew and no drinking inside. So at curfew time there is binge drinking at the front doors, which for alcoholics damages their liver even faster. (Rob, p.14)

30 One respondent was an academic, one was from a local authority and the third was a service provider.

31 The present data shows that 70% of homelessness is found in the Dublin area. (Eoin, P.7)

32 When asked how this practice is stopped, they replied, “You just say listen you have to stop exporting the problem” (DOE, p.14).

33 For example Limerick City, Limerick County, Tipperary North Riding, Clare are all within the space of 10 miles of each other and there is not a need for a wet hostel in all of these areas.

34 Limerick City Council have people from Clare, Limerick County and Tipperary NR local authorities in their wet hostel. Rob (p.18) “You have an authority like Clare county council who have no homeless provisions in terms of homeless hostels… When you see we are the ones who pick up the tab for all the other local authorities as well it proves difficult and I think from a governmental point of view that has to be looked at because Limerick city pays a lot of money out to house people from other local authorities”. 
3.6 Resourcing Solutions:

B&B’s:

B&B standards’ have improved and is now often quite good accommodation. According to Focus’s respondent (p.4) this means “people have been more willing to move into that sector and to engage with services”.

Eoin (p.13) acknowledged that

“you don’t want to use them but you can either have them on the street or else you can have them in accommodation and we are not building sufficient units of accommodation”.

However the respondents from both local authorities stated if they place somebody in B&B’s they “try to get them out of there as soon as possible because it’s not the right environment for anybody”(Rob, p.14). Additionally both respondents from Cork City Council expressed some concern as to how health boards used B&B” with Aisling (p.8) stating “sometimes the southern health board puts people in there very casually”. She (p.8) added that the maximum length of stay in Cork is approximately six weeks in exceptional circumstances.

But a different picture emerged about Dublin where the DOE representative (p.9) admitted that people were spending too long in B&B’s while Focus’s respondent (p.13) explained that

“You can have people there for 3 months and you can some who are there for 18 months, 24 months, 36 months”.

Interestingly the DOE respondent (p.9) explained that local authorities “would say that a lot of the people are in B&B because they have serious problems… and need quite an amount of work done with them before they can be put back into housing again”. Additionally it was mentioned that local authorities having difficulties getting people out of B&B’s, perhaps “because the accommodation is so good, there is no charge,
which is a serious problem, and they don’t have to pay for light, heat, anything” (DOE respondent, p.10).

Move on accommodation:
Five respondents identified move on accommodation as a problem area, with Noeleen (p.6) arguing “the decline in the numbers forced to sleep rough is not sustainable unless we can free up emergency beds by providing decent homes for people”. It emerged that the private sector can be utilised for the longer term housing of people with the Focus Ireland respondent (p.10) stating the private rented sector has opened up as an option “as the market has kind of slowed down… and rent levels have stabilized a little bit”, but it depends a good deal on supplementary rent allowance guidelines.

The standard of some private rented accommodation causes problems for people moving from transitional accommodation of a good standard and if “it’s the wrong setting they are going to take a step backwards and go back onto the streets” Aileen (p.3).

Permanent Accommodation:
Six respondents mentioned problems around permanent accommodation as in many cases the housing simply isn’t there, with sizeable housing waiting lists resulting. Eoin (p.8-9) argued that we are constantly going to be faced with a battle if we continuously sell off the public housing stock (of which more later), while Noeleen (p.19) went a step further and stated “until such time as we can provide mainstream accommodation for people who are homeless we won’t actually tackle the problem”.

35 Three respondents were from service providers and two were from local authorities.
36 Three were from service providers, two were from local authorities and one was an academic.
3.7 The status of social housing:

Four respondents\(^{37}\) felt the status of social housing in the government’s overall housing policy is high, a fact summed up by the DOE Respondent (p.7).

“Local authority housing has increased in recent years, voluntary housing certainly has increased and that caters for people who are on the local authority waiting lists. The other schemes we have like the shared ownership and the affordable housing is virtually all geared towards people who are on the local authority housing lists”.

Yet two respondents\(^{38}\) felt that this high status was almost paradoxical in that “huge amounts of money…are going into local authority housing… but certainly the housing doesn’t seem to be coming out the other end” (Tony, p.9). It must be noted that a significant amount of local authority housing at present is replacement housing and this should be factored into the amount of money coming into this sector. Three respondents\(^{39}\) felt that social housing’s status is low and it has become “a residual housing supply, often associated with bad estate management and poor quality” (Noeleen, p.11). Interestingly Lillian (p.7) stated the government is not keeping up to a commitment made in 2000 to have increase levels of social housing.

Second Class Option:

Four respondents\(^{40}\) felt that social housing was now seen as a second-class option as highlighted by Rob (p.10)

“There was a scheme in Kanturk with loads of lovely houses in a lovely area and they couldn’t give them away for €111,000. Why? … Because it was deemed social housing they were afraid to go and live there”.

\(^{37}\) Two respondents were from local authorities, and respondents from the DOE, & Homeless Agency.

\(^{38}\) One was a respondent from a service provider and the other was an academic.

\(^{39}\) All were respondents from service providers.

\(^{40}\) Three respondents were from service providers and the other was from a local authority.
Three noted\textsuperscript{41}, that estates seem to be stigmatised meaning even people brought up in local authority estates don’t want to move back to those areas. However Aileen (p.11) highlighted how some local authorities are trying to counteract that stigma.

\begin{displayquote}
We are now buying houses in private estates, which I think is a great idea, and that kind of loses all of that because it’s the address that’s the same”.
\end{displayquote}

**Single homeless:**
Seven respondents\textsuperscript{42} referred to problems around housing single people in social housing, despite the fact that “70% of homeless people are single” (Noeleen, p.11)

This year in Dublin Simon “400 people used the emergency shelter, not one of them received social housing from any of the local authorities in Dublin” (Noeleen, p.11).

In defence of local authorities Aileen (p.9) explained that “local authority housing stock was mainly built for family houses…which of course you are not going to offer to a single person”, while Rob (p.12) added that “if a single man turns up looking for housing they would be given private rent allowance quicker”.

**Implications:**
Mary (p.12) felt that “housing policy, which doesn’t make provision for single people impacts on homelessness”. Social housing is a bottom aspect of the housing system charged with housing low-income households, but Tony (p.11) felt that “at the moment it’s not doing that job well because there isn’t enough of it”. Only 5,500 / 6500 social local authority houses were built last year (Focus respondent, p.11) and Lillian (p.7) argued this puts more pressure on the private rented sector, lessening pressure on landlords to have their premises up to statutory minimum standard as people have nowhere else to go.

\textsuperscript{41} Two respondents were from local authorities and the third was an academic.

\textsuperscript{42} Four respondents were from service providers and three were from local authorities.
3.8 Managing Practice:

Housing waiting lists:
There is no clear strategy for how we accommodate people as different local authorities use different schemes. Eoin (p.10) believed “those who have a points based system… are most manipulatable because … you want to enhance the number of points that you get if this is how you get accommodation” therefore a pure waiting list was the fairest system. Conversely Noeleen (p.14-15) argued transparent and accessible housing waiting lists countrywide would have a major impact on the nationalizing of dealing with homelessness.

Five out of seven respondents belived the homeless were not being prioritised on housing waiting lists. Three respondents felt it was feasible if the appropriate accommodation came up, but it was a lengthy wait. Rob (p.8) noted local authorities simply can’t create ghettos and said Limerick City Council is “trying to purchase different houses in various areas of the city so as to not segregate one area as a homeless area”. Interestingly the DOE respondent (p.8-9) explained that with the possible exception of Dublin not all local authorities prioritise the homeless but

“it maybe that they are looking at the people on their list and... saying they don’t think they can sustain the tenancy or that he or she has been in two local authority houses already”.

In fact four respondents felt prioritising the homeless on waiting lists sees people getting categorised as homeless in order to fastrack the process of getting housed, a point clearly orated by Mary (p.11).

“We have actually created a situation where because people get over all priority for housing on the basis that they are homeless that... loads of people

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43 There were three respondents from service providers, the DOE respondent and an academic who felt the homeless were not being prioritised, while two respondents from local authorities felt they were prioritised if the appropriate accommodation was available.

44 There was a respondent from a local authority, a service provider, the DOE and an academic.
then kind of squeeze themselves into that kind of category in order to fastrack themselves on the housing list”.

3.9 The impact of legislation / policy on homelessness:
The 1988 Housing Act was positive in that it recognised homelessness. We have already spoken of how there is massive variation about whether the homeless are prioritised on housing waiting lists, an example of where it works in practice being “Louth county council where 4% of the housing stock goes to people who are homeless” (Noeleen, p.10). Additionally there are issues around the lack of information obtained from the three-year counts. In reality the definition of homelessness adopted in the 1988 Act is interpreted numerous ways by different local authorities and the fundamental problem is that the Act did not put a duty on local authorities to house homeless people. Mary (p.10) explained that local authorities have additional powers under the Act but they only provide from their own housing stock.

Furthermore Noeleen (p.17) highlights the problems with the Act when stating

“in order to have proper impact, the ’88 act has to be revised... in order to deliver the transparent and accessible housing needs assessment, priority allocation system, proper housing needs assessment that is client orientated, a homeless count that actually measures peoples housing needs and that is regularly updated...and ultimately a statutory duty is put on a local authority to house people who are homeless”.

The Integrated strategy was extremely important as it

“Forces homelessness in the social inclusion agenda; it says the solution to homelessness is not the provision of emergency accommodation but the provision of houses for people.... It recognises the need for a multi agency approach and a holistic approach to address the needs of people who are homeless...and to make resources available on a multi-annual basis to services” (Mary, p.2)

45 They can provide money to people to rent in the private rented sector, they can give money to the voluntary organisations, they can provide for their own housing stock, they can also provide advice, information and direction to people by way of alternatives. (Mary, P.10)
However there are serious concerns about the failure to provide multi annual funding, so much so that projects established with capital funding are experiencing difficulties as the expected multi annual revenue for the day to day running costs is not forthcoming. Noeleen (p.18) stated, “In the main local authority funding has been… forthcoming. Health board money on the other hand… has been less solid”46. Interestingly Rob (p.13) also highlighted that local authorities faced problems getting money from the Department.

