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Doctoral Dissertations, 2011-2026 Sociology

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Refuge: Syrian Refugee Incorporation and the Production of New Minorities

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Princeton, NJ : Princeton University

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REFUGE:

SYRIAN REFUGEE INCORPORATION

AND THE PRODUCTION OF NEW MINORITIES

Hebatalla Gowayed

A DISSERTATION

PRESENTED TO THE FACULTY

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Abstract

Drawing on two years of ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews, this dissertation examines the experiences of Syrian refugees. I focus on the lives of 18 Syrian families resettled in the United States. In the final chapter, I compare their experiences to Syrians resettled in Canada, who sought asylum in Germany, and who were resettled or sought asylum in Italy. I show that the Syrian refugees in this study, in all four countries, experienced three sets of crucial losses in their displacement: (1) human capital, (2) social relations—in terms of patterns of family life as well as relations outside of the household—and (3) a sense of security—or sense of legal and interpersonal safety. In light of these losses, I examine what I call refugees' *process of recuperation*—or how these men and women rebuilt these resources within the opportunities and constraints of a resettlement or asylum system. Through this focus on process, and through the cross-national comparison, I contribute to existing literature on refugees by centering the role of the state in facilitating or hindering refugees' *production* of these resources. I argue that refugees' ability to produce human capital, their management of social relations and their sense of security are the product of the opportunities and constraints imposed by immigration laws and social service systems that comprise resettlement and asylum policy. These systems reflect policy-makers' understanding of their humanitarian obligation to people outside of their borders, and those *within* them who are in need of social services. Because the resources I examine are crucial determinants for immigration outcomes, I argue that the state shapes the socioeconomic mobility of these new

newcomer refugees by facilitating or blocking the recuperation of these resources, and thus shapes the kinds of racial and economic minorities they can become.

Acknowledgements

For the past six years of graduate school, and before then, I have been dreaming of the day I get to write this part of my dissertation. My acknowledgements are the story of how I became able to write these pages, and like most stories, this one is best told chronologically.

I am able to write these pages because in 1941, when Alexandria was raided by Italian forces, my grandfather defied his father, a farmer in the Nile Delta, and insisted on staying in that city through the war to finish medical school. Abdelhamid Gowayed, who went by Mahmoud, a name his mother felt was more modern, was the first in his family to finish high school, the first to finish college, the first Dr. Gowayed.

I am here because my maternal grandmother, Magdiya Aly Ahmed, does not take shit. She rebelled against her abusive, conservative mother by dropping out of high school and becoming employed as a typist at the National Bank of Egypt, then run by the British. She rebelled against patriarchal expectations, when she left her fiancé of five years for a man she met at the local sports club, a man who loved her so well she was hospitalized without discernible medical reason after his death, the man who was my grandfather.

I am writing these pages because an air conditioner broke down in Cairo, in the summer of 1989 when my dad was applying to graduate school in the United States. A knock on my father's door—he was a civil engineer at the time—lead to his introduction to a professor at Drexel who wrote him a recommendation letter for that school. My father was accepted to all 11 schools he applied to, but only got a scholarship in one. Along with my mother, and toddler me, he moved to Philadelphia that fall.

I am writing these pages because my mother refused to hand me a glass of water if I asked for it in English and insisted on Arabic class every Sunday, regardless of the fit I threw. I am here because she took me and my brother home every summer and never let me forget where we came from, who the people are who made us.

I am here because my family loved and nurtured me in their own ways. Because my father raised me to be critical, to question, to ask why. Because my mother had an instinct for social justice, and reminded us of the privilege we had. Because my grandmother has been calling me "Dr. Heba" well before I got into graduate school. Because my brother, Omar, five years my junior, always bought two of everything as a child— one for me and one for him— even if I wasn't always nice. I am here because of the love of my Uncle Mohsen, Aunt Dina, and Uncle Amr.

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At Columbia, I made great friends including Jose Atria, Ryan Hagen and Sarah Sachs. I also met James Jones and Mellisa Valle who have both become special people in my life, and who I continue to turn to whether it's to help me think through a paper I'm writing, or to get a break from writing. At Columbia, Nick and I also met Kevin Loughran, the man who drove across the country for our tiny wedding held on a Monday morning in central park, who we can both talk to for an hour on the phone, and who is equal measures brilliant and hysterical. At Columbia, I was also first introduced to sociology by wonderful teachers— Denise Milstein, Joshua Whitford, Sudhir Venkatesh, David Stark, and Karen Barkey.

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And to save the best for last, I am able to write this because of the Syrian men and women who opened up their homes to me, fed me their food, and told me their story wanting nothing in return. I am sad that the world is a place where I have to keep them anonymous, because I would like to thank them one by one. Instead, I will resign myself to telling you, in the following pages, who they are. This entire dissertation is an acknowledgement and testament to them.

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Introduction

In November of 2015, I sat with Rima and Amjad in their two-bedroom apartment, on the top floor of what used to be a single-family-home in Connecticut, where they were resettled by the United States government as Syrian refugees a few months prior. Their four-year-old son, Boudi, laid on the rug beneath us – playing quietly with toy cars and action figures given to him by a neighbor.

Rima and Amjad entered this new country carrying with them the memory of the home that they had lost, and the violent way in which they lost it. Rima leaned across the black metal of their second-hand Ikea futon couch to borrow my phone, so she could search for a YouTube video. The family, poor in the United States though they were middle-class in Syria, could not yet afford two cell phones. Amjad had already used their month's data allowance. After trying a few different search terms, Rima finally found the video that she was looking for. Shot using one camera, the video opens with a sobbing older woman, dressed in black. She screams, "She was only 11 years old, she was so young. She went to the roof to get fresh air." The video then cuts to a photo of a young girl in a powder blue *hijab*; followed by a pan of her bandaged body. Amjad reached over and pointed to himself in the video. "That's me," he said of one of the men carrying the young girl's casket. The video was covering the shooting death of Amjad's younger sister. The older woman in the video was Amjad's mother.

The event in 2011, documented in the video, was the catalyst that lead Amjad and Rima and their extended family to leave Homs, Syria, where they had lived for as many

generations as anyone could remember. The events that took place in the video, however, were the downstream consequence of a series of events that originated across the Mediterranean one year before Amjad's sister was killed.

On December 17th 2010, in Tunisia, Tarek el-Tayeb Mohamed Bouazizi publicly self-immolated. Bouazizi was a street vendor, who set out each morning to sell his wares, hoping to make enough to support his family; his elderly mother and young sisters. Dealing with police corruption was an everyday thing. It was the cost of doing business. But, on this fateful morning in December, a slap across the face by a police officer, who also confiscated his scales, went too far. Bouazizi went to the governor's office to complain, but the governor would not see him. Distraught, Bouazizi lit himself on fire. With that act, this debt-ridden street vendor, who according to his family had no prior interest in politics, ignited what political commentators would term the "Arab Spring" – a regional revolution that spread through Egypt and eventually to Syria (Abouzeid 2011).

On February 15th 2011, in Daraa, Syria – a town in the southwest part of the country, near the Jordanian border – a group of school children scribbled graffiti: *"Ajak el dor ya doctor"* ("Your turn, doctor") on the wall. It was a warning to Bashar Al Assad, an Ophthalmologist, that he would be the next dictator toppled. (Just four days prior, the Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, was forced to step down as the result of protests that began on January 25th 2011.) The Syrian police rounded up the children. By some accounts, the parents who went to the precinct to inquire as to the whereabouts of their children were told to, "make new children."[1]

[1] What happened to the children who were rounded up remains unclear in journalistic accounts (Sterling 2012).

On March 15th, a month after the graffiti went up, protesters flooded the streets in the Syrian capital of Damascus. They were demanding reforms, as well as the release of the children and other political prisoners. The protestors were met with live rounds of ammunition, fired by Assad's security forces, as well as arrests and detentions.

From Damascus, protests spread across the country. Each Friday protesters took to the streets after prayer. Each protest lead to more deaths, more arrests, more indignation, and thus more protests (MacFarquhar 2012). Over the coming six years, the country spiraled into a war that would involve myriad actors, including *Daesh*—the so-called "Islamic State"—which terrorized those the Assad regime had spared (McCoy 2014). As of 2017, the war had claimed the lives of half-a-million other Syrians – including Amjad's sister and father – and displaced an additional 11 million from their homes (Human Rights Watch 2017).

Of those displaced by the time of this writing, 5 million were internally displaced within Syria, having left their homes but not the country, according to UNHCR data. The other 6 million were externally displaced, thereby becoming refugees – pursuant to the 1967 Refugee Convention, which defines a refugee as someone who leaves their country of origin due to a fear of persecution as a result of their race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion (United Nations 1967).

Syrian refugees have contributed the largest global displacement crisis the world has seen since WWII and the writing of the 1951 convention (UNHCR 2016b). In 2016, in total, over 20 million people were externally displaced around the world, and that number has continued to rise [see Figure 1]. Today, one in every four refugees is Syrian. Most refugees, Syrian or otherwise, will only make it so far as countries of immediate

refuge; countries proximate to their country of origin where they can find safety from violence. However, these countries, overwhelmed by the influx of refugees, often do not have the infrastructure to provide for the basic needs of these newcomers. For instance, Turkey currently hosts 3.3 million Syrians, and Lebanon, a country with a population of just 6 million, hosts one million Syrians. This influx has created tensions with residents, resulting in targeting and exploitation of Syrians, who often did not have legal status in these countries of immediate refuge. In these countries, refugees are in situations of protracted displacement.

Illustration 1: Externally Displaced People 1951-2016

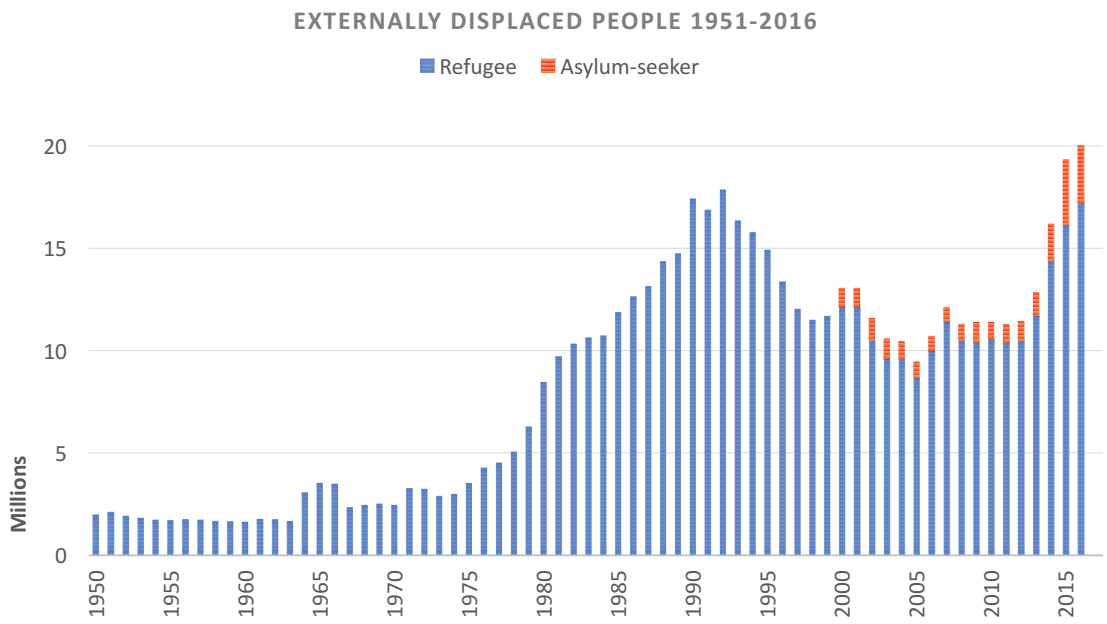
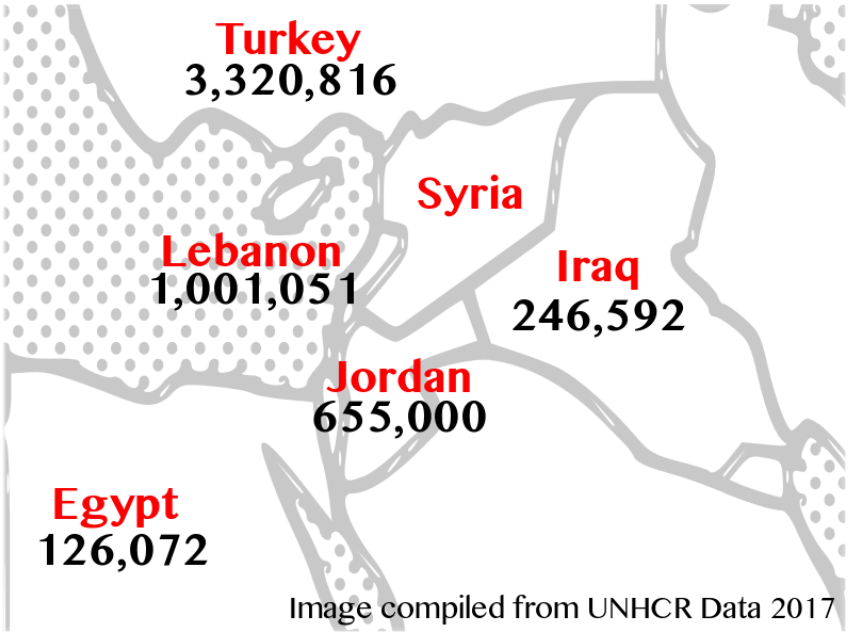


Illustration 2: Displacement by Country of Immediate Refuge



According to the United Nations Higher Council for Refugees (UNHCR) there are three "durable solutions" to the issue of protracted displacement: (1) repatriation to their country of origin; (2) resettlement; (3) or incorporation into another country through asylum (Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2014).

In the case of long, disruptive and violent conflicts like the Syrian War, repatriation to their country of origin is often not possible. Resettlement is only an option for 1% of refugees. Only 37 countries offered resettlement to refugees in 2016 according to the UNHCR, though this number went up from 14 in 2005 (UNHCR 2016a). For those refugees who are not offered resettlement *and* who feel that they cannot remake their lives in countries of immediate displacement *and* who can afford to travel further, asylum is an option. Asylum is where a refugee stakes his or her claim in a country that could offer them legal status, by showing up there and applying. This is what was sought by the Syrian refugees, who in the summer of 2015, made the dangerous journey by both land and sea to reach countries in Europe and asked for asylum there.

Refuge, Loss and Rebuilding

Drawing on two years of ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews this dissertation examines what happens next in the lives of these Syrian refugees who are offered resettlement or who seek asylum in other countries. These options, what the UNHCR calls "durable solutions" to displacement are in fact new beginnings that result in their need to traverse unfamiliar systems in new countries. This dissertation focuses on 18 Syrian families resettled in the United States, which is the country that resettled the

highest number of total refugees each year from the passing of the 1980 refugee act to 2017 – when the Trump presidency began (UNHCR 2016a). In the final chapter, I compare the experiences of those families United States to the experiences of their resettled counterparts in Canada (which also has a leading resettlement program), as well as to Syrian asylum seekers in Germany (which has admitted over half a million Syrians through its asylum program), and resettled refugees and asylees in Italy (which is grappling with its geographical position on the Mediterranean through both resettlement and asylum solutions).

In this dissertation, I argue that Syrian refugees experienced three sets of crucial losses in their displacement and refuge: (1) human capital; (2) social relations; and (3) their sense of security. In their becoming refugees, these individuals lost human capital, in terms of language and labor-market viability. Moreover, they lost social relations, both in terms of actual people they associate with or their social capital and in terms of the patterns of interaction between men and women within the household unit. And finally, they lost their *sense of security,* or sense of interpersonal and legal safety. This is particularly true as most refugees in this study are Muslim, and were resettled in a context of strong anti-Muslim sentiment that was amplified by their targeting under a Donald Trump's presidency (Tanfani 2016).[2]

In light of these losses, I examine what I call refugees' *process of recuperation*— or how these men and women rebuilt resources that they lost within the opportunities and constraints of a resettlement or asylum system. I focus on their first two years of

[2] Due to regional politics, Christians found support under the Assad regime in the early stages of the war. Early waves of Syrian refugees were thus predominantly Sunni Muslim. These would be resettled to the US and Canada in 2015 after years of vetting (see Khazan 2012).

resettlement, which is a period when they both grapple with the shock of being new (including being an ethnic and religious minority) and receive government assistance. I use *process of recuperation* rather than "assimilation" or "integration" because it allows for a consideration of how refugees grapple with their new setting over time, while the latter two focus mostly on immigrant outcomes (Berry 1997; Zhou 1997).

The central question I ask in this dissertation is *how do refugees' processes of recuperation shape their trajectories as economic and racial minorities?* This focus on process rather than outcome contributes to existing literature on refugees by centering the role of the state in facilitating or hindering refugees' *production* of crucial resources. The three resources that I examine—human capital, social relations, and sense of security—relate to resources that scholars have identified as determinants for long-term immigrant outcomes and pathways of incorporation (Portes and Rumbaut 2014).

In this study, I look at how immigrants *acquire* these resources (or not) in destination countries. I argue that the relationship of refugees to the labor-market, to each-other within households, and to people who are not co-ethnics, is the result of the admission systems (derived from immigration law), the rhetoric that surrounds those admission systems, as well as incorporation systems (derived from social services). Because these resources are crucial determinants for immigration outcomes, the state shapes the socioeconomic mobility of these new minorities by facilitating or blocking the recuperation of these resources.