“We were told ok you need to go get your wet hostel, get your move on accommodation, get your drop in centre, go do all of that and then you go and ask for the money and they are like ‘I don’t know about that. The Celtic Tiger is gone’.

The strategy did recognise the structural issues around homelessness and identified some of the triggers that lead to homelessness. However Eoin (p.13) argued it presents homelessness as a problem of deinstitutionalisation, and therefore its’ major flaw is that it doesn’t mention housing47. Thus the responsibility to provide more appropriate social housing is taken off the state. Noeleen (p.17) admitted Simon thought the strategy was excellent but there is a lack of implementation across all aspects of the strategy, resulting in major frustration among service providers.

It must be acknowledged that it has had a significant impact on rough sleepers and while major strides appear to have been made in Dublin, Cork and Limerick, they have not been replicated countrywide.

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46 The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government has a dedicated budget for homelessness; everybody knows how much money they have for homelessness. The health boards didn’t do likewise which made life difficult for service providers etc. (DOE respondent, p.11)

47 Noeleen also referred to this flaw.
Homeless action plans were important in providing people dedicated to homelessness, with the benefits that arise from such a situation. For example Aileen (p.1) stated, “Since we have taken on our outreach worker…we have gone away from just the administration side. She is actually out on the streets meeting people”. Some have been extremely effective building on the partnership approach, to find better solutions to homelessness\(^{48}\) and it emerged that while local authorities did not complete their plans on time anything not completed is brought forward into the next plan. The DOE (p.10) respondent believed local authorities were excessively guided by other agencies in the first round of plans instead of deciding themselves what they needed, while Focus’s respondent (p.13) highlighted that setbacks can occur when the plans have to go before county councillors and strategic policy committees etc as the NIMBY\(^{49}\) syndrome, the issue of the deserving poor can come to the fore. Finally Mary (p.3) argued forcefully that in the next round of plans we must concentrate on preventing people becoming homeless and improve intervention strategies for those who are homeless to ensure their homelessness is as short as possible.

Eoin (p.15) believed they are a positive step but it may be 10 or 15 years before we see proper results from them. However they are not on a statutory basis\(^{50}\), meaning there is no duty on local authorities to complete them on time. Aileen (p.19) agreed that if the plans were on a statutory basis people might be more conscious of

\(^{48}\) The action plan for Dublin has been evaluated by Price, Waterhouse, Cooper and found 80\% of the priority targets were met within the timeframe, that the views of the stakeholders in the action plan and the agency has been effective in changing mindsets, in improving partnership working, in improving the quality of services, in improving the range of accommodation available to people, in improving understanding of homelessness including the information that is available on homelessness, by providing training, by improving funding that is available and by improving the way in which funding is available to services. (Mary, p.13)

\(^{49}\) Not in my back yard.

\(^{50}\) The respondents from three service providers and a local authority spoke of this, while one of the academics was not sure it would make any difference.
completing the plans on time but didn’t think it would really make any difference.

However the Focus respondent (p.16) was adamant that

“It’s not enough that the action plan has been written, it needs to be implemented, it needs to be monitored, it has to be evaluated, the outcomes have to be looked at…. The fact that the action plans don’t have a statutory basis…You are automatically saying that it’s not as important as your housing strategy because your housing strategy is a statutory document”.

Interestingly Mary (p.14) argued, “They do have a statutory basis. They are formally adopted by each of the local authorities, by the elected representatives”
3.10 The impact of housing policy:

Figure 3.3:

Crisis of affordability:
There is a perceived crisis of affordability\(^{51}\), with local authorities housing strategies focusing on affordability even where their needs assessment showed a greater social need (Focus respondent, p.11). The media focus on this crisis of affordability thus sidelining the issue of social housing.

“There is a sense that yes we know people are homeless and we must help them etc but there is a bigger preoccupation around the crisis in affordability and what it means for our young people” (Focus respondent, p.9).

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\(^{51}\) Three respondents from service providers and an academic made reference to this perceived crisis of affordability.
House prices are driven by demand and as financial institutions are lending at 2 ½ to 3% mortgages are easy to service\textsuperscript{52} (Tony, p.7). Additionally few people are vulnerable as far as mortgages are concerned and could endure a moderate rise in interest rates. Unemployment poses more problems but the labour market outlook is good. However in contrast “almost the entire private rented sector is on the margins” (Tony, p.5) as high rents are more common than high mortgages and it’s difficult to reduce these rents (Tony, p.5).

**Private rented accommodation:**
The private rented sector is seen as the stepping-stone to home ownership or as a residual accommodation for people who can’t afford home ownership. Three Respondents\textsuperscript{53} stated investors have a sizeable share of this market with Eoin (p.11) feeling that they took up too many units. Additionally Tony (p.3-4) felt investors were leaving a lot of dwellings empty, as it may be just as profitable\textsuperscript{54}. Problems of sub standard accommodation, the issue of differential rents and security of tenure emerged. Three respondents\textsuperscript{55} felt regulation through the private rented tenancies bill will accord some degree of security of tenure but as the sector is not sufficiently profitable to encourage more people to let Tony (p.12) argued if there isn’t “an economic incentive to raise quality, regulation will simply cause supply to decline” possibly with more people on the streets.

\textsuperscript{52} Tony (p.6) The cost of servicing a mortgage on one hand has gone up as house prices have risen, but on the other hand it has gone down as interest rates have fallen.

\textsuperscript{53} Two were academics and the other was from a service provider.

\textsuperscript{54} If you are renting you have to deal with tenants, advertising, maintenance etc. so if a landlord is getting anything less than a 2% return and they have the property just for capital gain then it might actually be as profitable to leave it empty and let the value accumulate. Tony (p.3-4)

\textsuperscript{55} The respondents were a Service Provider, an academic and the respondent from the DOE.
SWA rent supplement:
The availability of rent supplement gave people alternatives but did not mainstream or raise standards in the private rented sector. Additionally while rents have risen partly on account of rent supplement allowance Tony (p.8) maintained if they had not risen the supply wouldn’t be there. The lower end of the private sector became a quasi-social housing sector and as the cost of the SWA rent supplement rose considerably the government introduced changes to the system. Three respondents argued the changes have no negative implications with the DOE respondent (p.12) stating “we have made absolutely sure in the regulations that nobody was to be made homeless because of the implementation of that”. Interestingly Rob (p.12) actually believed the changes would benefit the homeless. In contrast four respondents believed these changes will have negative implications, as the only way for people to avoid the new rules is for them to be assessed as homeless, indeed as a housing needs assessment is now required for rent supplement a backlog has developed at local authorities and people are being denied rent supplement while they wait. Interestingly Noeleen (p.13) highlighted that in the last budget approximately €58 million was spent on homelessness yet €60 million was saved in welfare cuts.

Implications of home ownership:
Three respondents felt home ownership has no implications for homelessness with Rob (p.5) stating “if a homeless person has a goal of ‘I want to be a homeowner’…

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56 Two respondents were from the local authorities and the third was the DOE respondent.

57 The local authority has to sign off on anybody going for private rented accommodation, therefore people can’t just give up a local authority house and say ‘I’m homeless give me private rented accommodation’. The people who are desperately in need have better choice now and there is a better choice of accommodation ultimately benefiting the homeless person. (Rob, P.12)

58 All respondents were from service providers.

59 The respondents were from a local authority, a service provider and the respondent from the DOE.
we can work with them to secure that”. Additionally three argued home ownership does not restrict the quality of people’s citizenship with Eoin (p.17) stating, “even…the minority… on the housing waiting list… they all just want to get in and get their opportunity to buy and become part of the home owner majority”.

Conversely six respondents believed home ownership has implications for homelessness with Aileen (p.10) stating,

“It’s excluding an awful lot of people... we all think that we should own our own house and we still haven’t accepted… that renting an adequate house is enough”.

Three respondents felt the ‘Right to Buy’ has implications for homelessness. Vast amounts of social housing have been sold and Eoin (p.9) argued if we had retained all the units since the foundation of the state we could accommodate huge numbers. Additionally he proposed the right to buy is the reason behind our housing waiting lists, as people wait for that particular housing option. He felt strongly that if we “want to break the hegemony of home ownership we will have to get rid of the right to buy” (Eoin, p.8). In contrast Tony (p.10) wasn’t sure as to what degree the sale of housing to tenants narrows the supply.

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60 The respondents were from a service provider, the DOE and an academic. Two of the respondents also felt home ownership had no implications for homelessness.

61 Three respondents were from service providers, one was from a local authority and two were academics.

62 One was an academic, two were service providers.

63 The right of local authority tenants to purchase their dwelling at a reduced price from the local authority.

64 A housing stock of approximately 300,000 units.
Finally six respondents\textsuperscript{65} felt home ownership restricts the quality of people’s citizenship, highlighted by Focus’s Respondent (p.17).

“\textit{you undermine people because what you are saying... is that the tenure that you are currently living in whether that be...social housing or the private rented sector is somehow inferior to home ownership... and the only way that you can truly foster a sense of citizenship...is through home ownership}”.

\textbf{3.11 The impact of health care policy:}
Five respondents\textsuperscript{66} said the closure of psychiatric hospitals has impacted on homelessness. Mary (p.12) referred to some people coming out and being placed directly into hostels for homeless people and others “have been placed in communities where they are not able to manage and it breaks down and they … are in homelessness”. Eoin (p.13) contested this notion.

“\textit{The big waves of deinstitutionalisation took place in the 1980s and early 90’s and that didn’t seem to manifest itself in homelessness at the time, so I can’t understand how it’s manifesting itself now when there are much better services, much better after care services}”.

\textbf{3.12 Suggested Changes:}
The 1988 Housing Act needs to be revised and the civil service must discontinue having to make all the decisions as they don’t have all the information required and there is a big gap between the way policy is made and how it is implemented (Mary, p.15). More account needs to be taken of the needs of the homeless and additional support in permanent accommodation at an earlier stage must be provided\textsuperscript{67}. Local authorities must have a clearer idea of what they actually need in the next round of

\textsuperscript{65} Three respondents were from service providers, two were from local authorities and one was an academic. It also included one respondent who felt home ownership had no implications for homelessness.