To clarify my contribution, I first review a literature on how states produce refugees, clarifying the place for racial and economic inequalities in that production. I

then review literature that looks at the importance of the variables of interest in this study, before turning to my contribution on the state's role in their production.

Refuge as a state production

Research across the social sciences has examined the role of the state in producing refugees. The production of refugees, Zolberg, Surke and Agayo (1989) argue, is contingent both on a person leaving his/her country of origin and the recognition of that person as a refugee. These are often two sides of the same coin. On the one hand, although they argue that generalized violence is not a sufficient condition to produce a refugee crisis, they identify a series of factors that make mass expulsions more likely, which include the hierarchical order of ethnic groups by the colonizer, the exploitation of resources due to colonialism, *and* the post-colonial meddling of Cold War actors in these countries' domestic affairs with the cooperation of local dissidents. While they do not specifically address countries in the Middle East, which they contend is a limitation of their framework, the Syrian case featured all of these variables[3]

On the other hand, whether or not an individual is *recognized* as a refugee is also a product of these same histories. First, the humanitarian project of providing refuge is necessary because of a shift in the contours of borders in a post-colonial world. As former

[3] French colonization of Syria resulted in ethnic hierarchies with preference for Alawites, Christians and Druze that shaped social life after they left. In the decades after WWII a lack of political direction, and short-lived unification with Egypt under Gamal Abdel-Nasser, characterized the Syrian experience. From here, the Baath Party emerged and Hafez Al-Assad (a member of the Alawite minority once preferred by the French) ascended to its leadership. Importantly, the Baath found its origins in Paris like the nationalist-communist Vietnamese movement that also contributed to one of the 20th century's largest refugee crises. Both movements intended to create modern societies like France, but to do so they needed to reestablish unity that the French had disrupted through their colonial intervention (Seale 1987). To reestablish unity they used excessive force, killing and imprisoning dissent. While the Vietnamese War was a Cold War proxy, the Syrian War, also features United States and Russia rivalries (Polk 2013).

colonial states, which became destinations for immigration, were closing their borders to keep people out, former colonies, which turned authoritarian states, were closing their borders to keep people in. Pushed towards humanitarian admission policies, most states adopted the United Nations Refugee Protocol of 1967:

> A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

However, how states apply this protocol is also contingent on these histories. This relies on the extent to which the destination state's government condemns the government of the sending state, and therefore sees its fleeing citizens *as* persecuted refugees (Castles 2003; Joppke 2005). This too is shaped by colonial and post-colonial relationships. Syria has long been a foe of the United States, part of George W. Bush's "Axis Evil." By contrast, as Menjivar (2006) shows, because the United States supported the Salvadoran government, it did not directly classify people fleeing from there as "political refugees," despite a horrible civil war. Instead the United States classified them as "economic immigrants," and rarely provided them with full legal asylum, but rather with temporary relief from deportation. This distinction between political refugee and economic immigrant also featured in the United States' classification of individuals fleeing Haiti and Cuba. Although people from both countries were fleeing a political regime that had damaging economic impacts, Haitians were defined by the United States as "economic immigrants" whereas Cubans were defined as political refugees (Stepick 1998).

While Zolberg and his coauthors examined how the relationship *between* states determined refugee designations, other research clarifies that racist histories *within* a state also shaped who is recognized as a refugee. For example, Ngai (1999a) has argued that in the United States the very notion of who is "White" was produced through the 1924 Immigration and Nationality Act, which set nationality quotas that specified who could travel to the United States. During WWII, this immigration system was used to exclude Jewish Europeans who were fleeing from the ravages of the holocaust (Gross 2015). And, although the United States had changed its immigration system by the time Haitians were seeking refuge in the 1970s, Stepick (1998) argues that the different treatment of Cubans and Haitians was the result of *both* a different relationship between the United States government and the government of each of their two countries, *and* the race of these newcomers. Indeed, he and others document the explicit anti-Black sentiment of policy makers, such as one of Florida's congressmen, who told Jimmy Carter's INS commissioner Leonel Castilla, "we don't want anymore goddamn Black refugees in Florida" (Lennox 1993; Stepick 1998).

As in the case of Haitians, the race of Syrians shaped their entry. However, the concern in the case of the Syrians is their perceived threat to national security because they are Muslims and therefore associated with terrorism. In the United States, the concern with security is a concern embedded in the policies and rhetoric targeted at Syrian refugees, as is reflected in Obama era vetting and the Trump-era "Muslim bans." Debates within Germany regarding family reunification for admitted refugees, and whether more should be allowed in also reflect these concerns (Liptak and Shear 2018).

In this section, I showed that admission processes reflect the contours of a state's humanitarian obligation to people outside of its borders, an obligation shaped by political considerations, as well as historical and current racial and economic inequalities. In this dissertation, I argue that the incorporation process of refugees, through social service systems, is *also* a product of state humanitarian obligations because the system shapes the resources of refugees who are admitted and are trying to begin a new pathway in a new country. In the following section, I review the capitals and resources that literature has found to be crucial for refugee outcomes. I then turn to show how incorporation, like admission, is contingent on how the state recognizes newcomers.

Determinants of refugee incorporation outcomes

Portes and Rumbaut (2014) provide a framework for studying immigrant pathways in destination countries. They argue that, in addition to the legal and economic system of a country, crucial variables, such as an immigrant's human capital, their social network, and their reception by the local community, all shape what they call an immigrant's "mode of incorporation." Rather than examining an immigrant's experience in terms of their "assimilation," which assumes a unidirectional melding into some other homogenous whole, they allow different incorporation of pathways based on these aforementioned determinants. In this section, I describe human capital, social capital, and societal reception as they are addressed in the literature, focusing on how they are hypothesized to matter for refugees, and how different refugees may experience these resources. In the following section, I make an argument that admission and incorporation systems shape how all of these variables are rebuilt.

First, being in good health, and having skills and capacities relevant to the labor market—or strong human capital—is of crucial importance to refugee outcomes (Lamba 2003; Potocky-Tripodi 2003). However, on all of these parameters refugees may experience a disadvantage. First, in terms of personal characteristics, refugees have often experienced shocks to their mental and physical state that most people have not (Silove et al. 2007). Moreover, because they are forced to travel from their country of origin (sometimes abruptly), and experience displacement in countries of immediate refuge (sometimes for decades), they may have a diminished ability to prepare for the process of immigration (Castles 2003).

There is also variation in how refugees are able to reclaim human capital resources. Studies of East Asian (i.e. Vietnamese, Laotian, Cambodian) and Haitian refugees, for instance, have shown that the resources of refugees vary across temporal cohorts and class backgrounds (Rumbaut 1989; Stepick and Portes 1986). In the case of Vietnamese refugees, earlier cohorts, who had relationships with the United States military, would be more likely to be fluent in English. Other factors, like having some educational background or being younger in age, increase language learning prospects. As a study of Burmese refugees showed, English language is a crucial resource not only for securing employment and also for reducing feelings of isolation by facilitating day-to-day processes (Nawyn et al. 2012). Studies find that a lack of human capital relevant to the labor-market is particularly crucial given the transformation of labor-markets in a post-industrial context and the decline of the living wage (Gans 1992).

Second, while most immigration literature has focused on how immigration disrupts social relationships outside of the household, I build on gender literature that has

examined the ways in which it also disrupts family life. Within the household, diminished human capital has been shown to have differential impacts on men and women in a family. In his work on Cambodian refugees, Tang (2015) finds that an inability to become providers for their households, due to the decline in the United States labor-market, leaves Cambodian men in particular disaffected about their futures in the United States. This echoes a sentiment expressed by the Vietnamese respondents of Nazli Kibria (1994) who found it difficult to make-ends meet in the United States, and described men and women taking on new responsibilities. These findings echo earlier work on Cuban refugees by Ferree (1979), who found that Cuban women who were not previously employed entered the labor-market in their husband's stead upon arrival in the United states, but did so as part of their caretaking labor. Given the importance of the family unit to economic life, these kinds of adjustment, underexplored in the literature, matter for refugee pathways (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1999)

Another way that studies examine social relations is by looking at the relationships of an immigrant to people outside of their household—or their social capital. Most immigrants follow cousins or friends to destination countries, through a process referred to as "chain migration" (Portes and Rumbaut 2014). This allows immigrants to connect to jobs and draw on the knowledge of those who have arrived before them. This is particularly crucial because co-ethnics have been shown to provide access to jobs or other income-earning opportunities (Beaman 2012; Lamba 2003). Immigrants who feel discrimination in the labor-market may form economic enclaves, which can have an insulating effect (Wilson and Portes 1980). While refugee resettlement does not allow for people to follow chain migration—the process involves a refugee

answering “yes” or “no” to an offer to resettle in a given country—studies of Southeast Asian refugees have shown that even though they were resettled in different places across the United States, secondary migration brought them closer together (Rumbaut 1989). The same was true for Somali refugees in Minnesota(Allen 2009). The case of Somalis, however, shows that social networks do not always have a positive impact. For women, being around other Somalis actually decreased their labor-market involvement as the community, together, upheld expectations for women’s care work. Finally, having a community with limited resources can have negative impacts on one’s personal resources (O’Brien 2012; Portes, Fernández-Kelly, and Haller 2005). This is seen in refugees’ transnational ties, as their countrymen are experiencing war they feel a responsibility to send money home and cannot rely on their community for business ties as other refugees and immigrants can (Singh 2007; Singh, Robertson, and Cabraal 2012).

Third, literature on immigration outcomes has increasingly examined the issue of race and racism. Along with coauthors, Alejando Portes examined how xenophobia impacted the acceptance of individuals in labor-markets, showing that ethnic enclaves protected immigrants from this discrimination (Portes and Rumbaut 2014; Portes and Stepick 1985). Recent research has looked at the impact of discrimination beyond the labor-market. As refugees arrive, people who may never have experienced minority status before, may become racialized in their country of resettlement: they experience elements of their physical appearance—perhaps their *hijabs* or their olive skin-tones—being lumped together in a group and associated with bad behavior, i.e. terrorism (Omi and Winant 2014).

Studies have shown that experiences of racialization and discrimination result in diminished psychological wellbeing (Abdulrahim et al. 2012; Brettell 2011). There is a debate in this literature on the impact of legal status on experiences of racism. Brown (2011) in her study of Liberian refugees suggested that having their legal refugee status increased newcomer's sense of belonging and claim in the United States. By contrast, Maghbouleh (2017) in her research on Iranian immigrants—some of whom may have arrived as refugees—suggests that they experience their whiteness as liminal and feel a diminished sense of belonging despite their citizenship as they are racialized as Muslims. Studies have shown that immigrants who are non-White and non-Christian will experience a particularly difficult incorporation process (Foner and Alba 2008). In particular, Muslim women, who wear the hijab, run a high risk of experiencing stigmatized hate (Bakalian and Bozorgmehr 2009; Naber 2012).

How States Shape Incorporation Outcomes

The aforementioned literature shows that human capital, social capital, and what I call *sense of security*—or refugees' sense of interpersonal and legal belonging—may be important determinants for the long-term outcomes of immigrants. In this dissertation, expanding on these variables, I examine human capital and social relations showing that their recuperation is the result of variation in incorporation systems. I also examine refugees' *sense of security* which I argue is shaped by both the admission policies and the rhetoric that surrounds them. In this way, all three resources can be understood as products of state interventions.

Refugees, unlike any other class of immigrant in the United States, are entitled to social services including welfare, which becomes their only regular cash assistance (as I show throughout this dissertation). In the United States, this access to social services is an exception for immigrants, as most immigrants are denied this benefit – particularly after the 1996 welfare reform and the creation of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

Research in the United States that examines refugee access to welfare has largely focused on how welfare assistance is used by refugees, particularly in the case of Southeast Asian refugees, who fled in the 70s and 80s. In her study of Vietnamese refugees, Kibria (1993) described how welfare became a cash resource in the hands of women, who patched it together with other incomes to keep families afloat. In his work with a group of South East Asian refugees in San Diego, Rumbaut (1989) viewing welfare through the lens of the 1980 Refugee Act, which held that refugees should become "self-sufficient," examined whether they became dependent on state assistance. He found that dependency had little to do with preexisting human capital and more to do with family composition. Importantly, in the period of time that Kibria and Rumbaut were studying, it was still possible to be dependent on the welfare system. Post 1996 welfare reform, however, the circumstances facing refugees have changed. As a result of the reforms, the welfare system was drastically truncated, coming with a 21-month lifetime maximum in states like Connecticut.

While this literature is important for understanding the experience of these cohorts of refugees, it misses the way that the program itself structures the ability of refugees to rebuild their lives. By examining the impact of this welfare system and

juxtaposing it to the resettlement assistance offered in other countries, I show both how these social assistance systems reflect that country's understanding of its humanitarian obligation to refugees, who are now within its borders, and shapes their *process of recuperation*—or their ability to rebuild the human capital, social relations, and sense of security. In the following section, I describe my argument for how state assistance shapes refugee's ability to reclaim human capital and social relations. I then turn to examine how admission systems shape refugees' sense of security.

Human Capital

One way that states shape the direction of refugee mobility—into the ranks of disadvantaged minority or not—is by shaping these newcomers' ability to both (re)build human capital and express their existing capabilities and skills as human capital.

First, admission policies impact the recuperation of human capital. In the United States and Canada specifically, where refugees are *resettled* and therefore chosen for arrival in these countries, a criterion for their selection is humanitarian need. While the determinants for "humanitarian need" are opaque, this typically means that these countries give priority to families with young children or chronic health needs, making it so that those admitted need extra support on arrival (UNHCR 2016a). This puts those who are offered resettlement at a disadvantage. Only two resettled refugees in this study had a high school degree. Though those who sought asylum were on average better educated, even they were moving from one economic system to another, with different expectations for their labor.

For these reasons, individuals in this study entered these respective incorporation systems with a need for investment in their human potential. A standard definition of human capital is the abilities and qualities of people that make them productive in relation to income-earning in the labor-market (Becker 1985). Studies of immigration look at human capital as crucial resource, but often treat its acquisition as contingent on immigrant's past employment and education. This has the effect of treating human capital like a puzzle-piece that fits or not into the demands of the labor-market.

I argue that although past experiences matter, the destination country can also intervene to play a positive or negative role in mediating a refugee's fit into the labor market. They do this in two ways. First, the receiving country can invest in immigrant's language learning or skill-building, by providing both instruction as well as financial support that enables refugees to benefit from that instruction. States therefore can reshape puzzle-pieces to better fit the needs of the labor-market. Second, the receiving country can block or facilitate labor-market entry by recognizing newcomer potential or not. For instance, in Germany, newcomers are expected to earn credentials that match those of native Germans. This means that someone who was well-established as a carpenter in Syria would have to learn German and then become an apprentice before becoming a carpenter again – a process that could take 5 to 7 years.

In this way, I argue that the human capital of refugees in a receiving country is state produced. The state determines whether an individual is worth the investment of resources, and whether they are good enough to enter the labor-market. In the first part of this dissertation I show how the United States, through a policy of self-sufficiency that promotes early incorporation in the labor-market, pushes refugees into precarious jobs

where there is little opportunity to churn one's way out of poverty. In the final chapter, I show how this approach compares to that of Germany, Canada and Italy that all provide more cash support to refugees but have different policies of allowing interface with the labor-market.

Social Relations

Without pre-existing contacts in the country of resettlement (caused by their inability to follow chain migration), resettled refugees are forced to form new social networks, which can have positive or negative effects on their adaptation. The networks they form, however, are also shaped by the resources at their disposal.

Scholars have shown that a crucial byproduct of social networks is the internal sanctioning capacity of the community itself, also known as enforceable trust (Portes and Sensenbrenner 1993). However, as newcomers, without the benefits of chain migration or family reunification, refugees may struggle with developing ties capable of sustaining such sanctioning capacity. Moreover, competition over limited labor-market opportunities may undermine the maintenance of social relations, which could have further deleterious effects on trust formation.

Just as social life outside of the nuclear family is disrupted in immigration, so is social life within it. This is a downstream effect of the resources at the disposal of the family within a given context, and how those resources enable the family to reconcile their own expectations for their household labor with the expectations of the social policy for that same labor. For instance, the "self-sufficiency" expectation in the case of the United States—which expects all refugees to enter the labor-market—is in contest with

Syrian men and women's expectations for their labor as breadwinners and caretakers respectively. By contrast, in Germany, all refugees are expected to enter the same language classes, and to earn the same credentials, which impacts men—who were more likely to have an established career in Syria—differently than it does women who were more likely to have stayed out of the labor market there.

Whether families are stretched across borders or arrive in destination countries together, resettlement changes family life and gender relations (Mahler and Pessar 2006). Large-scale quantitative studies have suggested that men and women's divisions of labor stay constant with immigration (Blau, Kahn, and Papps 2011; Frank and Hou 2015). Gender and immigration studies, however, reveal what these large-scale statistics obscure. Immigration requires a delicate management of family life, as the resources that once supported a family's division of labor no longer exist (Dion and Dion 2001; Mahler and Pessar 2006; Pessar and Mahler 2003). This is particularly true of families who once enjoyed extended familial networks in their home country. Because of a resettlement policy that only sees the nuclear family—father, mother, and unmarried children under 21 as part of the "family" unit– these family become truncated (Cvejić Jančić 2010).