\textsuperscript{66} Three respondents were from service providers, one was from a local authority and the other was the respondent from the DOE.

\textsuperscript{67} There is no point in having a family go through 2 or 3 steps and putting their children in different schools and everything else. (DOE respondent, p.13)
plans\textsuperscript{68}, there should be a unitary price per bed in homeless hostels throughout the country\textsuperscript{69} and where local authorities provide services on a regional basis, the other local authorities should contribute. The changes to the SWA rent supplement should be abandoned, as should those to Community Employment schemes, which provided training and employment opportunities.

A transparent and open housing system based on need rather than ability to wait is required and “until we start to see … the solution to homelessness is housing with supports where necessary, we are not really…getting anywhere” (Focus respondent, p.17). The possibility of taxing second dwellings to ensure all housing units are used should be investigated, (Tony, p.10) and a share of the 10,000 affordable houses should be available to voluntary housing agencies or for private rental since it is predominantly tenants who have little control over their accommodation (Tony, p.12). Finally there must be a shift in focus away from the preoccupation with home ownership.

\textsuperscript{68} For example Aisling feels domestic violence in men is learned from what they see as children, therefore she wants to see more resources put into the area of homelessness and domestic violence, as if they can get to the kids through play therapy the need for women’s hostels in the future may be lessened. (Aisling p.10)

\textsuperscript{69} Different prices are charged in different areas at present. By having a unitary price it will mean that instead of asking the government for more money, that surplus money some authorities will save would be there and they would have extra money to work with. (Aisling, P.10)
4.1 Analysing the citizenship of the homeless:
As mentioned in chapter one, the Partnership 2000 Agreement (1996) defined social exclusion in terms of “cumulative marginalisation: from production (employment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision-making and from an adequate quality of life”. From the findings it is clear that respondents spoke of the social exclusion of the homeless in these terms.

We examined Marshall’s three elements of citizenship (1950: 11) in chapter one and saw how the denial of any of these three elements results in social exclusion, with that exclusion being more severe when one is denied more than one of these elements. It is clear respondents believe citizens have fundamental entitlements, with citizens through the right to vote being included in the political element of Marshall’s’ (1950) citizenship. It emerged the homeless can vote via joining the supplementary register of electors, but difficulties around this, presented in chapter three, mean in effect the homeless are still excluded from the political process despite the mechanism just mentioned. The introduction of measures like the Representation of the People Bill (UK, 1999) would recognise this exclusion and address it in a positive manner.

In Chapter one McCann (2000: 44) argued the nature of homeless services generally offers no opportunity for productive activity of any kind and some hostels operated a no work rule, meaning the homeless population is excluded from the economic rights
of their citizenship. However we saw how respondents from Service providers were adamant their services are now client centered with the focus on empowering people so that homeless clients can realise their rights of citizenship and participate in society. Yet despite this welcome development, my findings show the homeless are clearly still excluded from the economic rights of their citizenship through the lack of a permanent home, a lack of work skills, and employer discrimination, etc.

In contrast to what was written about social welfare entitlements in chapter one, the research shows there are numerous reasons social welfare officers may refuse unemployment assistance and on the issue of SWA means testing it emerged that while some hostels are free it would not have any impact in the means test for SWA. Additionally the fact that local authorities now have social inclusion units and there is a cabinet sub committee on social inclusion must be welcomed from a social citizenship point of view.

Somerville¹ (1998: 762) presented three situations where a person may be ‘legitimately’ denied a right of citizenship and excluded from the benefits that right secure. While only three respondents believed homelessness is the result of individual problems, five felt that people viewed the homeless as undeserving poor. This form of thinking in reality allows the justification of the social exclusion of sections of our population on the grounds that such people are 'undeserving' of our assistance. It is clear therefore that a relationship exists between citizenship and social exclusion and I would argue that the homeless are still being denied full participation in all three elements of Marshall’s (1950) citizenship and thus face the most extreme form of social exclusion.

¹ See Chapter one pages 10 & 11.
4.2 A question of resources?
There is a debate about how best to address homelessness, with the general view being the more local services are the better. This raises questions as to whether organisations have sufficient resources to deal with homelessness in this manner. It is clear there are question marks over the resources (both monetary and human) available to local authorities, and while capital funding is forthcoming, the problems lie with resources for the day-to-day running costs and crucially human resources, with not enough staff having sufficient expertise in this area. Additionally the belief that homelessness is an urban phenomenon confined to large towns allows some local authorities to export their problem as people move to those urban areas to avail of services that are not provided in their locality. This has serious repercussions for homeless individuals in that it can exclude them from their social networks and while the DOE respondent confirmed a dim view is taken of those local authorities, in reality little is done other than requesting that the local authority cease the practice. It is clear that there is a need for wet hostels and while the provision of services such as this on a regional basis makes better financial sense; additional care must be taken to ensure that people availing of these services do not suffer exclusion from their social networks.

4.3 Accommodation:
It is clear that while huge amounts of money go into local authority housing, not enough housing units are emerging as an end product. Social housing must concentrate on housing low-income households, but at the moment this is not happening in sufficient quantities or in an acceptable timeframe. In turn this pressurises the private rented sector, lessening pressure on landlords to have their premises up to a sufficient standard as people have nowhere else to go. Additionally
many people now see social housing as a second-class option, with the estates being stigmatised. While it is encouraging that some local authorities have taken measures to address this stigma, the major issue in this area has to be the housing of single people and it is quite apparent that housing policy, which doesn’t make provision for single people is having a detrimental impact on homelessness.

It must be acknowledged that positive steps have been taken in the area of B&B’s with standards’ improving and it’s now often quite good accommodation, meaning people have been more willing to avail of it and engage with homeless services. Additionally the length of stay has shortened considerably as local authorities acknowledge it is not appropriate accommodation. However this is not the case in Dublin where people are still spending too long in B&B’s, with all that doing so entails. Additionally it was mentioned that some local authorities having difficulties getting people out of B&B’s for a variety of reasons and this needs to be taken into consideration when deciding whether to use this type of accommodation.

The shortage of move on accommodation is a major problem and unless it is addressed there will be an effect on the numbers sleeping rough, as those waiting for transitional or permanent accommodation will take up emergency beds. While the private rented sector is being utilised to some degree in this respect there are problems here also (see section 4.9). Additionally there are obvious problems with the lack of permanent accommodation, namely the lack of single person units, which contributes to the already sizeable housing waiting lists, and as with the lack of move on accommodation it deflates our ability to tackle the homeless problem.
4.4 Analysing the impact of health care policy:
While Eoin (p.13) believed deinstitutionalisation didn’t manifest in homelessness either in the peak period of the 1980s and early 90’s or presently, it is clear the majority of respondents believed the closure of psychiatric hospitals has impacted on homelessness, with people either leaving institutions and going directly into hostels or ending up on the streets eventually. Therefore as health care policy appears to have impacted detrimentally on homelessness, all policy that results in deinstitutionalisation needs to be homeless proofed.

4.5 Analysing the impact of legislation / policy on homelessness:
It is now apparent that Marcuse (1988: 72) was correct in saying the government has created specific programmes and legislation to address homelessness, rather than addressing problems inherent in the housing or social support services. Additionally retaining elements of the vagrancy act has ensured the criminalisation of homelessness and contributed to the exclusion of a sizeable proportion of the homeless population, and this needs to be addressed.

The Housing Act, 1988
The 1988 Housing Act was positive in that it recognised homelessness, yet it has made little difference to the homeless and perhaps local authorities need to start using all of the powers\(^2\) given to them under the Act. It is clear from the findings that how homelessness is defined has implications for how it is dealt with, as without an informed definition of homelessness, it is near impossible to find viable solutions. Additionally it has become clearer that all definitions of homelessness are political in

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\(^2\) They can provide money to people to rent in the private rented sector, they can give money to the voluntary organisations, they can provide for their own housing stock, they can also provide advice, information and direction to people by way of alternatives. (Mary, P.10)
nature, with reluctance on the part of government to adopt a broader definition than that in the 1988 Act. While it is true that local authorities must work from the same definition, it is also apparent that the definition in use reduces costs as if it encompassed everything there would be more demands for government funding. Additionally it is clear that by adopting a broader definition, the government would have to equate housing problems and homelessness, something it is apparently unwilling to do at present.

Interestingly all respondents acknowledged ‘Hidden Homelessness’ meaning official figures may be understating the actual size of the problem, yet the major problems around counting this population still have to be addressed. Some respondents wished to have those ‘at risk of homelessness’ included in the definition, which would be a positive step in that it could be used to predict future trends in homelessness, however I must acknowledge I still have reservations about including this category for the reasons given in chapter one. There is huge ambiguity in the 1988 Act and the way the definition is interpreted, with all that entails. Therefore the definition of homelessness in the 1988 Housing Act while initially positive needs to be updated.

By not counting the homeless in the census we lessen their claims to citizenship and depend on the homeless counts to provide a comprehensive picture of homelessness. However it is noticeable that there is still a shortfall in accurate information on the nature and extent of homelessness and while the government acknowledged this, it has not said how it is going to address it.

Voluntary organisations explain the situation of a sample of homeless persons using their services and some do so in a particular manner in order to maximize their
fundraising potential. While the DOE respondent felt the LINK system would give us better information on who is homeless, in reality the system was not designed for this purpose. We must have accurate information if we are to identify core groups and needs, and consequently address those needs based on that information. Therefore there is a need to revise how the homeless count is managed, as point in time data at such intervals does not give us the information required to tackle homelessness successfully. Additionally in chapter one it was argued we must have grave concerns about the prospect of a noteworthy minority becoming more removed from the incomes and lifestyles of the majority (National Anti-Poverty Strategy, 1997: 3-4). It is now even more apparent this is happening, and is facilitated by the lack of accurate data on the nature and extent of homelessness. Therefore O'Sullivan (1996: Xiii) was indeed correct in arguing the data deficit in this area prevents us from getting to the root of the existence of homelessness in Ireland.

It is clear that we need to look at how we accommodate people, as different local authorities use different schemes. In the main homeless people are not being prioritised on housing waiting lists, and where they are, there is not sufficient or appropriate units to accommodate them. Therefore it is apparent the Act should have put a duty on local authorities to house homeless people. Several articulated that prioritising the homeless on waiting lists sees people getting categorised as homeless in order to fastrack the process of getting housed. If this is the case then it would appear a pure waiting list system is the least manipulatable. However that system only serves people based on their ability to wait, and those most in need of social housing are excluded if they cannot afford to wait. Therefore it is my belief that we need to introduce transparent and accessible housing waiting lists countrywide, which would have a major impact on how homelessness is dealt with nationwide.
Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy:
The Integrated strategy was a significant step that situated homelessness in the social inclusion agenda. It must be acknowledged that it has had a significant positive impact on rough sleeping, yet while major strides were made in the larger cities they have not been replicated countrywide. There are several flaws that must be addressed, particularly the fact that it doesn’t mention housing, taking the responsibility to provide more appropriate social housing off the state. Additionally the concerns about the failure to provide multi annual funding must be addressed, in order that a high standard of services can continually be provided. To conclude, the Integrated Strategy having established a ‘base camp’ in tackling the emergency side of homelessness, now needs to push on and tackle the other aspects of homelessness, which urgently need to be addressed.

The Homeless Action Plans:
Homeless action plans were important in providing people dedicated to homelessness, with the benefits that arose from such a situation. However it is important to note they are not on a statutory basis and cannot ensure compliance from statutory authorities in terms of timescales and allocation of resources. It was argued that if the plans were on a statutory basis it would not necessarily make a difference in ensuring the action plans are completed on time. While this is true, it is also true that not having them on a statutory basis takes off any pressure on local authorities to complete them on time. While Mary (p.14) argued the plans are formally adopted by each of the local authorities and therefore have a statutory basis, it was highlighted that at this stage setbacks can often occur. Therefore this must be looked at to ensure that local councils do not unduly modify the plans decided on by homeless fora, as doing so defeats the purpose of having a homeless forum. It is important to note that while
respondents acknowledged reductions in numbers sleeping rough, service providers saw an increase in people wishing to avail of services, which suggests the need for homeless action plans to move to the next level in order to address these needs. Additionally, it is clear from my findings that the next round of plans should concentrate on preventing homelessness and improve services for those that are homeless to lessen the time they spend out of home. For these reasons the action plans need to be continually monitored, evaluated, and implemented in full within the timescale agreed.

4.6 Analysing the impact of housing policy:
While it is true that most people wish to become part of the home owner majority, it is also true that the policy of promoting home ownership has implications for homelessness. From the evidence collected it seems Somerville (1998: 773-774) was correct in saying housing tenure is a source of social exclusion and it is quite clear that owner occupation is most exclusionary as it excludes all but those who can afford to buy. Additionally the ‘Right to Buy’ has implications for homelessness. Vast amounts of social housing have been sold and if we had retained all these units there would be more units of accommodation available. Accordingly the ‘right to buy’ has a relationship with the housing waiting lists, as people wait for that particular housing option, which gives people the opportunity to join the home owner majority at a significantly reduced rate.

The perceived crisis of affordability is sidelining the issue of social housing as housing is portrayed as a public issue, which is unrelated to homelessness. In chapter one Murphy (1994:196) argued there are questions regarding a housing policy that

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3 See Chapter one page 17.
promotes a form of housing tenure “that doesn’t ensure that households will be
capable of remaining in that tenure” However the findings report that few people are
vulnerable as far as mortgages are concerned, yet in contrast almost the entire private
rented sector is on the margins, which needs to be addressed urgently.

The private rented sector is seen as the stepping-stone to home ownership or as
residual accommodation for people who can’t afford home ownership. It is clear that
investors have a sizeable share of this market and are leaving a lot of dwellings
empty, as it may be just as profitable. This suggests that there are possibly sufficient
housing units to meet demand in this country but they are not being utilised because
the sector is not sufficiently profitable to encourage more people to let. Therefore
there are two options available, either tax second dwellings or introduce incentives to
make the sector sufficiently profitable, which will result in supply increasing. The
availability of rent supplement gave people alternatives but did not mainstream the
private rented sector and as costs of the rent supplement rose considerably changes to
the system were introduced. Despite the DOE respondent (p.12) stating, “we have
made absolutely sure in the regulations that nobody was to be made homeless because
of the implementation of that”, the predominant view is these changes will have
negative implications for the reasons mentioned in chapter three. It is also vital to
take into account that while approximately €58 million was spent on homelessness in
the last budget €60 million was saved in welfare cuts\(^4\), which has a causative effect on
homelessness. Therefore the changes to the rent allowance scheme need to be
reversed and more needs to be done to make the lower ends of the private rented
sector a viable alternative to owner—occupation and not simply a place of last resort
for those who cannot obtain local authority housing.

\(^4\) Noeleen (p.13)
To conclude it appears that Powell (1992: 306) was correct in saying “In a society where the majority are preoccupied with home ownership it is likely the possessive individualism will continue to submerge a more humanistic housing policy which would meet the needs of the homeless minority”. Consequently it is clear that Irish housing policy has indeed satisfied the majority while at the same time unintentionally restricting the quality of citizenship for a sizeable minority.

It is clear increasing numbers of people look to the State to provide housing for them, and it is equally clear that O’ Sullivan was correct in saying the housing options of low income households will remain limited for the foreseeable future (1996: 85). Consequently it has become clearer that the government policy of promoting owner-occupier housing tenure in preference to other forms needs to be rethought as it is contributing in a major way to the social exclusion experienced by the homeless population in Ireland at present, and the promotion of shared ownership and affordable housing in an effort to build a more socially inclusive society will not work in its present guise.
CHAPTER FIVE
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine government housing policy and the measures introduced to address homelessness, to see what impact they have had on the social exclusion experienced by the homeless. A secondary analysis of relevant literature was conducted in order to define what homelessness, citizenship, and social exclusion are, consider the requirements for citizenship and exclusion from citizenship, and link exclusion from citizenship to homelessness, and how this manifests in Irish society. Consequently we could then examine how government policy has addressed exclusion from citizenship, or whether it has unintentionally added to it. Having done so we can now evaluate the success or failure of government policies in alleviating the social exclusion experienced by the homeless.

We saw how the denial of any of Marshall’s three elements of citizenship (1950: 11) results in social exclusion, with exclusion being more severe when one is denied more than one of the elements. It is clear that a relationship exists between citizenship and social exclusion and the homeless are still being denied full participation in all three elements of Marshall’s (1950) citizenship and thus face the most extreme form of social exclusion. For example it emerged the homeless can participate in the political element of citizenship via joining the supplementary register of electors, but we saw the difficulties around this, meaning the homeless are still in the main excluded from the political process. Additionally we saw how the homeless are clearly still excluded from the economic rights of their citizenship through the lack of a permanent home, a lack of work skills, and employer discrimination, etc. Measures are being taken to
promote social inclusion, which must be welcomed from a social citizenship point of view, however the prevalence of viewing the homeless as the ‘undeserving poor’ continues to allow the justification of the social exclusion of this population on the grounds that such people are ‘undeserving’ of our assistance.

The general view among the respondents was that services are better delivered on a local basis, yet there were questions as to whether organisations have sufficient resources to deal with homelessness in this manner. While the provision of services such as wet hostels on a regional basis makes better financial sense it may have the unforeseen consequence of excluding people from their social networks. Additionally some local authorities export their problem with people moving to larger urban areas to avail of services that are not provided in their locality, which can exclude people in the manner mentioned above. Worryingly it appears that not a lot is being done to counteract this process.

It is apparent that massive amounts of money go into local authority housing, yet not enough housing units emerge as an end product, which in turn is pressurising the private rented sector. The perceived crisis of affordability is sidelining the issue of social housing as housing is portrayed as a public issue, which is unrelated to homelessness. Additionally many people now see social housing as a second-class option, with estates being stigmatised, and it is quite apparent that housing policy, which doesn’t make provision for single people is having a detrimental impact on homelessness. Additionally it must be acknowledged that while positive steps have been taken in the area of B&B’s, people in Dublin still spend too long in B&B’s, with all that doing so entails. The shortage of move on and permanent accommodation are major problems and unless they are addressed there will be a negative effect on the
numbers sleeping rough, as those waiting for transitional or permanent accommodation will take up emergency beds, which will deflate our ability to tackle the homeless problem.

So has housing policy positively impacted on the social exclusion of the homeless or has it unintentionally added to it? It is clear housing waiting lists are continually increasing and it is equally clear that 0’ Sullivan was correct in saying the housing options of low income households will remain limited for the foreseeable future (1996: 85). We saw how housing tenure is a source of social exclusion, with owner occupation being the most exclusionary. Additionally it was highlighted that the ‘Right to Buy’ has negative implications for homelessness. Consequently it has become clearer that the government policy of promoting owner-occupier housing tenure is unintentionally contributing in a major way to the social exclusion experienced by the homeless population, and the promotion of shared ownership and affordable housing in preference to social rental housing will not bring about a more socially inclusive society.

Finally it was shown how the private rental sector urgently needs to be addressed. The findings report that investors have a sizeable share of this market and are leaving a lot of dwellings empty, as it may be just as profitable, suggesting there may be sufficient housing units to meet demand that are not being utilised, and if this is the case, it must be addressed. While the availability of SWA rent supplement gave people alternatives, it did not mainstream the private rented sector. Additionally the changes introduced to this scheme will more than likely have negative implications for homelessness, and it is vital to take into account that while approximately €58 million was spent on homelessness in the last budget €60 million was saved in welfare cuts,
which has causative effects on homelessness. Therefore more needs to be done to make the lower ends of this sector a feasible alternative to owner-occupation.

In analysing the impact of health care policy it is apparent the policy of deinstitutionalisation has impacted negatively on homelessness, with people either leaving institutions and going directly into hostels or ending up on the streets eventually. But what of policy/legislation on homelessness? Has it positively impacted on the social exclusion of the homeless? It is now apparent that Marcuse (1988: 72) was correct in saying the government has created specific programmes and legislation to address homelessness, rather than problems inherent in the housing or social support services. Additionally retaining elements of the vagrancy act have ensured the criminalisation of homelessness and contributed to the exclusion of a sizeable proportion of the homeless population.