Studies show patterns of relationships within the households change upon arrival to a new country. For example, partners that did not previously work may enter the labor market, and partners who did not previously assist in housework may need to take on new roles (Hondagneu-Sotelo 1992; Pedraza 1991). Importantly, these shifts are not without tensions as partners do the work of figuring out new arrangements. Espiritu (2003) for instance, showed that when Filipino men took on jobs that they perceived to threaten their masculinities, this created conflict with wives. And, Hondagneu-Sotelo (1994)

showed that strong unions were dissolved as women found more independence in America and men were nostalgic for life back home. Given the importance of the family as a productive unit, particularly in the context of immigration, this study pays specific attention to how men and women's relationships shift in resettlement (Sanders and Nee 1996).

Admission Policies, Rhetoric, and Sense of Security

Finally, Syrians who are resettled or seek asylum have privileged legal status. For instance, Canada and the United States have policies for the legal incorporation of refugees – i.e., offering admitted refugees a pathway to citizenship (Bloemraad 2006a; Capps et al. 2015). Germany and Italy, by contrast, which have not historically been immigration destinations, established their immigration policies specifically in response to the recent refugee crisis (Erlanger 2018). As a result, they offer these newcomers an indirect pathway to citizenship (discussed in more detail in the comparative chapter 5). Despite these variations and challenges in refugees' legal standing, refugees across countries are invited with the assumption that they will stay – as opposed to other kinds of immigrants who are offered short-term stays (like guest workers in Germany), or threatened with deportation (like undocumented immigrants in any of these four countries).

For the Syrian refugees in my study, however, this legal status, in some cases, was not sufficient to create a sense of security, due to a continued rhetorical and legal negotiation over whether they should be allowed to stay in these destination countries. Syrian refugees arrived in these countries in a post 9-11, post-ISIS world, with *hijabs*

wound, and in most cases lacked the ability to speak the language of their destination country.

In the United States, they arrived as conspicuous refugees invited by Obama and at a moment in which the tact in color-blind rhetoric had dissipated, in what Bail (2012) called the "Fringe Effect" – where anti-Muslim groups like the Tea Party have their voices amplified through media coverage. The rise of Islamophobia is seen in the campaign and subsequent electoral victory of Donald J. Trump, who once called Syrian refugees a "Trojan horse for terrorism" (Tanfani 2016) and legislated a "Muslin travel ban" that sought to limit travel to the United States of individuals from Syria as well as from other predominantly Muslim countries (Amos 2017). Importantly, this travel ban drew on histories of immigration policy in the United States and particularly a concern for security which emerged from a xenophobic, Cold War past.

This anti-Muslim rhetoric, however, is not confined to the borders of the United States. Liz Fekete (2018), in her book on the rise of the far right, describes its ascension in Europe as a result of a combination of longtime xenophobia that was stoked by the "war on terror" and fears for European security. The 2015 terror attack against the *Bataclan* and *Stade de Paris* in Paris resulted in the deaths of 130 people. As a reaction to this attack, governors in Thirty-one States in the United States attempted to ban refugees from arriving in their countries, despite the fact that no Syrian refugees were involved. Similarly, in countries throughout Europe, surveillance of immigrants increased in this period, resulting in states creating "deportable subjects" out of their long-term Muslim communities. While Islam is a religious group comprised of 1.3 billion people who are phenotypically diverse its followers are assumed by this fear to have common, inherent

traits by those who are part of the growing, global, political "right" which has lead scholars to describe Muslims as a racialized group (Afshar 2013; Galonnier 2015; Garner and Selod 2015; Love 2017; Selod 2015). As a result of this racialization people as disparate as Sikhs, Arab Christians, and Catholic Latinos are targeted for their assumed adherence to Islam due to how they are dressed or the olive complexion of their skin. Racialized in this way, the Syrian refugees in this study express a diminished sense of security—interpersonal safety from hate crimes and also legal safety—despite their privileged legal status.

Methods

Research for this dissertation began in a city in Connecticut, whose name has been redacted to protect the privacy of refugees in this dissertation. I began conducting an ethnography in Connecticut in October 2015 and ended the first period of fieldwork in October 2017, though I continued to be in touch with the families in the field site after this initial period of data collection through July 2018. I gained entrée into the Syrian refugee community at first through the local resettlement agency that serviced them. In Connecticut, my study includes eighteen families. The first fifteen arrived between 7/28/2015 and 3/15/2016. These are the total number of Syrian families to arrive to this city during this time. Except for the first five families who arrived within the three months before I began this study, I met these families either at their arrival or within the week of their arrival. The remaining three families included arrived between 7/20/2016 and 8/30/2016. All three are family members or close friends of the original 18 who had

asked to be reunified after their displacement. These families are included because they offer interesting variation on social networks upon arrival.

I am a native Arabic speaker and was able to volunteer as an interpreter for the resettlement agency. Initially, I interpreted between Syrian refugees, resettlement agency staff, and other service providers in day-to-day tasks including meetings at schools, with lawyers, with caseworkers over budgets and for hospital visits. Within weeks the Syrian families, learning that I was a volunteer and that I was doing independent research, began to recruit me to interpret in situations where they preferred that resettlement staff not to be involved, or where they felt that they needed an advocate. I have attended job interviews for formal and informal work, helped parents send money to their children in the diaspora via Western Union. I have become close to many of these families attending birthday parties, dinner parties, and stopping by casually for coffee. I am also Facebook friends with those who have a profile which allows me to observe their online lives and social relations with each other. The approach I take is as a participant-observer. This approach allows for me to capture day-to-day experiences more so than just through interviews or through an attempt at hands-off observation.

This case of these Syrian refugees in Connecticut is an example of a well-supported resettlement program in the United States. The resettlement agency is active, regularly covered in the national news. The city itself has a public transportation system, is nearby a major university, and already had several Arab businesses—grocers, gas stations, and fast food restaurants. Connecticut consistently votes Democratic and the governor at the time of the Syrian's arrival, Dannel Malloy, has made it a point of welcoming refugees to his state. When Thirty-one governors around the United States

said that they would deny Syrian refugee resettlement, Malloy was the only governor to state he would welcome refugees regardless of what anyone else did.

As I was doing this initial research, and Donald Trump was campaigning for presidency in the United States, just north of the border, Justin Trudeau had sworn to take in 25,000 Syrian refugees. Recognizing the importance of policy context for the resettlement of refugees, I began my research on the Canadian case on February 24, 2016, which was a few days before the Canadian government achieved their goal of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees. Also justifying this case is preceding work comparing the United States and Canada. Seymour Lipset (1990) argued that comparisons between Canada and the US are effective due to cultural similarities in the countries' historical development that allow the researcher to maintain certain aspects of context constant while comparing others. In her book comparing political incorporation of immigrants and refugees in the US and Canada, however, Irene Bloemraad (2006) argues that while there are indeed similarities between these countries, in the 1970s, they diverged in their policies creating different environments for immigrants and refugees. This makes Canada a useful comparison to the United States in this case.

The refugees that arrived in Toronto during this time were placed in hotels, since there was no housing available for them. I include five families in Canada (n=25). One of these families is the cousin of a Connecticut family that arrived a month before from her New Haven counterpart in July 2015. Two other families are friends of Connecticut families. The last two families are privately sponsored—resettled by a Canadian citizens who put up the money for their arrival. I met these families through cold-calling the organization and group of individuals who resettled them respectively. The two private

sponsored families live in central Toronto. For the government-sponsored families, one family lives in Hamilton, one in Kitchener and one in Mississauga. In addition, I observed and participated in a York University study conducting focus group discussions with refugees in Kitchener and Toronto, with groups of privately sponsored and government sponsored refugees as a way to place my findings in broader context. To conduct the interviews in Canada, I spent a month in Toronto in the summer of 2016, and then visited every 6 months, completing this research in February 2018. I maintained contact with the families via phone and social media in the interim. I have conducted interviews with private sponsors (n=2), practitioners including lawyers, heads of resettlement organizations both public and private (n=5), and academics (n=3).

The case of Italy is not a direct comparison with the Canadian and American cases. However, it was included because the resettlement program in Italy was entirely new and the Italian government was forced to figure out new criteria for refugee resettlement leading to cross-country variation. Moreover, the Italian case includes three refugee families invited to resettle in Italy by Pope Francis and taken to Greece. The Italian case captures the European debate over refugee mobility. In Italy I also followed six families and a single man in his twenties (n= 27) for two years from April 2016 when the refugees who came with the Pope first arrived in the summer of 2018. Like in Canada, I visited every six months, maintaining contact via phone and social media.

Finally, I added the case of Germany for an example of a country that offered asylum. Angela Merkel shocked Europe, and the world, when she agreed to admit hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees. This resulted in Germany leading the world on asylum, acting in its sovereignty to suspend the Dublin Regulations within its borders. It

accepted half a million Syrian refugees in the process. In Germany, I conducted interviews with five families, who I found via snowball sampling. They were related to families in the other countries I studied. These interviews were conducted in the summer of 2017 in the Badden-Wurtemberg region. I also visited Berlin to visit a refugee camp and interview more policymakers in the winter of 2017. I returned for a final visit in May and June of 2018 when I interviewed an additional 14 refugees, who either arrived as individuals or who are members of families who have been in Germany for since 2015. These respondents are also part of a national study done by the University of Konstanz of Syrian refugees in their first years there.

On limitations

Anticipated potential limitations to this study are three. First, the small number of respondents means that I cannot say how all refugees experience these systems of incorporation or admission. Instead, I use the cases of refugees across countries to reflect on how national systems work, and how specific refugees were able to traverse them.

Second, while this study reflects on the process of refugee recuperation, and the direction of their mobility as newcomers, because of my observation of the first years of resettlement, I cannot report on outcomes. It may be the case that the refugees, due to other factors—individual gumption, donations, mental health issues etcetera—do better or worse than the resources afforded to them allow. I report in this dissertation on the systems of resettlement and their implications for refugees.

Finally, as the reader will likely observe, I became close to the respondents in this study, particularly in the case of the United States. I believe, however, that the

relationships I developed provided a level of trust that allowed me to have a deeper understanding of respondent's lives facilitating the insights presented in this dissertation. I was careful to document in my field notes anytime I facilitated refugee's access to any resource, usually services offered through local NGOs. The findings of this dissertation are largely structurally shaped, and I could not change the resources that refugees had when they arrived in any of these countries, nor their household cultural practices, or the racism they experienced.

Illustration 3: Research Design and Methods

	United States	***Canada***	***Germany***	***Italy***
Case specifics	Global resettlement site	Top Syrian resettlement	Most Syrians admitted (asylum)	Pope Francis
Research duration	October 2015-October 2017	February 2016-February 2018	June 2017, June 2018	April 2016-April 2018
Method	Ethnographic Observation	Ethnography, longitudinal interviews, focus group discussions	Interviews	Ethnography, longitudinal interviews
Respondents	18 families (n=81)	5 families (n=25) 4 Focus group discussions	20 families	5 families (n=27)

Chapter Roadmap

To explore the process of recuperation of Syrian refugees, this dissertation proceeds as follows. The first chapter examines how Syrians became refugees. It describes how they made the choice to leave their country of origin, their experiences in countries of immediate refuge, and how the men and women in this study chose to move further afield to the United States, Canada, Germany and Italy, where they would experience a loss of human capital, a disruption in their social life, and a diminished sense of security for the first time.

The second, third, and fourth chapters focus on the case of the United States specifically. Chapter Two "Resettlement in America" examines the 1980 Refugee Act which sets up both the system of admission and incorporation in the United States. Tracing the history of this act, I show how the debates that lead to its formation continue to inform the rhetoric around refugee resettlement. While the chapter touches on how this rhetoric can impact Syrian refugees' sense of security, it focuses on how it shapes their ability to recuperate human capital. "Self-sufficiency"—the goal of resettlement in the United States, results in the place of Syrian refugees on United States welfare, which in turn pushed them to enter the labor-market, limiting their ability to build language skills or other skills relevant to the labor-market.

Chapter Three "Household Lives" further explores the issue of how refugees recuperate human capital by examining the ways in which men and women differentially navigate social services in the United States—balancing the Earned Income Tax Credit, welfare and food stamps—while holding onto their self-understandings about their labor. Focusing on the second loss—the disruption of social relations—I look at the way in

which incorporation policy shapes the ways in which Syrians rebuild family life. I show that the United States social service system interacts with Syrians' self-understandings for Syrian men and women's labor to produce divergent access to English language learning, a crucial human capital for refugee futures. I describe how this divergence, while not changing divisions of paid and unpaid labor, resulted in a new content of that labor, potentially consequential for men and women's future outcomes.

Chapter Four "Resettled and Unsettled" examines the unique political moment in which these men and women arrive in the United States, the summer of 2015. That same summer, Donald Trump descends the elevator of his eponymous tower to announce his run for presidency. Here I show how their arrival in this consequential moment resulted in their experience of racialization, and how that racialization reduced their sense of security—or legal and interpersonal safety—in the United States.

Chapter Five "New Minorities," compares the experiences of refugees in the United States to those who have been resettled in Canada, Germany and Italy where drastically different approaches to social services and histories of immigration inform variations in their incorporation. The intra-country comparison confirms the main argument of this dissertation, that the state plays a central role refugees' process of recuperation, and their ability to rebuild human capital, social relations, and establish a sense of security. These different approaches to incorporation shape the kinds of trajectories that Syrian refugees are on as economic and racial minorities.

Finally, the concluding chapter reflects on what the experiences of refugees—who are themselves a numerically small group of people—say about the social service and immigration systems in the United States more broadly, and how they impact

marginalized people. I focus on the notion of "self-sufficiency" in United States' welfare policy, and the focus on "security" in immigration policy. I end the chapter with a review of the main findings of the dissertation and the question of what comes next in the lives of Syrian refugees.

-1-

Becoming a Refugee

The men and women's journeys from their homes in Syria, to countries of refuge and asylum like the United States, Canada, Germany, or Italy, were complicated, stilted and violent. Temporal variation in the families' departure from Syria, but also other factors like access to money and health status determined the choice sets available to each family, which risks were possible for them to take, what futures were possible to pursue. In order to understand their process of recuperation in countries of resettlement and asylum, it is important to first understand how these men and women became refugees, or how they lost the resources of interest to this study. This chapter first elaborates on the motivations for these men and women's departure from Syria, and their lives in countries of immediate refuge like Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. It then examines how they were offered resettlement or sought out asylum, and the kinds of lives that waited for them on the other side of these journeys.

Let us return to the case of Rima and Amjad. With their departure from Homs, Syria, Amjad and Rima, who had already lost their family members, would at first experience more loss. They left behind the plot of land and half-built home they had saved up for over seven years, as well as a car he had just acquired for his construction business (he specialized in laying tiles). For seven years, they had lived in Amjad's parent's home while they saved up for these purchases. Finally, they had acquired the money four months before the war began and excitedly invested it. "If we had only

known" Rima shrugged. Amjad continued, "The apartment, car, and workshop were all lost to me when I left…God is my witness, when I left for Damascus I left without enough money to pay our right-of-passage. I left in debt."

In leaving their home, they joined the ranks of the internally displaced. For a month in Damascus, the couple and their children were safe. The war had not yet reached Zamalka, the suburb where they were staying. But, on June 30, 2012, an attack in Zamalka confirmed their worst fears; that they would have to leave Syria altogether.

Amjad pulled up another video on his phone. This one was unnarrarated raw footage. It opens with men walking down a road, during a funeral procession and then there is a loud blast and everything goes dark. Amjad explains that a car bomb had gone off during the procession. Amjad, in the mayhem, lost track of his then three-year-old son, something he would never be able to forgive himself for, even though he later recognized that his son was with one of his uncles. Sixty people died that day, and Amjad was left with an unshakable fear that he could lose his children. He realized he had three choices: kill, die, or leave. "All of the time, people lost family and would go on to join the Free [Syrian] Army… [But] I will not kill anyone… What should I do? Shoot a *Alawi*[2]*te* in the street? What if he has nothing to do with anything? …What if he's a better person than me? Then I have committed a sin." The family chose to flee to Jordan within the week after this incident, where they arrived with just $100 in their pocket, left over money from a tiling job that Amjad had done for a man in Damascus, becoming refugees in their external displacement.

Over the course of the coming years the Syrian war intensified. The resistance to the Assad regime would fracture, creating a conducive environment to militias including

ISIS; who had formed years prior in American prisons in Iraq (McCoy 2014). The world watched as more-and-more people streamed across the Syrian border and into surrounding countries.

Crossing the border in this later period were Nadine and Hamid, an educated couple from central Damascus in their thirties, who along with their toddler son would later arrive in Italy. Nadine and Hamid, unlike Rima and Amjad, had not experienced the war as violently. Their regime-controlled central Damascus neighborhood was spared from much of the fighting. However, they were forced to leave Syria in early 2016, after Hamid, then in his early 30s, received a letter from the Syrian military that he was to show up to their headquarters. He was being drafted. The Syrian military was short on bodies, given the duration of the war, and now they were drafting able-bodied men regardless of their age or status. Hamid, a well-regarded engineer, who at the time worked for the government, tried to appeal the request but was denied. He and Nadine were left with limited choices, they had to leave Damascus.

Nadine and Hamid sold land that they owned, as well their home which sat on top of it, for much less than its market price, securing $10,000. From this, they paid a smuggler $3,000 to get them out of Damascus and to Aleppo. Unlike Rima and Amjad and those who had fled early on in the war, getting out now was much more difficult. The smuggler piled the family into the back of an ambulance. Sirens on, the ambulance passed them through the check-points to the edge of the city. There, they got into another truck, which zig-zagged past the check-points, even further out.

The path taken by most of the men and women leaving in 2015 was through ISIS territory. The smuggler separated the women from the men. Nadine, who had never

regularly worn a *hijab*, wore an all-black *niqab* which covered her face including her eyes. For the majority of their escape, she could only see through its black fabric. This was the law of the land. For 24 hours, which included a 4 hour walk around a checkpoint, and 15 hours spent crouched in the back of a flat-bed truck with Russian bombardment overhead—in support of the Assad regime— Nadine and Hamid wondered if the other was alive. Because their three-year-old son was afraid of his mother in the *niqab*, unable to recognize her, he rode with his father.

They were relieved when they were reunited and put on yet another truck, which they thought would take them, finally, to Aleppo; where they could cross over to Turkey. This relief would be short lived, however. After their reunification, they were stopped at a checkpoint, where ISIS officers refused to allow them to move forward. When Hamid objected, the smuggler called him a *Kaffir* or infidel—for which the punishment was death.

After a few days in ISIS territory, with Aleppo in sight, the couple were tipped-off that they could sneak past the ISIS guards while they were praying. They paid an ISIS smuggler $100 per person for their journey which would entail a truck driving directly through the checkpoint during prayers. Four hours later, they found themselves in a grain storage unit. Since they were still dressed in ISIS-approved garb, they surrendered to the Syrian Free Army with their hands overhead, holding a white scarf. They had arrived in Free Syrian Army controlled Aleppo. From there, they were free to move on to Turkey. But, this ending would prove to be just the beginning of another long, and equally arduous journey that would ultimately lead them—through a series of unlikely events involving a Pope's intercession—to Italy.

Importantly in fleeing Syria, Rima and Amjad as well as Nadine and Hamid found safety from war. But, they also lost crucial resources. In paying smugglers and leaving their homes in a hurry, they lost economic resources in terms of land, businesses and savings. They left behind their family and friends. And with these loses they lost their home in a figurative sense: they lost the familiarity and the comfort of going about their day-to-day business in a place they knew and belonged. And, they no longer had the legal protection and security of their country of origin, their country of citizenship. And, while the countries of immediate refuge where they escaped—Turkey, Jordan or Lebanon—provided respite from the war, for a variety of reasons, discussed in the next section, they were bad permanent options.

Life in Countries of Immediate Refuge

When Rima and Amjad arrived in Jordan in 2012 they registered with the United Nations Higher Council for Refugees (UNHCR), becoming a legal "refugee." This designation is made possible by the 1951 refugee convention signed in the aftermath of WWII and updated in 1967 with the following definition of who constituted a refugee:

> A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it. (United Nations 1967).

The UNHCR is the agency tasked with determining whether a person satisfies this definition and of refugee within countries of immediate refuge where there is a large

influx of refugees such as in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey which recieved hundreds of thousands and then millions of Syrian refugees.

Those who registered with the UNHCR received a document, which Syrians called their "*mufawadeya*," which is the Arabic name for "Council" a short-hand reference to the UNHCR identification card. This document is crucial as refugees attempted to access services offered in countries of immediate refuge, including limited cash assistance, health care and education. NGOs also asked for this document when disbursing one-off assistance such as providing used clothing or other kinds of in-kind items.

There was variation in the experiences of refugees across time. As the numbers of Syrians arriving to countries of immediate refuge and registering with the UNHCR increased as the war escalated, from tens of thousands, to hundreds of thousands, to millions of people. The infrastructures in countries of immediate refuge became overwhelmed, creating tensions between newcomers and residents over economic opportunities, and pushing the policy makers in these countries to be more stringent when it came to refugee mobility. When Rima and Amjad first moved to Jordan, in early 2012, *Zaatari*—Jordan's main camp for refugees was not yet operational. Jordanian authorities did not require Rima and Amjad to stay in the camp.

Those who arrived in Jordan later that year, like Najlaa and her husband Nabil, who were also from Homs, were not as lucky. Nabil was detained by the Syrian military at a checkpoint and held for a month. The torture experienced during detention left scars on his back and his arms and delayed his family's departure from Syria. Upon his release, the family travelled to Jordan. There, like all of the Syrians who came before them, they

registered with the UNHCR. However, at that time the Jordanian authorities were pushing Syrians outside of their major cities and into the refugee camps.

Najlaa and Nabil moved into a tent in *Zaatari* camp which felt like a dead-end. Given the continuing chaos that engulfed Syria, the length of their stay in the camp was undetermined and would likely be long. According to the UNHCR, the average time that a refugee lives in a camp globally is 17 years (UNHCR 2014). Refugee camps, while providing education and some work opportunities for residents, substantially restrict mobility. They exist as a place for refugees to live isolated from the communities that surround them, restricted from their labor-markets and from their opportunity structures. Day-to-day life in the camps was difficult. Four days after Najlaa arrived in Jordan, she gave birth to their third child, a girl. Women who were strangers went to the hospital with Najlaa. Her husband stayed with their children as they did not yet know anyone well enough to entrust with babysitting. Returning to the camp after childbirth, Najlaa struggled to walk the 10-minutes to the bathroom. The family lacked blankets to stay warm in the frigid desert nights. And, living in a tent left Najlaa with a sense of insecurity, amplifying the loss of the brick-and-mortar home that she and her husband had owned and lived in just a few months prior.

Faced with the prospect of an indefinite time in the camp, Najlaa and Nabil chose to pay a smuggler to get them out. First, Nabil snuck out by himself, which was relatively easy. He went into Amman, Jordan to find an apartment for his family. To secure it, he paid the first month's rent. Getting the family out was the hard part. He paid $500 to a smuggler, an old man with a truck. That attempt, however, failed and the family was unable to recoup their money, nor would they be able to recoup the month's rent lost due

to this failure. A few weeks later, however, a Jordanian man who did business in the camp heard of their predicament and offered to smuggle them out himself at a discounted rate: $100. While Najlaa and Nabil did not believe that the man would be successful, they had little left to lose, a theme that motivated most agreements with smugglers. The man, however, was trustworthy. When she entered the apartment in Amman, after their successful escape, Najlaa felt like it was a palace. She could not believe that they were finally free of both the war and the camp.

Life outside of the camp, however, was also difficult. The Jordanian authorities began to restrict the freedoms of Syrians, due to the increasing numbers. Through 2013, if a Syrian knew a Jordanian person who would agree to sponsor them, they could secure a work permit. However, starting in late 2013, permits became harder and harder to come by. At the same time, Jordanian police began to monitor restaurants and other places where Syrians worked more stringently, arresting those found without a work permit.

It was in this way that Majid—a father of three in his early 40s—who was also from Homs, and who had a formal work permit when he arrived, was arrested twice. Each time, he was placed in handcuffs and dragged from the shawarma shop where he worked to the local police station. “I had never been in trouble with the authorities in my life” he explained, “it was so embarrassing.” The first time, a Jordanian friend, his former sponsor, was able to get him released. The second time, he spent the weekend in a jail cell before the same friend was able, again, to negotiate for the officers to let him go. Each time, the Jordanian officers threatened to send him and his family to a refugee camp.

Zafir, a 36-year-old former butcher, who was also from Homs, was not as lucky. When he was arrested for working at a restaurant, the officer insisted that his wife and children meet him at the station and be sent to the camp. Initially, he resisted, refusing to call his wife. After being held for a week, he capitulated, recognizing that his wife and children would soon run out of cash. He called his wife, who relieved to hear his voice, came to the police station. Together the family was sent to *Al-Azraq* camp. (Later, from there, they would be resettled to the United States).

Beyond the labor market, Syrian refugees felt marginalized and lacking rights in other ways. In Turkey Narjis, a young 18-year-old mother, described being taunted by Turkish kids, who called her Syrian trash, as she walked back to her apartment from the market with her two sons. And, when Majid's then 12-year-old daughter experienced sexual harassment by a 27-year-old Jordanian neighbor, who would later ask her father for her hand in marriage, all Majid could say was "no." Because of the family's diminished legal status, they had no recourse to turn to the law, even when the man continued to stalk his underage daughter.

In addition to these issues, there was a lack of basic services for refugees. While healthcare was available in theory, in practice medication and physician follow-up was not regularly available. Educational quality and access was also limited. The children had lost years of schooling a result of the war, and the schools in countries of immediate refuge could not absorb the influx of these children. Secondary school systems emerged that catered to Syrians, but they offered substandard education. Sometimes, teachers would not show up to teach. And, schools run by former teachers who used to work in Syrian schools were unaccredited elsewhere.

Though these countries became less and less hospitable to refugees, most refugees will remain in them. Some are able to carve out comfortable lives for themselves despite these obstacles, while others lack the resources to move elsewhere. In this dissertation, I focus on those who leave, who are either offered resettlement to third countries, or who travel themselves to seek asylum.

Awaiting Resettlement

First, while all of the families in this study registered as refugees, only those who arrived in countries of immediate refuge earlier in the war, by 2013—like the families of Rima, Najlaa, Zafir or Majid, had the prospect of being offered resettlement. Resettlement occurs when a third country—other than the country of origin and the country of immediate refuge—invites a refugee to immigrate. This is contingent on that countries' recognition of their status as a refugee per the 1967 definition. As I argued in the introductory chapter, this recognition is politically motivated. It is also contingent on the country having a resettlement program. According to the UNHCR, only 37 countries offered resettlement to refugees in 2016, though this number went up from 14 in 2005 (UNHCR 2016a). Countries who offer resettlement choose families from the UNHCR list, which is compiled via the registration of refugees when they first arrive, to undergo a vetting process. Though Syrian families typically lived among extended networks, with grandparents, aunts and uncles cohabiting, families according to the UNHCR, and most countries that offer resettlement are defined as the cohabiting spouses, as well as their unmarried children under 18 (Cvejić Jančić 2010). Less than 1% of refugees globally are ever resettled (UNHCR 2016a).

Refugees who enter this process are first interviewed by the UNHCR. The UNHCR determines through these interviews whether they have a refugee claim. Then, the refugee file is referred to the country of resettlement if it is deemed to have a "humanitarian need." This is a key requirement for resettlement in the United States which historically takes in the most refugees vis-à-vis resettlement each year since the 1970s (Capps et al. 2015). While the definition of "need" is opaque, having multiple small children, a treatable but acute health burden, or having a physical handicap seem to qualify families for travel.

The families of Amjad and Zafir, who were both in their 30s, and both with young children, were selected as part of this process. The men knew each other from Homs. The men, like all other respondents, had registered with the UNHCR upon their arrival in Jordan. And both received a call from the UNHCR asking if they would like to be vetted for resettlement in the United States. They had no choice about which country offered them an opportunity for vetting. Both men said yes to the offer. While Amjad and Zafir knew each other, their families were not particularly close in Syria, or in Jordan. However, the fact that they were undergoing vetting contemporaneously, and the prospect of being resettled in the same country brought them closer together. They knew no one else who was going through this process.

The vetting process would take two years. These were the years in which Amjad and Zafir both struggled to make ends meet in Jordan, years that would end in Zafir and his family's forced relocation to the refugee camp. From the perspective of Amjad and Zafir and their families the vetting process included five interviews—the two with the UNHCR and then additional interviews with the International Organization for Migration

(IOM) which is a US contractor, and with Homeland Security. They also underwent health screenings.

From the perspective of the vetting apparatus set up by the United States government, this process involved multiple levels of security agencies drawing on a system established over the course of the preceding century that thoroughly vets newcomers. These systems, as will be discussed in the coming chapter, draw on histories of immigration law that precede this latest cohort of Syrian refugees. This process of vetting eliminates the travel chances of most refugees.

Importantly, Zafir and Amjad and the respondents of this study were vetted during the Obama administration. Even under this administration that had a pro-refugee stance, the Department of Homeland Security reported that the US only took only about one-tenth of the Syrian applicants referred by the UN (Aleem 2017). For subsequent cohorts of refugees, as will be discussed further in chapters two and four, the rules would change as the Trump administration sought to depart from the United States' historical commitment to refugee resettlement, claiming a concern over national security (White House 2017).

While the families who travelled to the United States underwent this long process, most of the families who travelled to Canada experienced truncated vetting which lasted only a few months. This is, in part, because the Canadian government relies on the United States' vetting process, drawing from the same pool of applicants. It also has streamlined the process, requiring fewer interviews with Canadian officials. For Zafir's wife's cousin, Zhoor and her family, for instance, the process of vetting only took a year, but for

subsequent families, who arrived after Justin Trudeau promised to resettle 25,000 individuals, as part of his campaign for Prime Minister, it took a matter of months. Once accepted, regardless of whether they were travelling to the United States, Canada or Italy (this study includes both resettled and asylum-seeking refugees to this country) the refugees were assigned a date of travel. The last stage of the process requires sitting in a Cultural Orientation session, where the refugees would be taught what kind of assistance they would be offered by each of these governments, what kinds of laws existed about domestic affairs—polygamy, child abuse, etc—and other basics about traversing day-to-day lives in the United States or Canada or Italy. Once they were approved for travel, the families sold their remaining items and said their goodbyes to their family members who had moved to them in their displacement thus far. Amjad and Zafir linked their families' files to one-another, asking to be resettled in the same place. They both arrived in Connecticut in August of 2015 one of the first two families to arrive in the city.

Seeking Asylum

Resettlement was not an option for most refugees, and particularly those who like Nadine and Hamid left Syria later in the war. Because the vetting process took so long, and there were so few opportunities, they had no chance at acceptance. Moreover, for those who arrived in these later waves experienced more difficult realities in countries of immediate refuge who were saturated with refugees and unwilling to absorb more (Hagerdal 2018). Starting in the summer of 2015, along with at least a million Syrians, Nadine and Hamid made the journey into Europe to seek asylum. Paying thousands of dollars to smugglers, they held their children tight praying that they would meet the fate of Alan Kurdi, the

baby whose red shirt and brown shoes washed up on the shore, haunting the world (Valdez-Symonds 2017). News agencies, who the Syrians felt had been conspicuously absent during the previous years of war, turned their cameras on these beleaguered families as they ran. We watched as they camped out in train stations, crammed into busses, and were both heckled and cared for by locals along the way.

The Syrian refugees made their way through Europe cognizant of the contours of legal barriers, while these legal barriers themselves adapted to their influx, as European countries made quick choices about how they would react to asylum claimants. Some countries, like Hungary, attempted to close their borders, while others, like Germany, opened them up. Yet other countries like France or England remained on the peripheries of this process, protected by their geographical location and able to continue to enact their preexisting immigration laws (Erlanger 2018; European Union 2013).

The first step in this journey was the boat. Everyone describes the boat journey in similar terms. Walaa, a 32 year-old mother of two, a boy and a girl, pointed to a bounce house in the park in Rome where her children play. “You see that?” she asked me. “That is what the boat was made of, just like that. And they crammed us into it.” She explained that a boat built for 20 people, carried three times that number. "Do you know what it is to go into debt to put your children in the arms of death?” she asked. Walaa said of the hours spent on that boat “I can’t even count them among hours lived in my life.”

When they got to the other side of the water, however, the saga did not end. The Dublin III Regulation, the European Union (EU) Law the governs the process of asylum seeking, requires that European states fingerprint entrants into the EU, giving the right to other European countries to deport newcomers to the country of first entry (European

Union 2013). The struggle for these newcomers was not to get fingerprinted, as they did not want to remain in Greece where they first arrived.

The second step was for the refugees to make the journey from Greece to a country of asylum over land. Amin, his wife, Iman—cousins of Rajaa and Majid—along with their three children made their way from Greece, where the boat dropped them off, overland in 2015. Lacking an internet connection, they relied on an offline map to see where they were. Like other refugees I interviewed, they did not make a decision on *where* they were going, instead following the crowds of other asylum-seekers. Like many of their fellow travelers, Amin and his family were detained in Hungary by the Hungarian police for three days, an experience his wife describes as the worse in her life, including the war. They experienced hunger and exhaustion throughout the journey, running out of money and having to borrow additional funds from a stranger. After three weeks, they finally arrived in Bavaria, in the southeast of Germany. Exercising their own national sovereignty, the German government did not ask refugees who arrived in this period whether they had been fingerprinted elsewhere, choosing not to implement the Dublin Regulation. The Syrians called this practice "breaking the fingerprint" which captures their perception of the wrong fingerprint is a lock on their prospect of asylum; a barrier to freedom. "*Wilkommen*" the German officers said, providing them with blankets. Iman collapsed to her knees in tears.

In a unique circumstance, Nadine, Walaa, and another family—because they arrived to Greece in 2016 when the refugee waves had died down—found themselves stuck in Lesbos. They had been fingerprinted there, and were waiting, indefinitely, to see if any European country would accommodate them.

In a surprising turn of events, Pope Francis, who had flown into Lesbos on his private jet, selected these three families for resettlement in Italy. The families were uncertain why they were chosen, but all three said yes. They were exhausted by life in the overcrowded camp and encouraged by the interest of such a meaningful international figure. The Pope for his part, embraced them to make an explicit pro-refugee statement and encourage European countries to take in refugees who were stuck in Greece.