The 1988 Housing Act was positive in that it recognised homelessness, yet it is clear from the findings that how homelessness is defined has implications for how it is dealt with. There is huge ambiguity how homelessness is defined in the 1988 Act, and in the way that definition is interpreted, with all that entails. Additionally it has become clearer that all definitions of homelessness are political in nature, and it is apparent that by adopting a broader definition, the government would have to equate housing problems and homelessness, something it is apparently unwilling to do at present. Therefore the definition of homelessness in the 1988 Housing Act while initially positive needs to be updated.

The homeless’ claim to citizenship is lessened by not counting them in the census and we depend on the homeless counts to provide a comprehensive picture of
homelessness. However it is noticeable that there is still a shortfall in accurate information on the nature and extent of homelessness and while the government acknowledged this, it has not said how it is going to address it. We must have accurate information if we are to identify core groups and needs, and consequently address those needs based on that information. Therefore there is a need to revise how the homeless count is managed, as point in time data at such intervals does not give us the information required to tackle homelessness successfully. The lack of accurate data on the nature and extent of homelessness is allowing the homeless minority to become more removed from the incomes and lifestyles of the majority in contrast to the wishes of the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (1997: 3-4).

We saw how different local authorities use different schemes to accommodate people and in general the homeless are not being prioritised on housing waiting lists. Even where they are, there are not sufficient or appropriate units of accommodation, so it is apparent that under the 1988 Act a statutory duty should have been put on local authorities to house homeless people. The belief that prioritising homelessness on waiting lists sees people getting categorised as homeless in order to fastrack the process of getting housed needs to be investigated and it is my belief that we need to introduce transparent and accessible housing waiting lists countrywide, which would have a major impact on how homelessness is dealt with.

The ‘Integrated Strategy’ was a significant step that situated homelessness in the social inclusion agenda and has had a significant positive impact on rough sleeping. Unfortunately while these major strides were made in the larger cities they have not been replicated countrywide. We saw how there are several problems that must be addressed, particularly the fact that it doesn’t mention housing, taking the
responsibility to provide more appropriate social housing off the state. In evaluating the Integrated Strategy it is apparent that it has established a ‘base camp’ in tackling the emergency side of homelessness, which is to be welcomed but it now needs to push on and tackle the other aspects of homelessness. The ‘homeless action plans’ established under the ‘Integrated Strategy’ again have had a positive impact in addressing homelessness, but the major drawback is that they are not on a statutory basis and cannot ensure compliance from statutory authorities in terms of timescales and allocation of resources. I am of the opinion that the next round of plans should concentrate on preventing homelessness and improve services for those that are homeless to shorten their period of homelessness. Thus the action plans need to be continually monitored, evaluated, and implemented in full within the timescale agreed.

To conclude, I am now firmly of the opinion that while Irish housing policy has satisfied the majority of citizens, simultaneously it has unintentionally restricted the quality of citizenship for a sizeable minority. Additionally I must conclude that government policy has had a positive impact on alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless on a number of levels. However it appears to have reached its limit and therefore needs to move the next level to continue the progress that has been made. To sum up the impact of government policy in addressing homelessness I adapt a Fianna Fáil election mantra from the 2002 general election, A lot done, even more to do.
Having completed this research project and presented my conclusions I make the following recommendations to help alleviate the social exclusion of the homeless:

i. The 1988 Housing Act needs to be revised. It is now sixteen years old and needs to be rewritten to make it less ambiguous, so that its implementation can be uniform throughout the country.

ii. Steps must be taken forthwith to improve the quality of information on the nature and extent of homelessness and housing needs.

iii. The government should deliver the housing output promised under the National Development Plan in order to address our lengthy housing waiting lists.

iv. A transparent and open housing system based on need rather than ability to wait is required and until the government reintroduces housing as a solution to homelessness we will continue to struggle to eliminate it.

v. The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government should require local authorities to prioritise social rental housing over affordable housing in areas where the assessment of housing needs shows a greater need for social rental housing.

vi. Measures should be introduced to ensure all housing units are used and the possibility of taxing second dwellings to this end should be investigated.
vii. Most importantly there must be less of a preoccupation with home ownership.

viii. The changes to the SWA rent supplement should be abandoned, as should those to Community Employment schemes, which provided training and employment opportunities, and thus are useful to enable people gain the economic benefits of their citizenship.

ix. More account needs to be taken of the needs of the homeless when devising policy and additional support in permanent accommodation must be provided for homeless individuals.

x. Homeless action plans must be put on a statutory basis as it would aid the implementation of future plans and place more responsibility on the local authorities to complete them on time.

xi. Steps must be taken to ensure that local councils do not unduly modify the plans decided on by homeless fora, as doing so defeats the purpose of having a homeless forum.

xii. Local authorities must receive adequate resources to ensure they can develop, coordinate and implement the housing strategies and action plans.

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Focus Ireland Press Release: 2/4/03. Focus Ireland claims report showing 18 million spent on B&B’S for homeless people in Dublin last year proves the government is failing to tackle homelessness.

Focus Ireland Press Release: 21/11/02


Accessed 18 March 2004


Relevant Internet References:

European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless: www.feantsa.org

Combat Poverty Agency: www.cpa.ie

Department of Social & Family Affairs: http://www.welfare.ie/

Focus Ireland: http://www.focusireland.ie

Homeless Agency: www.homelessagency.ie


Merchants Quay Ireland: www.mqi.ie

Online Access to Services, Information and Support: http://www.oasis.gov.ie

Simon Community www.simoncommunity.com

Threshold: www.threshold.ie
APPENDIX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR TRI-ANNUAL HOMELESS COUNT

The Housing Act, 1988 requires that each local authority carry out periodic assessments, usually every three years, of the numbers of people who are homeless in their administrative area. The Act also sets out a definition of homeless, stating in Section 2 that a person is regarded as homeless by the relevant local authority if:

(a) there is no accommodation available which, in the opinion of the authority he, together with any other person who normally resides with him or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him, can reasonably occupy or remain in occupation of, or

(b) he is living in a hospital; county home, night shelter or other such institution and is so living because he has no accommodation of the kind referred to in paragraph (a) and he is, in the opinion of the authority, unable to provide accommodation from his own resources. The current assessment follows the legislative definition of homelessness, as was the case in 1999. However, people in hospitals, county homes and prisons were not included.

The terms of reference for the report are as follows:

- An enumeration of the actual homeless (in contrast to potential) population in the Dublin area.

- The definition of homelessness follows that legally defined in the 1988 Housing Act; excluding people in institutions but including people sleeping rough.

- As in 1999, the population in question will be enumerated on the basis of: one, a survey administered by homeless services in Dublin and two, a questionnaire completed for each person accepted as homeless by the relevant local authorities.

- The reference period for the study will extend over one week - from the 20th to 26th of March 2002.

- In contrast to the previous assessment, a rough sleeper count will also be undertaken on one night over the period of the survey. This will be coordinated by the Homeless Agency and undertaken by employees and volunteers from voluntary and statutory homeless and related services. The count will not record information on the characteristics of those identified but will simply be a head count.
• The data are to be recorded at the level of the individual to allow an estimate of the number of adults, family units or households and dependent children to be made.

• The principal focus of the study will include: * a headcount of the homeless population. * basic profiling of that population by age, gender, duration of homelessness. * information on the type of accommodation used in the week preceding the study.

Issues such as routes into homelessness or service users evaluation of homeless services will not fall within the remit of the study, as inclusion of these issues would have potentially adverse effects on response levels. (THE REPORT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN DUBLIN, 2002: 12-13)

The Rough Sleeper Count

In an attempt to verify the estimate of rough sleeping produced by the survey, it was decided to conduct an independent rough sleeper count on one night of the survey week. Taking the figure in the formal assessment as a lower bound estimate, it was considered that the result of an independent count could be used as a more accurate assessment of the size of the rough sleeper group. Such counts are conducted periodically in British and American cities and towns and are often used to compare the situation in Dublin.

The rough sleeper count was planned and co-ordinated by the Homeless Agency, with the assistance of the street outreach teams from Focus Ireland and Dublin Simon. The objective was to conduct a thorough search of the entire Dublin region over a 2 hour period (between 2 and 4 am) on one night, (21st March) to include all who were bedded down in a car, open building (sheds, bus/railway station, etc.), park/green, cemetery, and so on. The selection of the time period related to the perception of the earliest time that the majority of rough sleepers would be bedded down; the aim was to exclude those who were on the streets until late but may not ultimately be sleeping out.

Planning the count involved the division of the Dublin region into 14 areas. Within each, detailed maps were used to select streets, roads, parks and so on, where rough sleepers were likely to be found. Sheets were prepared for enumerators who were instructed on a system of recording rough sleepers by group size and type of location. Assistance was sought and generously provided by the Gardai both in terms of planning where to search and, on the night of the count, as a security backup for each team of enumerators. The count was publicised in the weeks prior to the assessment with a view to recruiting volunteer enumerators. A good response was received and training was provided to the one hundred volunteers and area co-ordinators on the logistics of the count. Area co-ordinators were based in a central venue in each of the 14 areas. They provided training to enumerators on the night of the count, provided phone assistance where required, received all returned sheets, and reported on the number of rough sleepers and the experience of the enumeration on completion of the count. In total, 140 rough sleepers were identified. (THE REPORT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF HOMELESSNESS IN DUBLIN, 2002: 18).
OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

i. To investigate the participants understanding of homelessness.

ii. To investigate whether the numbers of people counted as homeless have an impact on policy responses.

iii. To investigate the participants understanding of social exclusion and how it manifests itself for homeless people.

iv. To investigate the participants understanding of citizenship and if it is linked to social exclusion.

v. To investigate if home ownership as an aim of housing policy in Ireland has implications for homelessness.

vi. To identify if housing tenure be can seen as a source of social exclusion.

vii. To investigate whether any pieces of legislation or policy have positively or negatively impacted on homelessness and or homeless peoples experiences of citizenship?

viii. To investigate if Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy, and the Homeless Action Plans have had an impact on homelessness.

ix. To identify if there are changes to Government policy that should be introduced.
APPENDIX III

PROFILES OF THE RESPONDENTS

• Lillian is a research and policy analyst with ‘Threshold’. She was part of the project team, which produced ‘Findings of Joint Research on the Local Housing Strategies and Homeless Action Plans’ in 2002, working as a researcher on the housing strategies. Additionally she co-edited ‘Housing Rights. A New Approach.’ in 2003.

• Noeleen is the social policy and research coordinator with ‘Simon’. She was part of the project team, which produced ‘Findings of Joint Research on the Local Housing Strategies and Homeless Action Plans’ in 2002. Additionally she was involved in drafting ‘The Right to Housing and the Homelessness Crisis’, which was the submission by the Simon Communities of Ireland to the All Party Oireachtas Committee on the Constitution.

• Mary is the director of the ‘Homeless Agency’, having previously worked for Threshold. The Homeless Agency is responsible for the management and coordination of services to the homeless in the Dublin area and for the implementation of agreed action plans. The Agency is a partnership structure, bringing together both the voluntary and statutory agencies responsible for planning, funding and delivering services to the homeless.

• The respondent from Focus Ireland is a research worker with that organisation and was part of the project team, which produced ‘Findings of Joint Research on the Local Housing Strategies and Homeless Action Plans’ in 2002.

• Aileen is the Homeless Coordinator with Cork City Council. She deals with the hostels and she has responsibility for pushing forward Cork City Council’s homeless strategy through the local action plans agreed by the homeless forum.

• Aisling is an outreach worker with Cork City Council. She meets people out on the streets and tries to get people beds in the city’s hostels. She gets people already in hostels on the housing waiting lists and helps them fill in forms etc. Additionally she is involved with Cork Simon’s Soup run and acts as a link between the city council and people in local authority estates who are having rent troubles, intervening on their behalf to keep them in their tenancies. Aisling also compiles statistics on the homeless.

• Rob is the Homeless Coordinator with Limerick City Council. He has worked there for the past eighteen months and is essentially a coordinator of homeless services. He employs the housing structure side of addressing homelessness and
is based out of the housing department. They effectively provide a one-stop service to homeless people.

- The respondent from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is a senior civil servant with responsibility for homelessness and social inclusion. The Department has responsibility for housing, funding homeless services and monitoring the implementation of the homeless strategies and the local action plans.

- Eoin O’ Sullivan is a lecturer in social policy in Trinity College Dublin. He has written extensively on homelessness and housing need in Ireland. In his 1996 publication ‘Homelessness and social policy in the Republic of Ireland’ he put forward the three categories of homeless, which has been utilized in this thesis.

- Tony Fahey is a research professor at the Economic and Social Research Institute. He has written extensively on Irish housing policy and recently co-authored ‘Housing, poverty and wealth in Ireland’ (2004) for the Combat poverty agency.
APPENDIX IV

INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENTS

Informed Consent Form; Service Providers:

I__________ agree to participate in a sociological study investigating the effectiveness of Irish governmental policy in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless. I understand that the researcher is a master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Limerick, and that he is conducting this research as the thesis requirement for his Masters degree. I understand that, as a participant in the study, I will be asked to respond to interview questions including

- My views on social exclusion and citizenship
- My views on Housing policy
- Aspects of my work in relation to housing / Homelessness
- My relationships with government bodies, local authorities in the operation of my job.
- How government policy impacts on my ability to address Homelessness
- Any shortfalls I feel are present in government policies relating to the social exclusion of the Homeless
- My evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness
- Changes I would like to see introduced in this area

I understand that the interview will take about 1 hour, will be recorded and will occur at a time and place that is convenient for me in June 2004. I understand that I am under no obligation to agree to participate in an interview. I understand that I may refuse to answer any questions, to stop the interview at any time or withdraw from the study. I understand that I can ask any questions that I may have before consenting to participate. I understand that I may choose how I wish to be identified in the final report. I understand that only Martin Power, the supervising lecturers and the external examiner will have access to the full transcripts of the interviews. I understand that if I give permission to reuse the transcript in any future projects, that Martin Power will maintain the same level of confidentiality agreed with me now in any future study, and that I may check the transcripts for accuracy before agreeing to the same.

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Signature: ___________________ Date: _________________

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, please contact:

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Phone Number: 0863169292

Supervising Lecturers:
Name: Dr. Amanda Haynes
E-Mail: Amanda.Haynes@ul.ie
Phone Number: 061 213151

Name: Dr Eoin Devereux
E-Mail: Eoin.Devereux@ul.ie
Phone Number: 061 202341
I wish to be referred to as ________________________ in the report.

Signature: ____________________    Date: ______________

I agree to the transcript being retained for use in further studies.

Signature: ____________________    Date: ______________
Local Authorities Informed Consent Form:

I __________________ agree to take part in a sociological study investigating the effectiveness of Irish governmental policy in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless. I understand that the researcher is a master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Limerick, and that he is conducting this research as the thesis requirement for his Masters degree. I understand that, as a participant in the study, I will be asked to respond to interview questions. I understand that participation in the study may involve answering questions about:

- My views on social exclusion and citizenship
- My views on housing policy
- Aspects of my work in relation to housing / Homelessness
- My relationships with government bodies and service providers in the operation of my job.
- How government policy impacts on my job
- My evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness
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Department of the environment, Heritage & Local Government Informed Consent Form:

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- My views on social exclusion and citizenship
- My views on Housing policy
- Aspects of my work in relation to housing / Homelessness
- My relationships with local authorities and service providers in the operation of my job.
- My evaluation of how government policy impacts on Homelessness

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Signature: _________________    Date: _____________
Informed Consent Form; Tony Fahey:

I __________________ agree to take part in a sociological study investigating the effectiveness of Irish governmental policy in alleviating the social exclusion of the homeless. I understand that the researcher is a master's student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Limerick, and that he is conducting this research as the thesis requirement for his Masters degree. I understand that, as a participant in the study, I will be asked to respond to interview questions. I understand that participation in the study may involve answering questions about:

- My views on social exclusion and citizenship
- My views on Housing policy
- Aspects of my work in relation to housing
- My evaluation of housing policy with regards to Homelessness
- Any shortfalls I feel are present in housing policies relating to the social exclusion of the Homeless
- Changes I would like to see introduced in this area

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Signature: _________________    Date: _____________

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Informed Consent Form; Eoin O’ Sullivan:

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- My views on social exclusion and citizenship
- My views on Housing policy
- Aspects of my work in relation to housing / Homelessness
- My views on how government policy impacts on Homelessness
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Signature: _________________    Date: _____________

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Signature: _________________    Date: _____________
Interview Guide Service Providers:

How would you define homelessness?

What do you see as the major causes of homelessness?

Voluntary organisations often argue that homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in Homelessness legislation. Is this your view? 
Probe: Why?

This argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Why do you think that is so?

Do you think that the numbers of people we count as Homeless has an impact on policy responses to the situation? Probe

0’ Sullivan, (1996) said the style in which homelessness is offered to the public by voluntary agencies may be more an expression of the ideologies of those agencies rather than an objective assessment of the needs and backgrounds of those who use their service? How do you respond to this statement?

Aspects of your work in relation to housing / Homelessness

What is your organization’s remit with regard to the Homeless?

Have you seen a change in the numbers of Homeless wishing to avail of your services over the last few years? Why do you think this is?

With regard to homeless clients, what are the most common situations that you confront on a regular basis?

How do you address the needs of these clients?

How successful do you think these approaches are?

Are these solutions your ideal way of addressing the needs of homeless clients or are there other approaches you would see as preferable?

Has your job become more difficult or easier over the past number of years?
McCann (2000) argued that the nature of homeless services generally offers no opportunity for productive activity. How do you respond to this statement?

Do you think involvement in productive activity is important for your homeless clients?

Williams (1999) said that achieving more effective services is impossible without current, accurate information on the nature and extent of Homelessness. Would you agree with this assessment?

Your views on social exclusion and citizenship

How would you define Social Exclusion?  
Probe: In what ways do you think exclusion manifests itself for your homeless clients?

How would you define Citizenship?

Are citizenship and social exclusion linked in any ways?  

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation?

How do feel people in Ireland view the Homeless population today?

Your views on Housing policy

How long does it usually take before clients find move on accommodation?

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What is your opinion on this policy?

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner—occupation?  

How government policy impacts on your ability to impact on Homelessness

Does the definition of Homelessness adopted by the government in the 1988 housing Act have any implications for your ability to impact on Homelessness?

The Housing Act, in 1988, placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. In your opinion has it had the desired effect?  

Probe
How do you feel about the level of responsibility that has been placed upon local authorities for addressing homelessness?

Do you think it would be better for homelessness to be addressed at a national level?

*Homelessness An Integrated Strategy* recommends that B&Bs are only to be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. Is that the case on the ground? *Probe*

Under the 1988 Housing Act social phenomena such as begging and drunkenness still remain crimes. Does this impact on your ability to alleviate Homelessness?

Is there a need for wet hostels in Ireland at present?

In the UK the Representation of the people Bill (1999) allows Homeless to vote. Would initiatives such as this have any impact on your ability to impact on Homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having positively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having negatively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on your homeless clients experiences of citizenship?

*Your evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness*

*Homelessness An Integrated Strategy* set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. In your opinion has it had an impact?

What about the 3-year Homeless Action Plans?

“The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? *Probe*

*Changes you would like to see introduced in this area*

Are there any changes to Government policy that you would like to see introduced? *Probe*
**Interview Guide: Homeless Agency**

How would the Homeless Agency define homelessness?

What do you see as the major causes of homelessness?

Voluntary organisations often argue that homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in Homelessness legislation while this argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Why do you think that is so?

Do you think that the numbers of people we count as Homeless has an impact on policy responses to the situation? *Probe*

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**Aspects of your work in relation to housing / Homelessness**

What is your organization’s remit with regard to the Homeless?

Have you seen a change in the numbers of Homeless wishing to avail of services in Dublin over the last few years? Why do you think this is?

People who are homeless are entitled to receive the same range of public services as other members of society yet public services are designed around the needs of people living in conventional houses so they can often be difficult for homeless people to access. Are there ways in which this is remedied?