All of the families who would arrive in Europe had to undergo steps to prove that they were legitimate asylees once they were in their countries of destination. In a similar process, both those who arrived in Italy and in Germany, would have their asylum claim heard by a tribunal who either offered "subsidiary protection" or "humanitarian protection," a 1 or 3-year residency status.

Whether families were resettled, or sought asylum, the decision to move further way from their country of origin, geographically and culturally, by boat or by plane was a difficult one. They knew that they would be going to countries where their religion and language would be that of a (stigmatized) minority, where their credentials to work may or may not be recognized, where they knew few people and little of the cultures or traditions.

However, facing a truncated set of choices, the men and women in this study made this decision driven by a will to make decent lives for them and their children. Whether they were able to make a decent life, and what kinds of minorities they would become in these new places, however, would be contingent on the resources and support available to them upon arrival which shaped their process of recuperation in each of these countries.

Starting over and loss

In the basement of a First Baptist Church, in the winter of 2015, the Connecticut resettlement agency held its annual holiday party. Widely attended by refugees who were resettled in Connecticut from countries around the world—including the DRC, Sudan, Eriteria, Somalia, Ukraine, Cuba, Bolivia, Iraq, Afghanistan—it is a pot-luck style event, with each cuisine represented. A DJ played songs from the cell phones of the different refugees, who each waited impatiently for their countries' turn on the playlist.

When the Syrian music began playing, Majid jumped up to dance with his 7-year-old daughter. He held square paper napkins between his fingers, which functioned as substitutes for the traditional scarves, as he swayed back and forth. With a serious face, humorous to the adults observing, the young girl rustled the pink crochet dress her mother had made her.

As the room emptied, I offered to drive Majid's family home. The mother, Rajaa, accepted my offer, but asked if it would be okay if we could stay just a few minutes longer. She apologized for keeping me but said "we no longer have fun like this." I watched as Majid did the *Dabke* with a group of men, bending and rising to the beat of the line dance that he would have performed at every cousin's and friend's engagement party and wedding, and every joyous occasion. For the family of five, that once spent every Friday grilling at a public park outside Homs, the party was a rare moment of leisure in years of strife.

While all of the families in this study eventually agreed to the offer of travel to countries of resettlement or made the decision to move to countries of asylum, many

remembered feeling some level of hesitation. Rajaa, for instance, recalled being worried about how she and her daughter, who wore the *hijab* would be received in the United States, given what she understood about the anti-Islamic sentiment that existed in the country. How would they be able to manage given the fact that none of them spoke English? How would they traverse a place whose "norms and traditions" *adat we taqaleed* were so different from what they had been used to?

She could not in good conscience object to the move given the number of times her husband was arrested for working in Jordan, the low education her children were receiving at school and the nightmare of the sexual harassment her daughter was victim of by a neighbor. Nevertheless, she could not bring herself to be excited about it either. By contrast, Rajaa and Majid's son, Hesham, then 15, could not be more ecstatic. He came up with a song comprised of a single verse "We're going to America where they'll mend our broken hearts" which he repeated to tease his mother. She was, however, cautiously hopeful. She told her children that when they had the United States Citizenship they could throw it in the face of authorities anywhere else. "It's the strongest in the world," she said.

A year and a half after their first interview, in October 2015, the family flew from Amman's Queen Alia Airport to New York's JFK. They road up Interstate 95 in the back of an International Organization of Migration (IOM) van to a large desolate parking lot by a Connecticut harbor. There, a case-manager from the local resettlement agency piled them into his car and took them to a three-bedroom apartment in a low-income neighborhood of the city where Rajaa and Majid, along with the other Syrian newcomers, would make their first homes in America.

In some ways, resettlement met Hesham's American dream. He and his sisters were enrolled in school, and they were given special attention in their English as a Second Language classes. Eventually, he and one sister were given the opportunity to go to a boarding school. Though the decision was difficult for their parents, they agreed because the goal of the move of the move to the United States was education. The family would receive a social security card, they would have a legal right to work, they would have access to social services and healthcare, and at least for their initial months of resettlement they would receive assistance from a resettlement agency. And, they would begin on their pathway to permanent residency, to a green card, which would later lead to citizenship. Like the other Syrians who went to Canada, Germany or Italy, they would be resettled through a formal program, and would have rights that they did not themselves have when they were undocumented, and that other undocumented in these destination countries also do not have.

In other ways resettlement lived up to Rajaa's fears. First, their lack of English-language proficiency (both written and spoken) was a constant obstacle. As will be discussed in more detail in the following two chapters, this was an obstacle to finding work and making contact with people who were not co-ethnics. However, it also made mundane tasks like buying food or riding a bus uncomfortable. The men and women needed an interpreter for every step of each process whether they were going to the hospital, meeting with resettlement agency staff, or reading their mail. Often this translation assistance was not easy to come by due to the small number of Arabs in the area and the lack of funds to compensate translators.

Moreover, they were experiencing a need to recreate themselves in myriad ways. When Syrian families meet for the first time in new countries they identify themselves first by city, then by neighborhood, then by family name, asking "whose house are you from?" And then, they ask "what is your occupation?" The answer to this question—that men ask other men, given a culture where men are most often breadwinners— refers to the occupation that this man did in Syria, an occupation passed-on within families. "I am an electrician" or "I work in stained glass" may refer to an occupation that this man has not done for years, in displacement in countries of immediate refuge, and an occupation that the man will may never again do. While the men had skills and capacities in Syria, due to global inequalities in economic systems, there was a discrepancy in the translation of these into meaningful resources for receiving country labor-markets. With the lack of language and clear pathway to reclaiming their occupation, the newcomers experienced a loss in their human capital.

This loss of human capital mean that Majid could not support his family as we once had in Syria. And, as a result, the relationship between the spouses changed. As I will describe in Chapter 3, she felt a need to support him. She took it upon herself to learn the language, and to attempt to earn money in order to support the family. She had never previously been employed, and was not intending to go to school. Majid, for his part, struggled to figure out how what it meant to be a good husband and father within these newly imposed constraints.

In addition, unlike other immigrant communities, who may arrive to destination countries vis-à-vis chain migration, the family did not arrive in a neighborhood where they could speak their language or find cuisine familiar to their pallets. They were not

surrounded by businesses that spoke their language. And, they did not come into a ready-made social network. Unlike their immigrant neighbors in this Connecticut town, many of whom were originally from Mexico, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic, they did not choose to follow family members or friends to their destination. While this is slightly different for refugees who went to Germany, where they may be preceded by family members, chain migration there is also curbed by government assignment of refugees in different areas in the country.

The family had lost crucial social capital. They knew very few people upon arrival. The natural inclination for both men and women was to attempt to connect to other Syrian refugees, people who shared histories and experiences that were difficult to explain to outsiders. However, just because people came from the same place, or experienced similar things, did not mean that they were socially compatible. In the early period, attempts at establishing connections that mimicked decades-long friendships or family relationships regularly failed. Patterns of reciprocity unestablished, people felt taken advantage of or disrespected as they did the work of trying to establish meaningful connections in a short duration. This made social capital difficult to recreate.

Moreover, the refugees in this study would remain connected to those they had left behind. During one visit to Canada, during Ramadan, I attended a family's *iftar* dinner—the traditional meal that breaks the fast each day. In the corner of a family's living room was a laptop with an open Skype page, which was connected to their family in Jordan. They remained on the screen as we had our meal. They were having the pre-fast dawn meal or *suhoor*—sometimes talking across the screen, sometimes talking to one-another. In this way, the families attempted to create co-presence, though digital.

And, despite restrictions in all countries on what could be done with government money, the families regularly sent money back. They sent money to help pay rent and day-to-day expenses, to help a family member pay to cross the Mediterranean or get out of Syria, or to help finance a wedding or a funeral.

Finally, in part due to this lack of a large community caused by chain migration, and in part due to the political climate that surrounded their arrival, women, like Rajaa, felt conspicuous for wearing their *hijab*. There were not many others who looked like her in places that she frequented. When a terrorist attack in Paris happened early in their resettlement, she sent her daughter to school wearing a hat rather than her hijab, fearful that she would be attacked. This concern got worse as the political situation in the country took a sour turn with the campaign and election of Donald Trump and even fewer refugees would be admitted. Overall, as I show further in this dissertation, their sense of security was disrupted.

This dissertation examines how refugee resettlement and asylum systems shaped these families' process of recuperation or ability to manage all of these losses: of human capital, of social relations and of their sense of security. Burdened with these losses, they would enter resettlement and asylum systems that came with their own sets of histories which reflect those nations' understanding of their humanitarian obligation towards refugees.

-2-

Resettlement Policy in the United States

Syrians who are offered resettlement in the United States are admitted and incorporated through the Refugee Act of 1980. The first half of this chapter traces the history of the Act and the resettlement system it engendered. It highlights how the admission system became concerned with "security" and how the incorporation system became concerned with refugees becoming a "public charge"—reliant on national assistance.

I then describe how the resettlement system was experienced by the refugees included in this study. I outline how they were vetted due to the concern with security and how, arriving in the United States post 9-11, and during Donald Trump's campaign and presidency, they were met by rhetoric and policies fueled by an understanding of them as dangerous. I return to this thread in Chapter four where I address how this rhetoric and policies diminished sense of security.

The second half of the chapter turns to look at how the incorporation policies that emerged from the Refuge Act of 1980 shaped the lives of the refugees in this study. I show that though refugees are a privileged immigrant, in that they receive economic support from the United States government and are supported by an agency tasked with their resettlement, the limited economic assistance to the refugee and the agency limits their ability to acquire the language skills and employment skills that they need to become upwardly mobile. Moreover, though the United States resettlement system is formally "state sponsored" the system involves mostly private money because the

resettlement agency funding, and government assistance to refugees, is not sufficient to cover these men and women's basic needs.

History of United States Refugee Policy

In 1924, the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) was passed in the United States, which systematized immigration by enacting a National Origin Quota. The quota system was based in notions of eugenics and race-based nativism, preferring northern and western Europeans over the "undesirable" eastern and southern races—which in practice included Asians, Eastern Europeans, Russians, Arabs Indians, and importantly Jews. Historian Mae Ngai in writing about this version of the INA, argues that the National Origins Quota system constructed a White American race "in which persons of European descent shared a common whiteness that made them distinct from those deemed to be not White" (1999b:70).

This 1924 INA was the law of the land in the United States when World War II erupted. Notoriously, pursuant this law, the United States did not admit Jews fleeing from the Holocaust. In June 1939, 937 Jewish passengers were turned back when they tried to seek asylum in the port of Miami. More than a quarter of them would perish in the next five years (Gross 2015). The United States maintained its position of not making an excretion for refugees even after the war, when 60 million people had been displaced by the Holocaust, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the bombardment of homes across Europe (Harris and Wulker 1953).

President Truman was concerned about the "displaced person problem." He intervened with solutions: setting up a Jewish state in Palestine (which would lead to

events that culminated in the beginning of the Palestinian refugee crisis in 1948) (White House 1946), stating that homes should be requisitioned from the Germans allowing Jewish repatriation (Truman 1945a), and also advocating for the resettlement of displaced persons to the United States stating, "to the extent that our present immigration laws permit, everything possible should be done at once to facilitate the entrance of some of these displaced persons and refugees into the United States" (Truman 1945b). Logistically, this meant setting a quota for displaced persons outside of the National Origin Quotas already established by the INA.

By 1948, a full three years after the end of the War, however, Congress was still debating the "Displaced Person (DP) problem" having admitted few refugees despite the millions waiting in camps in difficult conditions. Despite calls for humanitarianism in the United States by Truman and others, a legal process to admit refugees had not been established (Truman 1948a). The reason for the delay in addressing the issue of displaced persons was explained succinctly by Republican Senator from West Virginia Chapman Rivercomb, "We could solve this 'DP' problem all right if we could work out some bill that would keep out the Jews (Pearson 1948)."

The 1948 Displaced Person's Act reflected Rivercomb's vision, as he was one of its architects. While it allowed for the admittance of 200,000 displaced Europeans, through a set of complex provisions—oversampling Balkan protestants and requiring that all those admitted have been present in Germany in 1945—it excluded most Jewish refugees (Pearson 1948). President Truman lamented the inhumanity of the "humanitarian" act but he signed it into law due to how late it was proposed:

> If the Congress were still in session, I would return this bill without my approval and urge that a fairer, more humane bill be passed. In its present form this bill is flagrantly discriminatory…The bill discriminates in callous fashion against displaced persons of the Jewish faith. This brutal fact cannot be obscured by the maze of technicalities in the bill or by the protestations of some of its sponsors (Truman 1948b).

At an international scale, contemporaneously, calls for countries to protect the welfare of human beings beyond their borders, resulted in the signing of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, as well as the Geneva Convention in 1949 (UN General Assembly 1948), which sought to protect the rights of people in war (ICRC 1949). Two years later, the United Nations drafted the 1951 Refugee Convention, which was a multilateral treaty on the issue of displaced people (UN General Assembly 1951). By ratifying it the 145 signatory nations committed to *nonrefoulment*, or to not return any refugee to his or her country of persecution, and to provide refugees with residency and other basic rights, including access to "public relief and assistance" afforded to other nationals of that state. The United States was not a signatory to this act. However, when Truman won reelection and Congress passed two amendments to the 1948 Displaced Person's Act which allowed for Jewish refugees to be admitted (Bockley 1995).

Importantly, in the United States, the conversation around immigration during this period had turned to the issue of *security*. As America entered the period that historians have called the Red Scare, those opposed to immigration drew on a phobia of foreigners subverting the American government. The fiercest of these were Senators Pat McCaran from Nevada and Francis Walter from Pennsylvania. McCarran wrote and passed the

"Internal Security Act" which required that people deemed a threat to American security register with the state. Citizens and immigrants alike who were suspected of promoting or engaging in the establishment of a "totalitarian dictatorship…fascist or communist" could be detained or apprehended on suspicion (Columbia Law Review 1951).

This intense focus on security shaped the drafting of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA) of 1952, which tweaked but upheld the National Origin Quota system from 1924 (Loescher and Scanlan 1998; Scanlan 1988). While the law—the first to systematize immigration fully in the United States—did away with provisions from 1924 that effectively banned non-Whites from becoming citizens, it still had higher quotas for immigrants thought to be more "assimilable." Moreover, using the logic of security it implicitly assumed that immigrants from some places of the world would be dangerous to the United States and therefore should not be admitted. McCarran summed up this sentiment in response to Truman's veto and the law's eventual passing saying that some immigrants threatened "America's way of life,"

> ...we have in the United States today hard-core, indigestible blocs which have not become integrated into the American way of life, but which, on the contrary are its deadly enemies. Today, as never before, untold millions are storming our gates for admission and those gates are cracking under the strain (Baker 2016).

President Truman in his response to having his veto overridden lamented the discriminatory nature of the Act in no uncertain terms:

> It violates the great political doctrine of the Declaration of Independence that "all men are created equal." It denies the humanitarian creed inscribed

> beneath the Statue of Liberty proclaiming to all nations, "Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free." It repudiates our basic religious concepts, our belief in the brotherhood of man… It is incredible to me that, in this year of 1952, we should again be enacting into law such a slur on the patriotism, the capacity, and the decency of a large part of our citizenry (Truman 1952).

Importantly, the 1952 INA drew on language, used from the colonial period, that excluded "public charges" from being admitted in the United States. This would continue to resonate in immigration law and would become a key driver of social service reform in the 1990s, impacting immigrants including refugees, as I will detail in the next section of this chapter. Importantly, the "public charge doctrine" as it was used in the 1952 INA excluded immigrants who were unable to rely on themselves financially from admittance in the United States. In the 19th and early 20th century, those who arrived in the United States and were suspected of becoming a public charge—a suspicion that historians suggest was used to discriminate against non-White immigrants—would also have been deported (Edwards 2001; Hirota 2017).

The debate around the 1952 INA informed the 1953 Refugee Relief Act passed when the Displaced Person's Act expired. McCarren, and others, were against the passing of this act, seeing it as a threat to national security, a threat he sought to avoid with the 1952 Law. The 1953 Law required for refugees to support themselves, there would be no government assistance. It also reached a compromise on the issue of national security by requiring a vetting of all newcomer refugees (Scanlan 1988). Moreover, refugees from Communist countries or communist-dominated countries were ineligible. Other refugees

were required to provide a verifiable history for the two years prior to their arrival. Moreover, all refugees would be subject to vetting. The law stated:

> No alien shall be issued a visa under this Act or be admitted into the United States unless there shall have first been a thorough investigation and written report made and prepared by such investigative agency or agencies of the Government of the United States as the President shall designate, regarding such person's character, reputation, mental and physical health, history and eligibility under this Act, and such investigations in each case shall be conducted in a manner and in such time as the investigative agency or agencies shall determine to be necessary (United States Congress 1953).

Edward Corsi, Special Assistant to the State Department for Refugee and Immigration Problems in 1954, was pushed out by Walter when he refused to implement the security criteria specified by the law saying that it was "wholly dominated by the psychology of security… refugees are investigated to death… the police job is the thing, not the admission of the refugees—that is just incidental" (Mayer 2010). This law set-up the framework for what refugee resettlement would become, however it did not establish a system for refugee admission, as a quota-system continued to be used.

1960 would see a shift, as legislators began to recognize that refugees from communism are communism's biggest critics (Loescher and Scanlan 1998). In 1962 the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act allowed Congress to provide monetary assistance to these refugees (United States. Cong. 1962). In 1965, the year after the Civil Rights Act was passed, a new immigration law was also passed that finally repealed National Origin Quotas. The motivation for the Act, passed under President Johnson was anti-

discrimination. While the proponents of the new INA wanted to admit immigrants, who would be "especially advantageous" to the United States' economy arguing that this held everyone to the same benchmark, conservatives insisted on a focus on family reunification. They anticipated that this was a way to continue to have mostly White immigrants, as most of the immigrants to the United States under the previous laws had been White. This backfired, Historian Tom Gjetlen (2015) argues, as European immigrant's motivation for migration had subsided, and immigrants from other origins began to petition to bring their family members. The 1960s would also see other shifts to the benefit of refugees. In 1967 the United States ratified the second refugee convention, which recognized as a refugee:

> A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (United Nations 1967).

This history all informs the law which finally systematized refugee policy in the United States. The United States Refugee Act of 1980, emerging from this long and embattled history, was established to systematize the resettlement of refugees and asylees. The Act emerged from a consensus that a systemic approach to refugee admission and incorporation was needed given the constant refugee crises plaguing the world. It was also in part a consequence of the so-called "Boat People," refugees from the

Vietnam War who came to the United States at the end of the 1970s, and the continuing stream of Cuban refugees (Anker and Posner 1981).

The Act systematized refugee admission and incorporation. First, it made refugee admission in the United States a regular part of the law, doing away with a system of country-specific admission quotas or need for special approvals upon the occurrence of a crisis. Second, it systematized the work of incorporation by funding resettlement agencies as government contractors who are tasked with ensuring that refugees receive certain services in their early resettlement as well as the financial assistance received by refugees, including their access to the welfare system, within the stated goal of their "self-sufficiency" (United States Congress 1980).

Importantly, through this system, people who are admitted in the United States as refugees and asylees are treated uniquely from other kinds of immigrants. They are vetted uniquely (and arduously)—in keeping with the concern for "security" established under McCarran, but they are also on a pathway to citizenship once they are admitted and have a right to the assistance of an agency, as well as a right to work and to access social services, the latter unavailable to most other cohorts of immigrants.

Current Refugee Admission in the United States

As an amendment to the INA, the 1980 Refugee Act defined refugee per the 1967 Refugee Convention—moving away from region-specific definitions in the preceding legislation—and suggested a "normal flow" of refugees to the United States of 50,000 people. By setting a "normal flow" the Act incorporated refugee admission as a regular avenue for immigration into the United States. In addition, the president could increase

the quota of refugees admitted given "humanitarian concern" allowing flexibility with emerging refugee crises. The act also clarified that refugees could be resettled either through meeting with a consular officer in a foreign country, or through asylum by interviewing with a counselor officer once already admitted to the United States. This dissertation focuses on the first mechanism for entry, since Syrian refugees were admitted through resettlement (Anker and Posner 1981).

Rooted in the focus on security from the 1950s, refugees are the most thoroughly scrutinized group of immigrants admitted in the United States (Frelick 2017). The process, established by the Refugee Act of 1980 includes seven steps. First, when refugees reach countries of immediate refuge, they register with the UNHCR which collects their initial information. The UNHCR then suggests cases of refugees who are "most vulnerable" to be resettled in the United States, per the United States' government's request. According to the State Department, there is no clear criteria for this vulnerability, but it is "..generally understood as individuals who are not able to safely and voluntarily return home, are not thriving in their country of first asylum, and are not expected to be able to locally integrate in that country in the future" (USCIS 2015).

Second, the Resettlement Support Center (RSC) funded by the Department of State, does the first interview with the refugee candidate, and submits their information into a database that is then subject to security checks by multiple agencies. These agencies include the National Counterterrorism Center, FBI, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the Department of Defense, and the Department of State, as well as the intelligence community.

Third, the applicant is interviewed by trained personnel from Department of Homeland Security who verify the information the RSC submitted, and collect additional data, searching for disqualifiers or inconsistencies in the candidate's statements. Inconsistencies result in an indefinite hold on the application. A former interviewer at this stage of the process described it as follows:

> I typically had to review a raft of high school degrees, baptismal certificates, marriage and birth certificates, honors and awards, photos with U.S. service personnel, recommendations from American military members, and conscription booklets or cards, which every man in those countries has to carry... In one instance, because we had this information, I knew that a man had worked with Saddam Hussein's intelligence agency for years and potentially tortured people, and, because of checks already in place, his application was rejected (Hall 2017).

Syrians included in this study had friends or family members rejected because of their former ties with the Assad regime, despite the fact that they were the legitimate leaders of Syria pre-war, and there was no opportunity to join a dissenting political party.

Fourth, the refugee is subject to biometric checks. Their fingerprints are now run through databases governed by the same agencies that did the initial background checks: the DHS, FBI and DoD which has access to an international database of fingerprints. Syrian refugees at this stage, and particularly men, undergo a second level of vetting. While the process is opaque, reports suggest that this includes processing through a Fraud Detection unit at the National Security Directorate Office (Griswold 2016).

Fifth, those who reach this stage of the process, attend a cultural orientation session which informs them about the culture, laws and system in the United States. They also undergo a medical check to ensure that they have no diseases that have a "public health significance."

Finally, if they pass this process, the sixth stage is their allocation to a resettlement agency in the United States. This occurs through a weekly meeting, attended by "Voluntary Agencies" which are NGOs subcontracted by the United States government to govern the work of resettlement,

The seventh and final step of this process is their arrival in the country which includes yet another security screening upon entry. Their arrival procedures are organized by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

By the time a Syrian refugee arrives in the United States they will have undergone 18-24 months of vetting at minimum. This system's intense focus on security is burdensome for government resources, but it also has a human toll, leaving refugees, who are selected by the state department *because* they are deemed to be most vulnerable, in places where they have no legal rights for a long duration of time. Costi in 1954 objected to the requirement for refugees to submit two years of "verifiable history." This system *verifies* refugees for two years.

For those for whom there is an error at any stage of the process, the vetting can take longer than 2 years. For instance, for Mowaffaq, the 24-year-old son of a refugee family who arrived in Connecticut in 2015, the process would take approximately 30 months. Because he was older than 21 at the time that his family was offered resettlement in the United States, his refugee case was linked to his family's file but required its own

vetting procedure. The United States only recognizes unmarried children under 21 years of age as part of a given family unit (Cvejić Jančić 2010). Though he was told by DHS officers that he would be able to follow his family to the United States within weeks of their departure, months later he was still in Turkey without information as to why he had not yet been approved to travel. After petitioning Connecticut Congressman Chris Murphy,[4] the family discovered that a clerical error, caused by an assumption that he had departed with the other members of his family, had resulted a wrongful closure of his file. With the reopening of the file, Mouwaffaq had to redo medical clearances, which expired after 6 months.

This focus on security predated the Trump administration, as most refugees in this study were vetted well before this administration began. However, the focus on security was intensified under the Trump administration. Because the number of refugees admitted is at the discretion of the President of the United States, the number varies by administration. President Obama committed to admitting 70,000 refugees in the 2015 fiscal year (of whom 10,000 were Syrian (Park and Omri 2016)). The number was increased to 85,000 in 2016 in response to the Syrian crisis. The aim was to increase the number further to 110,000 in 2017. However, that aim was never brought to fruition.

The Trump administration drastically shrank the number of refugees admitted. President Trump at the beginning of his term signed an Executive Order entitled "Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States" which banned Syrian refugee resettlement indefinitely, reduced the refugee ceiling to 50,000, and

[4] This petition was done through me, I had a relationship with Joanne Cannon the lawyer at his office.

suspended the program for 120 days. In addition, the Executive Order limited immigration from seven majority-Muslim countries (Amos 2017). His motivation was to ban Muslims who would be more likely to commit terrorism, a motivation he made clear on the campaign trail when he called Syrian refugees a "Trojan horse" for terrorists (Tanfani 2016). Legal challenges to President Trump's Executive Order temporary suspended its implementation; however, in the 2017-2018 fiscal year, resettlement agencies reported a precipitous drop in the number of refugees admitted, projecting less than the 50,000 number.

Clarifying the link from McCarran to Trump is that the Executive Order is based in a claim that it is the right of the president to determine the origins of entering immigrants on Section 212(f) of the INA (Waxman 2017; White House 2017). This is the same section that President Truman had once called "a slur on the patriotism…and the decency of a large part of our citizenry" and regressive for 1952:

> Whenever the President finds that the entry of any aliens or of any class of aliens into the United States would be detrimental to the interests of the United States, he may by proclamation, and for such period as he shall deem necessary, suspend the entry of all aliens or any class of aliens as immigrants or nonimmigrants, or impose on the entry of aliens any restrictions he may deem to be appropriate.

Current refugee incorporation system in the United States

The 1980 Refugee Act also set-up a system for the incorporation of refugees once they arrive. Historically, given that there was no federal financial assistance for refugees until

the 1963 Refugee Relief Act, incorporation was a task done by charities, called Voluntary Agencies or VolAgs which formed prior to and during WWII. These agencies included organizations like HIAS (formerly Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) and the International Rescue Committee (IRC) which were working in the United States since before the turn of the 20th century (Nawyn 2010; Wright 1981).

The 1980 Refugee Act, by establishing the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) within the Department of Health and Human Services, subcontracted the work of resettlement to the VolAgs. The VolAgs do some of the work of resettlement through their own local offices, but also contract other resettlement agencies—including this one in Connecticut—to support newly arrived refugees. Importantly, this system turned the United States resettlement program from a volunteer-based service, which was run by private citizens, into a federal program, which is currently run through resettlement agencies.

Refugees are allocated to a specific agency through weekly meetings, during which representatives of one of the nine VolAgs review information about refugees and agree to take-on their case. The exception to this process is when approved refugees have family in the United States with whom they can be reunified (BPRM 2017).

Resettlement agencies are required to offer families help with finding an apartment, basic furnishings, and food and clothing that is relevant to the weather during their initial resettlement. The agency is also required to help the family access other government services such as healthcare, education, and social service benefits to which a refugee is entitled. Beyond this, however, the federal requirements of the agency towards the family ends, as does the federal funding (Sargent, Hohm, and Moser 1999).

The federal assistance offered to the resettlement agency to do this work changes over time, but it is currently $2,025 for each refugee that arrives. This includes $925 in "Welcome Money" to be spent on that refugee's immediate needs (housing, food, clothing) and $200 in "Pool Funds" to be spent on the neediest refugees, who require long-term assistance, as well as $900 in administrative funds to cover the organization's overhead like rent and case manager salaries. This assistance depletes early in the refugee's resettlement, limiting the ability of resettlement agencies to ballast refugees as they become reoriented and find jobs. The limited funds available and the limited purview of the resettlement agency is the result of the explicit goal of the resettlement program to: "achieve economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible" (Refugee Act of 1980, section 412).

The goal of self-sufficiency attempts to limit the extent to which refugees rely on social services—a different application of the logic behind the public charge doctrine (Edwards 2001). The work of the resettlement agency is aimed towards helping the refugee become "self-sufficient" or find employment within their first months of arrival. To this end, the 1980 Act stipulates that newcomers receive a limited Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA), in an amount that matches local welfare payments, only for the first 8 months of resettlement contingent on their active search for work. However, refugees who are low-income and have children under the age of 18 do not qualify for RCA and instead qualify for the United States welfare system, accessed otherwise by the American poor.

All of the refugees in this study qualified for welfare, which is not surprising given their selection based on vulnerability. In this way, the welfare system is part-and-

parcel of the United States resettlement program, and indeed, one of its most important components for newcomer refugees for whom this is their only regular income. Refugees are eligible for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) only because they are an exclusion to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act which reformed welfare policy in the United States in 1996, to exclude most immigrants (Edwards 2001).

TANF is the key assistance to newly arrived refugees in the United States and therefore is important to examine as a policy. TANF offers necessary cash to individuals, including refugees, experiencing poverty. This cash, however, comes with strings attached. In order to receive the cash, recipients are required to work towards "countable employment" or non-entrepreneurial work for which they receive a pay stub (Lower-Basch 2017; Ridzi 2009; State of Connecticut 2014). It compels this through three mechanisms. First, TANF has lifetime limits, meaning it is not a long-term safety net.[5] Second, the low amount of cash assistance that TANF offers does not protect against poverty even when combined with other resources, pushing recipients to work.[6] Finally, TANF monitors recipient time through a mandatory Work Verification process that takes account of paystubs and work-related behavior—including learning English—for 35 combined hours a week for two-partner households.[7]

This strings-attached approach to welfare emerged from a national conversation in 1996 that portrayed the poor as abusing the social service system and that aimed to turn

[5] 21 months in Connecticut with two possible 6-month extensions.
[6] In generous CT, TANF amounts are $701 for a family of four, food stamps (non-cash) are $649. Together this is $16,200 while the poverty line was $24,250 for 2016 (Center for American Progress 2016)
[7] Learning English is not a "core" TANF activity, which is limited to employment, searching for employment or direct employment training, and as such counts towards the 35 hours only in conjunction with one of these activities.

the poor into the working poor who are "worthy" of state support (Katz 2013; Orloff 2002; Zelizer 1997). By seeing all recipients as current or potential employees, the program makes the poor accountable by making them countable and can be understood as a state project of legibility (Scott 1998). Like other legibility projects—that reduce personal complexities into singular, countable metrics—this one obscures the strategies that individuals already employ for managing their lives (Espeland and Stevens 1998). Specifically, TANF by focusing on counting hours of narrowly defined "work," glosses over both the burdens and paradoxically the *work* done in recipient households to manage their poverty.

First, in terms of burdens, it ignores human capital deficits. In the context of the American labor-market, jobs that one can access without skill are poorly paid and offer limited upward mobility or opportunity to build human capital (Gans 1992; Kalleberg 2011; Newman 2009). As a result, finding a job on the short term may hinder long term economic success due to an inherent tradeoff between work and skill-building. This is particularly the case for refugees, for whom English learning is a crucial resource (Lamba 2003; Potocky-Tripodi 2003). This makes work at these lowest rungs of the labor-market an inefficient pathway out of poverty (Newman 2009). Moreover, this flattening of recipients into their countable employment potential obscures care burdens within households, and the gendered barriers to employment these care burdens entail. By taking a gender blind approach, TANF *expects* that households operate as a collection of workers, and that tasks are not divided by gender, which in most American households, and certainly in Syrian households, is not the case (Blair-Loy 2009; England et al. 2010; Rabo 2008).

Second, TANF's attempt at legibility makes this program blind to any work that is not compensated by a pay-stub. This matters in two ways. First, the poor have always found ways to make ends meet by working both on and off the books, balancing the imperatives of different sets of policies while patching together ways to keep their families afloat (Kibria 1993; Lein and Edin 1997). This informal or off the books work, and often even on-the-books entrepreneurship, is not countable in TANF rosters (State of Connecticut 2014). Second, while TANF offers childcare to working parents—at the requirement that they fulfill 55 hours of countable work rather that 35—this devalues childcare as a productive task in and of itself. Mothers who spend time with their children at home as primary caretakers have no flexibility on time or mobility because they are engaged in that productive task, but this policy ignores that labor. Moreover, it ignores complexities such as matching child care to shifts, managing child illness, or the high demand on childcare services (Hays 2004). By focusing on legibility, on short term countable work, the program misses essential elements of the lived experience of families—refugees or other—pushing normative notions of how they *should* behave that do not resonate with meanings surrounding household labor. The gendered implications of this are explored in the next chapter.

The case of refugees captures how poverty policy ignores the structural factors that result in diminished human capital which causes and reproduces poverty. The refugees in this study were often economically comfortable in their country of origin. However, issues beyond their control (a war, a series of displacements, a lack of relevant language or credentials) resulted in them becoming poor in America. And like the other poor in America, they are expected to be self-sufficient from this position of weakness,

which pushes them into the lowest rungs of income stratification in the United States, a difficult position to work their way out of.

Consequences of the incorporation policy on Syrian Refugees: the Connecticut Case. In the first month of a refugees' resettlement the agency, having received the refugee by way of the VolAg, fulfills its federal obligations. These will be the same across any agency in the United States. However, as I will show throughout in this section, the agency in the Connecticut town in which this study is conducted, goes beyond these federal obligations, and seeks out funds beyond federal funds in order to support refugees as they reorient to the United States and figure out their footing in its job market.

The resettlement agency in this Connecticut town is in a quiet neighborhood whose homes are painted brilliant blues and whites with pitched, wood-trimmed, New England roofs. On the sidewalks (mostly White) couples, affiliated with the nearby university, push strollers, or follow their dogs past over-priced Italian grocers. A few weeks prior to the arrival of a refugee family, the agency caseworkers, whose offices are in the second floor of the agency's two-story building are notified. Above their desks are bulletin boards with the last name of the family, the number of people who will be arriving, the VolAg to which the family is assigned, and the date of their arrival. Prior to the family's arrival, the agency pre-leases an apartment for them. The federal mandate is to provide a basic checklist of items—a table, chairs in the number of people arriving, trashcan, etc.— which the resettlement caseworker always double-checks with refugees within their first week. (The resettlement agency uses donated items to supplement these

basics and to make the apartment comfortable for the newcomer. However, this is outside of their federal purview).