Are the solutions you use the ideal way of addressing the needs of homeless clients or are there other approaches you would see as preferable?

In the area of Social Welfare your website says a fixed address is not a prerequisite to claims and people sleeping rough are entitled to receive social welfare, but that many people fail to claim successfully for unemployment assistance, usually because they are deemed not to be actively seeking and capable of work. Could you tell me a bit more about that?

According to the Supplementary Welfare Allowance information leaflet it says free accommodation etc are taken into account in the means test. Has this an implication for homeless people in that they may actually receive a higher monetary amount by sleeping rough as opposed to staying in a hostel?

Williams (1999) said that achieving more effective services is impossible without current, accurate information on the nature and extent of Homelessness”. Would you agree with this assessment?

Are you happy with the accuracy of the data you have on homelessness for Dublin?
Your views on social exclusion and citizenship

How would you define Social Exclusion?

In what ways do you think exclusion manifests itself for homeless people in Dublin?

How would you define Citizenship? Are there benefits associated with it?

Are citizenship and social exclusion are linked in any ways? Probe

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation?

Your views on Housing policy

What kinds of move on accommodation options are accessible to homeless people in Dublin?

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What is your opinion on this policy?

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner —occupation? Probe

How government policy impacts on your ability to impact on Homelessness

Does the definition of Homelessness adopted by the government in the 1988 housing Act have any implications for your ability to impact on Homelessness?

The Housing Act, in 1988, placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. In your opinion has it had the desired effect? Probe

How do you feel about the level of responsibility that has been placed upon local authorities for addressing homelessness?

Would be better for homelessness to be addressed at a national level?

Homelessness An Integrated Strategy recommends that B&Bs are only to be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. Is that the case on the ground? Probe

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having positively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?
Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having negatively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on homeless peoples experiences of citizenship either positively or negatively?

*Your evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness*

*Homelessness An Integrated Strategy,* set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. In your opinion has it had an impact?

What about the 3-year Homeless Action Plans?
Does the fact that the Action Plans do not have a statutory basis have any implications for service providers?

On you website you say that you manage the implementation of agreed action plans which aim to eliminate homelessness in the capital by 2010. Is that date a realistic goal?

Are there any changes to Government policy that you would like to see introduced?
Probe

Finally how do you respond to the idea that (and I quote) “The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Would you agree or disagree with this statement? Probe
Interview Guide: Focus Ireland

How would you define homelessness?

What do you see as the major causes of homelessness?

Voluntary organisations often argue that homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in Homelessness legislation. Is this your view?

This argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Why do you think that is so?

0’ Sullivan, (1996) said the style in which homelessness is offered to the public by voluntary agencies may be more an expression of the ideologies of those agencies rather than an objective assessment of the needs and backgrounds of those who use their service? How do you respond to this statement?

Aspects of your work in relation to housing / Homelessness

What is your organization’s remit with regard to the Homeless?
Probe: How do you think your organization impacts upon homelessness or the lives of individual homeless people?

Have you seen a change in the numbers of Homeless wishing to avail of your services over the last few years?

With regard to homeless clients, what are the most common situations that you confront on a regular basis?

How do you address the needs of these clients?

How successful do you think these approaches are?

Are these solutions your ideal way of addressing the needs of homeless clients or are there other approaches you would see as preferable?

Has your job become more difficult or easier over the past number of years?

McCann (2000) argued that the nature of homeless services generally offers no opportunity for productive activity. How do you respond to this statement?

Do you think involvement in productive activity is important for your homeless clients?

Williams (1999) said that achieving more effective services is impossible without current, accurate information on the nature and extent of Homelessness”. Would you agree with this assessment?
Do you think that the numbers of people we count as Homeless has an impact on policy responses to the situation? *Probe*

*Your views on social exclusion and citizenship*

How would you define Social Exclusion?

In what ways do you think exclusion manifests itself for homeless people in Dublin?

How would you define Citizenship? Are there benefits associated with it?

Are citizenship and social exclusion are linked in any ways? *Probe*

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation?

How do feel people in Ireland view the Homeless population today?

*Your views on Housing policy*

What kinds of move on accommodation options are accessible to your homeless clients?

How long does it usually take before clients find move on accommodation?

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What is your opinion on this policy? *Probe: What implications do you think this has for homelessness?*

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner—occupation? *Probe*

*How government policy impacts on your ability to impact on Homelessness*

Does the definition of Homelessness adopted by the government in the 1988 housing Act have any implications for your ability to impact on Homelessness?

The Housing Act, in 1988, placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. In your opinion has it had the desired effect? *Probe*

How do you feel about the level of responsibility that has been placed upon local authorities for addressing homelessness? Do they have the necessary financial and or human resources?
Do you think it would be better for homelessness to be addressed at a national level? 
Probe: What about housing more generally?

*Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy* recommends that B&Bs only be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. Is that actually the case on the ground?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having positively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having negatively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on homeless peoples experiences of citizenship either positively or negatively?

Under the 1988 Housing Act social phenomena such as begging and drunkenness still remain crimes. Does this impact on your ability to alleviate Homelessness?

Is there a need for wet hostels in Ireland at present?

*Your evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness*

*Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy,* set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. In your opinion has it had an impact?

What about the 3-year Homeless Action Plans?

Does the fact that the Action Plans do not have a statutory basis have any implications for service providers?

The Homeless Agency are to manage the implementation of agreed action plans which aim to eliminate homelessness in the capital by 2010. Is that date a realistic goal?

*Changes you would like to see introduced in this area*

Are there any changes to Government policy that you would like to see introduced? 
*Probe*

*Finally how do you respond to the idea that (and I quote) “The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Would you agree or disagree with this statement? Probe*
Interview Guide: Local Authorities.

How would you define homelessness?

What do you see as the major causes of homelessness?

Aspects of work in relation to housing / Homelessness

What is your organization’s remit with regard to the Homeless?

Probe: How do you think your organization impacts upon homelessness or the lives of individual homeless people?

Have you seen a change in the numbers of Homeless wishing to avail of your services over the last few years?

With regard to homeless clients, what are the most common situations that you confront on a regular basis?

How do you address the needs of these clients?

How successful do you think these approaches are?

Are these solutions your ideal way of addressing the needs of homeless clients or are there other approaches you would see as preferable?

Has your job become more difficult or easier over the past number of years?

Your views on social exclusion and citizenship

How would you define Social Exclusion?

Probe: In what ways do you think exclusion manifests itself for your homeless clients?

How would you define Citizenship?

Are citizenship and social exclusion are linked in any ways? Probe

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation? Probe: Do you think that there is any difference between citizenship as experienced by the homeless clients you work with versus the way it is experienced by an owner-occupier for example?

How do feel people in Ireland view the Homeless population today?
**Relationships with government bodies and service providers in the operation of your job.**

Voluntary organisations often argue that homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in Homelessness legislation. What is your opinion on this?

That argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Why do you think that is so?

Do you think that the numbers of people we count as Homeless has an impact on policy responses to the situation? *Probe*

Williams (1999) said that achieving more effective services is impossible without current, accurate information on the nature and extent of Homelessness”. Would you agree with this assessment?

Do you think your organisation has access to all the data on the homeless in its area that it needs?

How are the homeless population in this local authority area counted?

Are you satisfied with the way the Homeless population is counted at present?

Some people have argued that given the statutory duty on government & local authorities to tackle homelessness, government adopts a fairly strict definition in order to minimise the size of the problem? How would you respond to such a statement?

**Views on Housing policy**

What kinds of move on (longer-term) accommodation options are accessible to your homeless clients?

How long does it usually take before clients find move on accommodation?

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What is your opinion on this policy? *Probe*: What implications do you think this has for homelessness?

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

What is the average time on the waiting list for this local authority?

What do you see as the major obstacles to local authorities trying to increase their stock of social housing?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner —occupation? *Probe*

Under the 1988 act, it is possible to prioritise homeless people on the social housing
waiting list. How feasible is this in reality?

Are there any obstacles to placing homeless people in social housing?
Probe: How/are these being addressed?

In terms of providing clients with access to longer-term accommodation, be it sheltered or social, do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

*Homelessness An Integrated Strategy* recommends that B&Bs are only to be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. Is that the case on the ground? *Probe*

Under the 1988 Housing Act social phenomena such as begging and drunkenness still remain crimes. Does this impact on your ability to alleviate Homelessness?

Is there a need for wet hostels in Ireland at present?

*How government policy impacts on ability to do the job*

Does the definition of Homelessness adopted by the government in the 1988 housing Act have any implications on your ability to impact on Homelessness? Probe: That definition is quite broad, how do you go about turning into a working system for decide who is and who isn’t homeless?

Has the publication of *Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy* changed how you assess homelessness?

Probe: *Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy* can be seen as having clouded the issue further with the inclusion of 'temporary unsecure accommodation' in the definition. How have you operationalised this term?

In the UK the Representation of the people Bill (1999) allows Homeless to vote. Would initiatives such as this have any impact on your ability to impact on Homelessness?

*The Homeless Action Plans*

Can you tell me about this local authority’s involvement in the homeless action plans?

Who is involved in its preparation?
Probe: What organizations are represented.

How far have you progressed?
Probe: Has it been sent to the DoE?

What are its major action items?

Has a list of performance indicators been drawn up?
Probe: What are they?

Has a timescale for completion of the action points been drawn up?

_Evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness_

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having positively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having negatively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on your homeless clients experiences of citizenship?

_Homelessness An Integrated Strategy_, set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. In your opinion has it had an impact?

What about the 3-year Homeless Action Plans?

Does the fact that the 3-year Homeless Action Plans do not have a statutory basis have any implications for local authorities?

The Housing Act, in 1988, placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. In your opinion has it had the desired effect? _Probe_

How do you feel about the level of responsibility that has been placed upon local authorities for addressing homelessness?

_Probe:_ Do they have the necessary financial resources?

_Probe:_ Do they have the necessary human resources?

Do you think it would be better for homelessness to be addressed at a national level?

_Probe:_ What about housing more generally?