On the day of their arrival, and over the next two weeks, the resettlement agent fulfills most of her federal requirements.[8] The caseworker arranges for the families' fridge to be filled with basics, items like milk, cheese, bread, eggs, or chicken and meat that is *halal* slaughtered for Muslim families. She picks up a home cooked, culturally appropriate meal, often prepared by a previously resettled refugee family. Then, with an interpreter, she meets the family at the parking lot by the Wharf that is the designated drop-off area for newcomer refugees. She arrives with car seats for all young children and an interpreter, someone who can speak to the family in their native tongue. The family is taken home that first night, and if anyone is in need of medical attention; like a case where a child had a fever, or a woman had a psychotic episode prompted by PTSD, they are taken to get medical attention. In the winter, the caseworker also brings coats, recognizing that families may be ill equipped for the New England chill.

The families are then taken to their new home. The neighborhood the agency is located in would be too expensive for refugees to afford, given the limited financial assistance they would receive. Therefore, the agency places newcomers in neighborhoods to the east and south of the city, where the homes are dingier shades, the faces are browner, and the corner stores have bullet proof windows.

The first weeks are a whirlwind for refugees. The caseworker accompanies the families to their myriad appointments. This involves hours of waiting on curved plastic chairs bolted to the floors of various government offices. At the Department of Social

[8] during the two years, caseworkers were all women except two men

Services (DSS) the families are registered for Medicare (called Husky in Connecticut), TANF, food stamps and Women and Infant Children (WIC) assistance if they qualify. At the Social Security Office, they apply for a Social Security Number. At the School Board, they examine the children in English and register them in one of the schools, and in English as a Second Language classes. At the Primary Care Center at the local hospital, they undergo a battery of tests, with children often getting a series of immunizations that they have missed.

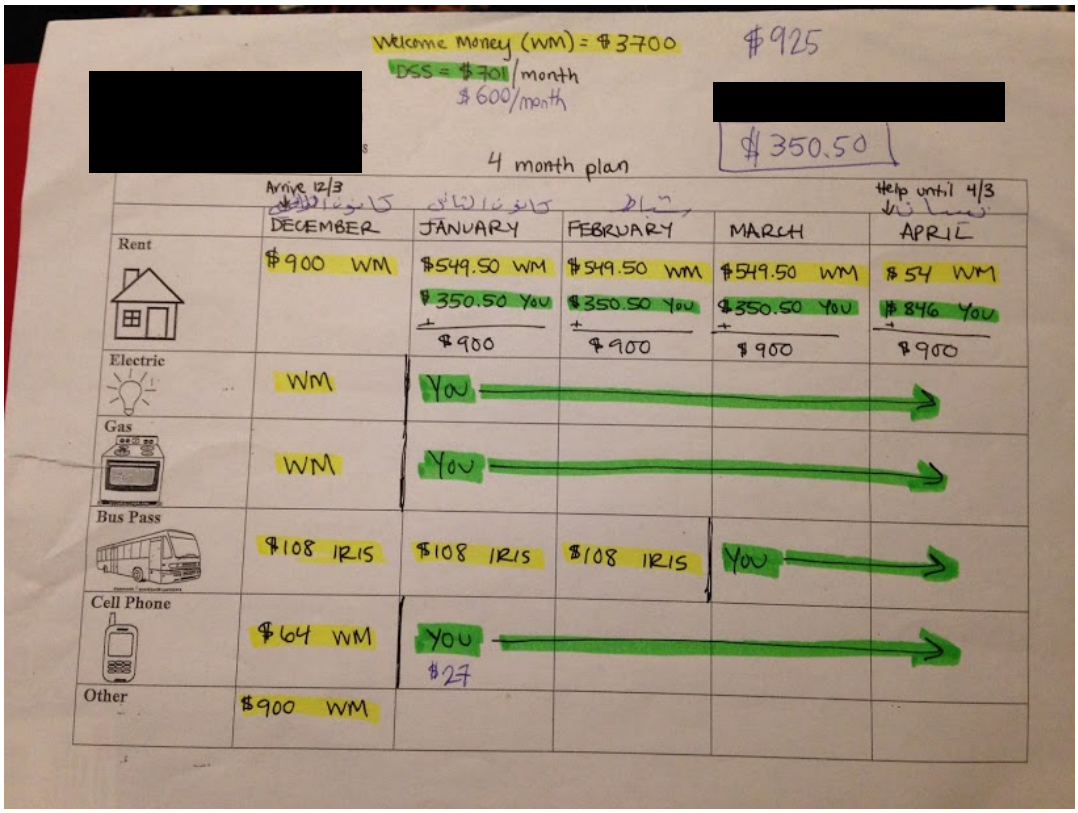
The agency is also federally mandated to provide a cultural orientation session to every member of newcomer families over 16. This session is similar to the IOM Cultural Orientation in countries of immediate refuge, but focuses more on local laws concerning rent, domestic violence issues, budgeting, and on issues of mental and physical health. Within these first weeks, the caseworker, having signed up the family for TANF, would also inform them of how their cash assistance will work. The resettlement agency would use the "Welcome Money" designated for the newcomer refugees—$925 per person—to pay for the families' security deposit, first month's rent, first month's utilities, new mattresses, car seats, one cell phone, the welcome meal and the welcome food in the fridge. These were all the federally mandated items.

The families are often surprised when they don't receive this Welcome Money in its cash form, and when they are told it has been spent. They are also shocked when they learn of the TANF amount and compare it to their rent. With rents exceeding $1000 a month, the TANF assistance for a family of four was $701. Even without spending anything other than rent, the families would not be able to make ends meet on that assistance.

Given these limitations, the resettlement agency steps in with additional, non-federal funds. This resettlement agency was proactive and was in a politically liberal community. Its work was *primarily* funded by private donations and grants, making resettlement a mix of a federal and philanthropic program. In the 2016 Fiscal Year, only 38% of the agency's financial support was from the United States Department of States' Refugee Admission program. The year prior this number was only 25%. External assistance enabled the agency to assist refugees in the first months of resettlement beyond the described federal mandate. In this way, the agency, in addition to implementing federal guidelines, acts as a nongovernmental advocate, supporting this constituency. It does so in two main ways: (1) by providing rental assistance in family's early resettlement, and (2) by providing other services, such as help in accessing social services, English classes, a limited daycare facility, and low-cost legal assistance.

First, this agency had a clear system for its assistance. After the Welcome Money was depleted, the resettlement agency would subsidize newcomers' rent and other costs for their first three months. The family would pay half of its welfare on rent, and the agency would pay the rest. Below is an image of a finance plan given to the families by the resettlement agency in their first weeks of resettlement [Figure 4]. The finance plan pictured here is that for a family of four, like Rima and Amjad's. They would receive $701 monthly, from the DSS, from which they would pay $350.50 toward their $1000 rent. They would pay their utilities and other expenses (except for food, which is covered by food stamps) out of the remaining $350.50. For their initial months of resettlement, this assistance, along with food stamps, enabled them to make-ends-meet.

Illustration 4: Resettlement Agency Budget Plan



In November of 2015, as their resettlement rent assistance approached three months, the caseworker made a visit to the family home with another chart. This chart showed how much was spent on the family, by the federal government through their allotted "Welcome Money," and what additional money was spent by the resettlement agency. The caseworker showed them how the $3,700 allocated to their family—$925 for each of its four members—was spent within the first month of their resettlement on items including car seats for the children, new mattresses, a security deposit, first month's rent, the home cooked meal, the food in the fridge, and "pocket money" (as it is termed by the agency) which the agency disburses in the amount of food stamps until families' food stamps are issued.

At this point, the agency had spent an additional $2,600 from its own fundraising on the family. This amount was spent on their rental assistance, and on an additional security deposit paid after the agency had to move the family from the apartment that they had pre-leased—which was rat-infested—to an apartment in a nicer neighborhood that was better maintained. Amjad, looking at the expenditures that the caseworker had listed was both skeptical and appalled. He asked me, in my role as interpreter, to translate each line of the document. When I was done, he said, "you could buy a whole house for this amount in Syria. Here we're barely living on it."

Amjad was frustrated. He was frustrated that the agency had chosen such a poor apartment for his family to begin with. He was frustrated that so much money had been spent, but he did not feel comfortable financially. He was also frustrated at the display of these expenditures that seemed to boast "look at how much we helped you." He had just gotten out of a war, and been *invited*, from his perspective, to begin again in the United

States but the assistance offered after that invitation felt remarkably limited. He was also frustrated because in this meeting the caseworker reiterated that Amjad would not be receiving agency rental assistance for the following month. He would need to pay his rent, in full. Amjad gestured with his arm towards his family—Rima and his two young boys— who were also sitting in the room. "I don't have a job, what do you expect me to do?" The caseworker responded that he should find one and reminded him that he had been given months of notice as to when agency assistance would run out. Amjad responded that he had been looking, but he had not found anything. He had not learned enough English to be able to use it to find employment, or to use it in an employment situation. He lacked contacts. While he had met other Syrians at the mosque, he had not been able to secure regular work through them. A gas station owner hired him to lay tiles in his station, but this was all the work he had been offered to that point. And, a lot of the jobs that he was hearing about he would need a driver's license for, since the bus system was unreliable. He could not get a driver's license in the state of Connecticut because it did not allow him to take the exam in Arabic, and he could not yet speak English (later the laws would be changed).

Amjad, like others in this study, felt that because of the invitation for resettlement, and because it meant that he had no one to rely on *except* for the United States government, the richest government in the world, he should receive more support. He no longer had a community of friends or family around him and didn't have a way to produce his own income yet. In a refrain repeated by others he asked "why did they bring us here if they were not going to help us?"

During the same meeting, the case manager also performed the last part of her federal requirements, administering a test to Amjad and Rima that assessed whether they knew basic facts about life in the United States. She asked if they knew their address, telephone, and what would happen if they don't pay their rent. Then she asks a series of questions about seeking medical attention. Her final one was, "What would you do if you got a cut? Stay home, go to the doctor, or go to the hospital?" He responded that he knows how to take care of a cut, since he'd watched so many in Syria bleed out. In this way, the United States government both checks refugees' knowledge of basic information about where they are in the same time that they are expected to have already found employment,

During this early period, and throughout their first year of resettlement, refugees like Amjad and Rima also had access to the services available at the resettlement agency that were meant to facilitate their adjustment to the United States and prepare them for their inevitable self-sufficiency. On the second floor of the two-story office, is a narrow lobby (really a wide corridor) which is the sight of most of the agency's day-to-day work. The lobby's walls are plastered with flyers on bulletin boards that are written in multiple languages including Arabic, French, Spanish & Pashto that advertise resettlement agency events or closures. They also feature work training opportunities, or advice on stretching out food stamps. On a given day, Syrian, Sudanese, Iraqi, Afghani, and Congolese men and women crowd the lobby, sipping tea from a constantly bubbling kettle, chatting with their co-linguists.

Most are waiting for their caseworker to emerge from behind the locked door that leads to the hallway of staff offices, so that she, with an interpreter, can decipher a letter

that they received in the mail, or help them figure out why their food stamps were reduced or why they received a bill from the hospital. This bureaucratic assistance was crucial for families during their first year. Newly arrived refugees brought piles of mail, with spam advertisements on top of their welfare renewal letters, unable to differentiate what could be thrown away from what was consequential for the continuation of their assistance. In addition to this day-to-day work, the agency provided four sets of services crucial to refugees' early incorporation.

First, it offered English classes—beginner, intermediate, and advanced—between 9am and 12pm each day. The beginner class is held in the multipurpose room, whose walls feature posters of ABCs and a map of the United States, and whose surfaces are always littered with pens and papers and bits of thread from sewing workshops held in the same space. Both women and men are allowed to attend these classes, but as will be explained further in the coming chapter, the necessity of early labor-market entry curbed the ability of refugees to fully benefit from this service.

Second, the agency offered limited childcare assistance for those who were attending English class. Across the hall from the multipurpose room, is the agency daycare, a small room that can host up to 6 children at a time, aged 2 to 4, as their parents are in English class. The wait list to get a child into this daycare is 8 to 12 months, depending on the volume of refugees arriving, and is only available for those families where a parent is enrolled in English classes. This service was crucial, particularly for women, who did the brunt of childcare.

Third, the agency offered some employment assistance. An employment officer reached out to local businesses to try to secure jobs for newly arrived refugees. While the

agency was sometimes successful—at least three men in this study secured jobs that they did for more than a year through the resettlement agency—jobs for non-English speakers were few, and there was often a mismatch between jobs available and the capabilities of refugees. For instance, in at least two cases people lost jobs because they were unable to commute to another city (particularly before they were able to secure driver's licenses). And, in another case, a man with back issues was offered a job in an ice factory, hauling 50 pound cubes, a job he was physically unable to do. In no case was anyone offered work that matched their skills as artisans.

Finally, the agency offered legal counsel. Refugees had to pay for this counsel, except for consultations about family reunification, but at an extremely discounted rate. A member of every family in this study visited the lawyer in the first months of their resettlement to ask for information about facilitating reunification with a loved one back home The answer was always that there was nothing they could do but wait for their family's (unlikely) resettlement, or wait until the refugee secured citizenship, at which point they could petition for a parent or a sibling, but the wait would be several years. And, all of the refugees in this study went again to this lawyer to apply for their green cards at the end of their first year of resettlement, securing their legal residency.

While through all of these channels, the resettlement agency offered support to refugees that is unavailable to any other kind of immigrant in the United States, and while it was a crucial resource for the newcomer, the relationship of newcomer refugee with resettlement agency was also inevitably a source of frustration due to a constant navigation of scarcity. The case managers have a large number of cases, in most cases do not speak the language of the people they are resettling and have limited resources with

which to respond to refugee demands. They can exercise some discretion on advocating for refugees to continue to receive agency assistance. For instance, in the end, Amjad's family was helped on and off for around 6 months. Other families received more or less assistance which created resentment. However, eventually, for all families, the assistance was withdrawn, whether or not they found good jobs. And, perhaps more importantly, despite the resettlement agency's assistance, the looming knowledge that the refugees would soon be on their own created a constant sense of instability and lack of safety that they will be able to maintain a roof over their heads. This scarcity meant that the work of private citizens could have a large impact on the ability of refugees to navigate the initial months of resettlement.

The role of private citizens in resettlement

In addition to donating to resettlement agencies, private citizens are also involved in the work of resettlement in two crucial ways: (1) as formal resettlement assistance through a new innovation in refugee resettlement called "co-sponsorship," and (2) as volunteers within resettlement agencies, and outside of it. The work of these private actors is shaped by the "self-sufficiency" goal of the resettlement system and the need of refugees in the United States for basic day-to-day support.

Co-sponsorship

First, resettlement agencies across the United States are drawing on the Canadian example of "private sponsorship" to create a pathway for local groups to "co-sponsor" refugees or support their resettlement. In this research sample, three refugees in the

United States were resettled vis-a-vis this hybrid program, though the resettlement agency relied heavily on this program when President Obama, who promised to resettle 10,000 Syrians in the 2016 FY made good on his promise in its final months, resulting in a hundred refugees arriving via this resettlement agency in a few months' time.

While the United States resettlement system, and the 1980 Refugee Act, does not allow for private citizens to receive refugees (this is the exclusive purview of approved VolAgs), the resettlement agency can receive a file and assign it to a local community group. The agency provides the group with some cultural training, introduction to the aforementioned government services available to refugees, and services offered by the resettlement agency for refugees. The co-sponsors are also encouraged to follow a similar pattern as the agency in their assistance—requiring refugees to pay half of their welfare money towards rent. In this way, the co-sponsorship system is an attempt to mimic the government sponsorship system while reducing the pressure on resettlement agencies.

However, co-sponsorship—there are over 40 family placements with cosponsors in Connecticut at the time of this writing—is different than resettlement through the agency in four important ways. First, co-sponsors tend to be groups of well-resourced (predominantly White) community members who have more social connections and time for the single refugee family that they are resettling *and* are able to provide more financial assistance than resettlement agencies with finite resources. However, and second, the co-sponsor members, despite training received at the resettlement agency, are not professional caseworkers and therefore lack the know-how to traverse the United States' social service system, which their social class would not have previously exposed them to. Gaps in access to social services occur as a result of this lack of knowledge.

Third, and related, co-sponsors often live far from the resettlement agency city (1-2 hours) and therefore may isolate refugees from other co-ethnics, and also from access to the resettlement agency should they have issues. And finally, the cosponsoring areas are wealthier than the neighborhoods were refugees are placed by the resettlement agency, limiting refugees' ability to afford their rent past their initial year.

While this type of resettlement is new in the United States, it is an innovation that is being tried by resettlement agencies across the country as a way to alleviate the pressure on resettlement agencies, and as a way to defray the cost of refugee resettlement beyond the federally mandated requirements.

Private and NGO Volunteering

Second, the resettlement agency also relies heavily on the work of volunteers. Interpreters, necessary for most client-facing agency work, offer these services on a voluntary basis. The work of furnishing refugee homes, administering bus trainings, and assistance in casework, is done by college interns who are working on a volunteer basis. In addition, an important program run by the resettlement agency—a cultural companion program—introduces refugees to non-refugees. These are people who get involved in the lives of refugees, visiting once a week, as some of the only non co-ethnic friends that refugees will have.