_Changes I would like to see introduced in this area_

Are there any changes to Government policy that you would like to see introduced? _Probe_

Eoin O’Sullivan, in his 1996 book noted that in 1993 a number of local authorities reported the complete absence of homelessness in their districts, despite the existence of functioning shelters for the homeless. How would you respond to that finding?

How would you respond to the idea that (and I quote) “The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? _Probe_
Interview Guide Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government.

How would you define homelessness?

What do you see as the major causes of homelessness?

Aspects of work in relation to housing / Homelessness

What is your Departments’ remit with regard to the Homeless?  
Probe: How do you think your department impacts upon homelessness?

Has your job become more difficult or easier over the past number of years?

Your views on social exclusion and citizenship

How would you define Social Exclusion?

The Partnership 2000 Agreement (1996) defined social exclusion in terms of “cumulative marginalisation: from production (employment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision-making and from an adequate quality of life”. Are the Homeless thus by definition socially excluded.

In what ways do you think exclusion manifests itself for homeless people?

How would you define Citizenship?

Do you think citizenship and social exclusion are linked in any ways? Probe

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation?

Do you think that there is any difference between citizenship as experienced by the homeless clients versus the way it is experienced by an owner-occupier for example? Probe: In what ways does this manifest?

How do feel people in Ireland view the Homeless population today?

Voluntary organisations often argue that homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in Homelessness legislation. What is you opinion on this?

That argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Why do you think that is so?

Some people have argued that given the statutory duty on government & local authorities to tackle homelessness, government adopts a fairly strict definition in order to minimise the size of the problem? How would you respond to such a statement?
Do you think that the numbers of people we count as Homeless has an impact on policy responses to the situation? *Probe*

Williams (1999) said that achieving more effective services is impossible without current, accurate information on the nature and extent of Homelessness”. Would you agree with this assessment?

Are you satisfied with the way the Homeless population is counted at present?

*Views on Housing policy*

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What is your opinion on this policy? *Probe*: What implications do you think this has for homelessness?

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

What do you see as the major obstacles to local authorities trying to increase their stock of social housing?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner—occupation? *Probe*

Under the 1988 act, it is possible to prioritise homeless people on the social housing waiting list. How feasible is this in reality?

Are there any obstacles to placing homeless people in social housing?

*Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy* recommends that B&Bs are only to be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. Is that the case on the ground? *Probe*

*How government policy impacts on ability to do the job*

Does the definition of Homelessness adopted by the government in the 1988 housing Act have any implications on your ability to impact on Homelessness?

*The Homeless Action Plans*

Can you tell me about the Departments involvement in the homeless action plans?

*Evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness*

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having positively impacted on homelessness?
Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having negatively impacted on your ability to address homelessness?

Would you think any pieces of legislation or policy in particular have impacted on homeless peoples experiences of citizenship?

*Homelessness An Integrated Strategy,* set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. In your opinion has it had the impact it hoped to have?

What about the 3-year Homeless Action Plans?

Does the fact that the 3-year Homeless Action Plans do not have a statutory basis have any implications for local authorities?

The Housing Act, in 1988, placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. In your opinion has it had the desired effect? *Probe*

How do you feel about the level of responsibility that has been placed upon local authorities for addressing homelessness? *Probe: Do they have the necessary financial resources? Probe: Do they have the necessary human resources?*

*Finally*

Eoin O’Sullivan, in his 1996 book noted that in 1993 a number of local authorities reported the complete absence of homelessness in their districts, despite the existence of functioning shelters for the homeless. How would you respond to that finding?

How would you respond to the idea that (and I quote) “The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? *Probe*

In your definition of homelessness you include those ‘at risk of homelessness. Why did you decide to include this group?

How do you respond to those who say that by so doing, you take away from the unique nature of distress experienced by those who are physically homeless?

In 1996 you said the style in which homelessness is offered to the public by voluntary agencies may be more an expression of the ideologies of those agencies rather than an objective assessment of the needs and backgrounds of those who use their service? What exactly did you mean by this?

How would you define Social Exclusion?

How would you define Citizenship?

Do you think citizenship and social exclusion are linked in any ways? Probe

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation? Probe:

How do you feel people in Ireland view the Homeless population today?

Aspects of work in relation to housing / Homelessness

Voluntary organisations continually argue that homelessness is a broader problem than that which is defined in Homelessness legislation. That argument is in the main contested by both central and local government. Why do you think that is so?

Is it fair to say that given the statutory duty on government & local authorities to tackle homelessness, it is unsurprising that government adopts a fairly strict definition in order to minimise the size of the problem?

Do you think that the size of the Homeless population will determine the policy responses to the situation? Probe

Williams (1999) said that achieving more effective services is impossible without current, accurate information on the nature and extent of Homelessness”. Would you agree with this assessment?

Does the way in which the Homeless population is counted provide accurate information?

Views on Housing policy

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What implications does this have for Irish society?
Do you think housing tenure can be seen as a source of social exclusion? If so in what ways? *Probe*

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

What do you see as the major obstacles to local authorities trying to increase their stock of social housing?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner—occupation? *Probe*

Under the 1988 act, it is possible to prioritise homeless people on the social housing waiting list. How feasible is this in reality?

Are there any obstacles to placing homeless people in social housing?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on homelessness?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on the visible homeless experiences of citizenship?

*Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy* recommends that B&Bs are only to be used as emergency or short-term accommodation. Is that the case on the ground? *Probe*

Is there a need for wet hostels in Ireland at present?

*How government policy impacts on Homelessness*

The Housing Act, in 1988, placed legislative responsibility on local authorities to look after the homeless population present in their areas. In your opinion has it had the desired effect? *Probe*

Under Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy the precise parameters of 'temporary unsecure accommodation' remain highly ambiguous and this ambiguity means that Homelessness is underestimated, resulting in the under-resourcing of services. How would you respond to this statement?

*Evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness*

*Homelessness: An Integrated Strategy* set out a strategy to tackle the rising problem of homelessness. In your opinion has it had an impact?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy stand out in your mind as having impacted on homeless peoples experiences of citizenship?

What about the 3-year Homeless Action Plans?
Does the fact that the 3-year Homeless Action Plans do not have a statutory basis have any implications for local authorities?

How do you feel about the level of responsibility that has been placed upon local authorities for addressing homelessness?

Do you think it would be better for homelessness to be addressed at a national level?
Probe: What about housing more generally?

Changes I would like to see introduced in this area

Are there any changes to Government policy that you would like to see introduced?
Probe

Finally

You spoke before of how in 1993 a number of local authorities reported the complete absence of homelessness in their districts, despite the existence of functioning shelters for the homeless. Is this proof that government policy as it stands at present can not work?

“The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Probe
**Interview Guide: Tony Fahey:**

How would you define Social Exclusion?
In what ways do you think exclusion manifests itself?

The Partnership 2000 Agreement (1996) defined social exclusion in terms of “cumulative marginalisation: from production (employment), from consumption (income poverty), from social networks (community, family and neighbours), from decision-making and from an adequate quality of life”. Are the Homeless thus by definition socially excluded?

How would you define Citizenship?

Do you think citizenship and social exclusion are linked in any ways? Probe

Do you think that there is a relationship between citizenship and one’s accommodation situation? Probe:

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**Views on Housing policy**

Home Ownership is an aim of housing policy in Ireland. What implications does this have for Irish society?

Do you think that government ideology has encouraged an ethos, which not only promotes owner occupation above others, but also does so in a way that undermines the other forms of housing tenure?

How do our rates of home ownership compare with those in other EU countries?

Labour market readjustments mean that people are no longer guaranteed stable employment for the duration of a mortgage repayment. Do you think this raises questions regarding a housing policy that promotes a form of housing tenure “that doesn’t ensure that households will be capable of remaining in that tenure”.

Do you think housing tenure can be seen as a source of social exclusion?

PJ Drudy said recently that half of couples in Dublin and one third in the rest of Ireland would not be able to afford their own homes within two years. They earn too little to buy their own homes and too much to get council houses. How would you respond to claims like this?

Eoin O’ Sullivan (1996: 80) stated that the housing options of those who are unemployed, especially long term unemployed will remain limited and bleak for the foreseeable future and developments concerning a weakening commitment to social housing investment will result in severe housing deprivation and homelessness for a minority of citizens. Would you agree or disagree with this assessment?

How would you respond to the idea that the government policy of promoting owner-occupier housing tenure at the expense of other forms needs to be rethought as it is
contributing in a major way to the social exclusion experienced by a minority of citizens in Ireland today?

How would you respond to the belief that the role of local authority housing “is no longer to meet basic housing needs but to segregate what has become a clearly defined housing underclass”? Would you agree or disagree with this statement?

What do you think is the status of social housing in terms of the government’s overall housing strategy?

Eoin O’ Sullivan said recently that there is a current net figure of 50,000 household needing local authority housing despite the fact 128,000 households had their housing needs met by local authorities since 1990. Is this evidence that Central government needs to rethink its housing policy?

Many people are now forced to look to the private rented sector for accommodation, while they wait on housing lists. Is there anything that should be done to address the length of time people spend on housing waiting lists?

In your opinion has the rent allowance scheme helped to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner—occupation? Probe

What do you think can be done to make the private rented sector in Ireland a viable alternative to owner—occupation?

*Evaluation of government policy with regards to Homelessness*

Do you think it would be better for housing to be addressed at a national level rather than leaving at the local authority level?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy in relation to housing stand out in your mind as having positively impacted on Irish Society?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy in relation to housing stand out in your mind as having negatively impacted on Irish Society?

Do any pieces of legislation or policy in relation to housing stand out in your mind as having impacted on peoples’ experiences of citizenship either Positively or negatively?

*Changes I would like to see introduced in this area*

Are there any changes to Government policy that you would like to see introduced? Probe

To finish up how would you respond to the idea that (and I quote) “The success of Irish housing policy has been to satisfy the majority at the expense of the underprivileged restricting the quality of their citizenship”. Do you agree or disagree with this statement? Probe
## APPENDIX VI

### CODING SCHEME

**Nodes in Set: All Nodes**

**Number of Nodes: 81**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Node Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1988 Act 2</td>
<td>Positives</td>
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<td>How closing psychiatric hospitals impacted negatively</td>
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<td>Changes that should be introduced</td>
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