Outside of the work of the resettlement agency, there are volunteers at a community level. These include people who are active in the local non-refugee Syrian community. People like Ali who fundraised to purchase new cars for newly arrived refugees in order for them to get to work, or like Dina who collected money to buy new

clothing for children or held parties to introduce the Syrian immigrants who had been in the United States for decades to the newly arrived refugees. These connections with co-ethnic communities, as will be discussed in the following chapter, were crucial for refugees' finding employment, particularly in the early period.

Finally, groups developed around the refugee issue. These included Facebook groups like Greater New York for Syrian Refugees, which administers assistance to refugees in the tristate area: New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut. This group, and others like it, are platforms for fundraising for refugees who are in need of assistance, and also have done work to help refugees, and particularly women, earn an income. For instance, crafts fairs held in New York, and cooking projects—where Syrian women are asked to cater meals for parties or cooking classes, have had a meaningful impact as the men and women in this community are finding their footing, and managing their new experience of having limited incomes in the United States.

It is with the help of the resettlement agency as well as these disparate organizations that refugees traverse the demand for their self-sufficiency in the United States. However, while organizations intervene, assisting refugees in the early period, the main private resource used to fill the gap left by the "self-sufficiency" goal is of course the labor of the refugee themselves. The following chapter examines how refugees respond to the self-sufficiency requirement in the 1980 Refugee Act, and how that response diverges by their gender.

-3-

Household Lives

On a snowy morning in mid-December 2015, Rima, waited at the bus stop to take the M bus to her 9:30am English class. Her black *hijab* sat up on her chin, inches down from where it used to sit in both Syria and in Jordan when she used to wear a full *niqab,* which left only her eyes exposed. She took off her *niqab* in America for fear of targeting. As she waited, Rima sounded out the phrase, "I want to go to the toilet," from her English worksheet, while her 3 year-old son, Boudi, played with his cars beneath her on the sidewalk, ignoring her pleas to put on his gloves. Though the scene is banal, taking the public bus to English class was an extraordinary event for Rima. She had never left her house without a male companion in Homs, Syria or in Amman, Jordan, where her family had first fled from the Syrian Civil War.

Across town, her husband Amjad worked at a fiberglass insulation factory. His allergic reaction to the fiberglass could be seen on his skin and heard in his wheeze, as he pushed the vacuum cleaner as janitor. His lack of English meant that he could not communicate with his colleagues, and for that reason his supervisors, who liked him, could not promote him to assembly-line work. He felt lucky for the regularity of his 9-5 shift, and for the fact that he earned a couple of cents more than minimum wage, which was $9.60 an hour in Connecticut, at the time. However, working full-time made it difficult to get to English in the evenings, and his earnings were insufficient to support his family of four.

Theories of men and women's household divisions of paid and unpaid labor argue that cultural beliefs in separate spheres for women and men, embedded in institutions, create disparities in access to resources that disadvantage women and advantage men (Davis and Greenstein 2009; Ridgeway 2011). Through voluntary or forced immigration men and women leave behind institutions and join new ones that impose new constraints on how they behave (Pessar and Mahler 2003; West and Zimmerman 1987). Women, on aggregate, often take on more paid labor, but men often remain primary breadwinners (Blau, Kahn, and Papps 2011; Frank and Hou 2015). Studies have shown that even when women take on paid labor, that does not necessarily correlate to their increased access to household resources or power (Parrado and Flippen 2005). This raises the following question: how do men and women's behaviors shift under the pressures of a new institutional setting, and with what ramifications for the distribution of household resources?

Looking at the case of Rima and Amjad, and the other families resettled in the United States, I focus not only on stability or change in the structural form of labor, the distribution of paid and unpaid work in the household, but also the content and meanings of men and women's labor vis-a-vis one another, which I refer to as the relational content of labor. I argue that shifts in the relational content of labor, whether they entail behaviors that uphold or challenge cultural beliefs, can result in new distributions of human capital in the household. Rather than seeing human capital as an individual, static attribute of an immigrant upon arrival, evaluated in a new context (Portes and Rumbaut 2014), I look at capitals as ongoing products of men and women's relational labors constrained by their expectations for their own labor and the new policy context.

In Syria, the men and women in this study developed their human capital constrained by the expectation for men to become income-earners and women to take care of the household. The men dropped out of school early to join family businesses. The women, by contrast, stayed in school longer, and learned to perform household tasks like cooking and sometimes sewing or crocheting. After marriage, each performed these differentiated tasks. In 2011, when war took away their loved ones and homes, they were forced to flee to Jordan or Turkey or Lebanon as described in Chapter 1. As is the American policy, they were selected for resettlement due to humanitarian need like having multiple small children or health burdens (Halpern 2008).

In the United States, the Syrian men and women attempted to maintain cultural expectations that men would become income earners and women remain the caretakers. There was no question that Amjad would be the one to enter the labor-market on behalf of their family. This effort interacted, however, with the American policy context to result in shifts in the relational content of household labor with the unintended consequence of divergence in men and women's capital access, advantaging women. The resettlement program required that refugees enter the labor-market within the first six months of arrival, aiming for their "self-sufficiency," or non-reliance on government assistance (Halpern 2008). The resettlement program enforced this goal by offering almost no direct cash assistance. Instead, refugees are provided access to American welfare, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) a program typically closed to immigrants, which required all recipients to actively search for work (Ridzi 2009). Men entered the labor-market as the household's primary income earners, despite lacking the skills required by the American post-industrial labor-market (Kalleberg 2011). Men

could only access menial jobs that offered little potential to build economic capital or forms of human capital like new labor-market skills or English language. Women, meanwhile, stayed out of the labor-market as caretakers, and through the help of their local resettlement agency, found daycare for their children and attended English language classes. English was a crucial form of human capital that allowed them to traverse day-to-day life more easily, make connections with non-Arabs and prepare for the citizenship exam. Further in their resettlement, women also did paid work to manage household poverty. The skills acquired through work and English learning were important to women and provided crucial resources that could be utilized in their futures in the United States. However, these resources were also interpreted within the frame of existing meanings about men and women's labor. Most women did paid work they could manage with care work, and their earnings were earmarked as supplementary.

In what follows, I position my contribution within the broader literature on household divisions of labor and on migration, describe the methodology, and present findings on how families described their lives pre-resettlement and how they lived them post-resettlement.

A relational approach to household labor

Studies that have examined stability and change in household divisions of labor have found that while women do more paid work in destination countries than they did in countries of origin, men remained primary breadwinners (Blau et al. 2011; Frank and Hou 2015; Parrado and Flippen 2005). Whereas early work on gender, immigration and divisions of labor-that used a "household bargaining" approach-predicted that this

increase in women's paid labor would mean increased access to material resources and household power, later studies questioned this assumption, arguing that paid labor was sometimes understood as an extension of care obligations (Ferree 1979), and showing that women did not always control the money that they earned within the household (Kenney 2006). Moreover, studies clarify the ways in which women access cash or services in immigration through informal networks and social assistance, and the importance of those resources to women's wellbeing, even if they do not enter paid work (Kibria 1993). These findings highlight that whether women do paid or unpaid work is an incomplete indicator of whether their access to resources has shifted.

To examine how household labor may shift, and the consequences of that shift, I draw on insight from relational approaches in gender theory and economic sociology. First, gender theory holds that masculinities and femininities are relationally constituted within an institutional setting and within households, where men typically have power and resource advantage (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). Because gender interactions are constrained by context, then with changes in that context the way that gender is "done" will also change (Pessar and Mahler 2003; West and Zimmerman 2009). These shifts in "doing," however, do not necessarily mean departures from cultural meanings about men and women's labor (England et al. 2010). As studies have shown, performances of masculinity may be a way for men to retain self-worth particularly when other aspects of their lives are disrupted (Espiritu 2001).

Second, to understand this shift in femininities and masculinities as it pertains to labor, I draw on the notion of relational work from economic sociology. This approach, advanced by Viviana Zelizer (2012), argues that economic action between partners

represents, reinforces and constitutes interpersonal relationships. People's household economic transactions, including labor, in this view, reflect the meaning they assign to their marriage and to their views about themselves as men and women. People care about matching those meanings to the right kind of economic transactions. Zelizer and others find that difficult, emotional situations emerge when people are unable to perform economic transactions in ways that are meaningful to them (Bandelj 2012; Tilly 2006). Moreover, other scholars have found that when labor in the household shifts in ways that depart from gender expectations-for instance if women engage in paid labor where they had not before-women do additional unpaid work or "compensate" to uphold cultural meanings about men and women's labor (Bittman et al. 2003). For Zelizer, economic media (such as money) is a part of this negotiation as it is earmarked, or categorized and used, in ways that reflect broader notions about a relationship between partners.

I argue that as economic worlds are transformed by exposure to new institutional imperatives, as in the case of migration, people engage in relational work as they make efforts to establish proper matches between their new economic situation and their definitions of their relationship. The relational content of labor emerges from this relational work between women and men that occurs in a new institutional context. Relational work entails new sets of behaviors. These new behaviors may not increase human capital. In the case of the Syrian men, for instance, they do not. However, they may also result in the acquisition of new sets of resources in cases where people learn a new language, access social services on behalf of their family, or enter paid labor. Similar to cash, human capital in the household is also confined by understandings of the relationship. For instance, Read and Oselin (2008)show that for Arab-American women

in an ethnic enclave, educational credentials were interpreted as a care taking resource rather than a labor market resource. However, unlike cash, human capital is a non-finite future resource that has the potential of opening up possibilities in the event that the cultural meanings expectations within a relationship shift. In the case of immigration, these shifts are imposed by the self-sufficiency imperative.

As discussed in the previous chapter, refugees are resettled as part of a government incorporation program, a privilege as there is no incorporation policy for other immigrants. As part of this program, refugees receive the assistance of a resettlement agency that provides them with housing, helps them access state services, and provides supplementary services like English class, daycare, or labor-market assistance. The federal government provides agencies with a one-time payment of "Welcome Money" per refugee to be spent on that refugee, matched by overhead support for the agency itself. But, the program offers no additional cash assistance, aiming for refugees to be "self-sufficient" or non-reliant on government assistance.

As will be discussed further in Chapter 5, unlike Canada, that offers refugees a year of full cash -assistance, before placing refugees on a generous welfare program (Government of Canada 2016), refugees in the United States are offered access to TANF like other low-income American families. The program offers limited cash, $701 per month for a family of four in Connecticut (no family's rent is less than $1000), has a lifetime limit of 21 months, and requires non-working recipients, who are women or men, to search for or take on "countable employment"-non-entrepreneurial work for which they receive a paystub (Lower-Basch 2017; Ridzi 2009; State of Connecticut 2014).

As was discussed the previous chapter, through this mechanism, which hold immigrants accountable by counting hours worked, TANF views all recipients as potential employees, pushing immediate labor-market entry (Scott 1998). Implicit to the program is the assumption that household time is fungible by gender, ignoring household care burdens, and ironically, all of the off-the-books work that men and women, and particularly women, attempt to make ends meet (Espeland and Stevens 1998; Lein and Edin 1997; Shola Orloff 2009). In the case of Syrian refugees, the official policy interacted with cultural beliefs about men and women's labor, thus pushing men into the labor-market, while women stayed out in ways that unexpectedly advantaged their human capital formation.

Life & Gender before America

Before I examine the emerging patterns in men and women's labor in the United States, I first describe the families' recollections of their lives in Syria, where the men and women were members of the middle class. Nabil and Najlaa are a typical case. Both Nabil and Najlaa grew up in Homs, Syria in the Bab Amr district. He dropped out of school in the third grade to join the family business which was carpentry. She stayed in school until the 9th grade. The couple was not anomalous in this sample, nor in Syria, where pre-war national statistics showed that women had higher school attendance rates than their male counterparts (UNICEF 2013). In addition to her schooling, Najlaa learned to cook, helping out her mother. While Najlaa did not learn a handicraft, other women in this sample, like Rajaa, learned to crochet, knit or sew. As was common for Sunni

women, upon marriage, Najlaa moved in with Nabil's family and, like all of the women in this sample, did not engage in paid work, which was Nabil's purview (Rabo 2008). The men in this study, like Nabil were mostly artisans and small-business owners with one man working as a government administrator. The men provided for their family's day-to-day needs, and ran errands-managing bureaucracies, doctor's offices, and markets. But also, memories of Syria included regular family trips, outings on Fridays to local parks or village homes, and plans for the future. For instance, Majid, who was once a chef, was saving up to build a home for his wife and children, the foundations and ground floor of which were laid just before the war began. As his wife, Rajaa, 36, explained, "in our countries, we are used to the father and mother as being responsible for the future of their children…" It was through these tasks that men saw themselves as providers and as fathers.

The women in this study, like Rajaa, followed the day-to-day educational progress of their children, and took care of the family home. Some of the women, including Rajaa were also in charge of household budgeting, making sure that the bills were paid on time. Like Najlaa, Rajaa lived with her in-laws. While Najlaa remembered life with her in-laws as an "endless tea-party"-she did tasks with her in-laws and then visited other women in her neighborhood-Rajaa always felt constricted by her in-laws who intervened in her upbringing of her children and restricted her mobility. In this way, while the women performed similar sets of tasks, they had different recollections of their experiences.

When the families in this study moved to Jordan or Turkey, there wasn't an additional opportunity to join the labor market. There, they actually reported limiting

their mobility to prevent interactions with police and harassment from men that felt that knew that Syrian women had no way to protect themselves. The only woman who did work in Jordan, Madiha, who was widowed there, reports several instances of harassment.

Introduction to Self-Sufficiency

One of these families included Faten, Abdulrahman, and their son Ahmed. Like the rest of this sample, they arrived in the United States as poor and welfare reliant refugees. In Syria, Abdulrahman was a consignment store owner, while Faten was a stay-at-home mom though she was one of two women in this sample who had a high school education. On the day after their arrival, in their initial meeting with a resettlement caseworker, the couple asked about their assistance. They learned about TANF for the first time, that it would be $597 for their family of three, and that they would receive an additional $511 in food stamps through an Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) that could only go towards food items. These numbers surprised Abdulrahman. "Is this per person or for the whole family?" he asked. The caseworker confirmed that it was for the whole family. They also learned that for the first six months they would put half of this TANF benefit towards rent, while the resettlement agency would cover the rest.

Two months after the family's arrival, an employment officer from the resettlement agency came to the couple's apartment to help them prepare their CVs, asking Abdulrahman what skills he had. Abdulrahman had worked for decades, but given that he had owned his own company he was not sure what he could do in the United States. All Abdulrahman could think to list was dry-cleaning, which was the job he had

done for the three years in Jordan. As the officer pushed him to list other skills (e.g., management skills, cooking, cleaning), Abdulrahman became frustrated. He asked, with exasperation, how he could find a job without speaking the language? Though he attended English for close to a month-after completing his medical screenings and registering-he had no command over the language. The officer replied sympathetically, "finding a job in America is like climbing a steep mountain even for the native-born English speaker." Indeed in Connecticut's post-industrial landscape, white-collar jobs were returning to cities, while low-skilled jobs were hard to come by particularly for ethnic minorities.

When the officer was done with Abdulrahman, he turned to Faten. Did she want to prepare a CV? Abdulrahman responded for his wife with an immediate "no" indicating that she would not be working. Faten explained, "I have a child," as a self-evident reason of why she would not work. Faten's motherhood was sufficient reason for her to stay out of the labor-market. However, she hinted that maybe, in the future, she might be open to a job, after she learned enough English.

Four months after this meeting, and six months into their resettlement, the resettlement agency stopped helping the family with rent. The TANF cash was insufficient to cover the family's $1,200 rent, let alone other day-to-day expenses. As the household's breadwinner, Abdulrahman felt responsible for keeping his family out of poverty, which given the self-sufficiency policy, meant finding a job. Lacking a useful social network-his friends were refugees who were as poor as he was-he got a job through the resettlement agency. He became a dishwasher at a pub in a suburban neighborhood, a world away from owning his own consignment store. Abdulrahman felt

grateful for the $1 over minimum wage he received. Due to the nature of the job, however, he had no control over his shifts, and did not always get full-time work. Though he tried to continue to attend English class his work schedule was unpredictable. He also did not have the time or energy to study after his shift.

Meanwhile, Ahmed, who was five, was eligible to enroll at a local kindergarten. Without the obligation to take care of Ahmed during the day, Faten, like the other women in this sample, began to attend English class in the morning at the resettlement agency. Because Faten knew some English from Syrian High School she excelled quickly through the lessons. In the fall of 2016, in a move that distinguished her from the other women in this sample, she enrolled at Gateway Community College, where she took the English as a Second Language (ESL) sequence for two semesters. While Faten studied, she began to interpret for a dentist in her apartment building, when he got Arabic-speaking clients, and began to give cooking classes through a local community group. Both these activities were purposefully part-time so that she could balance them with taking care of Ahmed, and cooking and cleaning for her household.

In a pattern maintained across this sample, the men and women upheld men's breadwinning and women's caretaking. Abdulrahman entered a menial job, with limited promise of capital accrual, whereas Faten stayed out of the labor market and was able to learn English, later taking on paid work. She expressed concern over these shifts in their division of labor saying, "sometimes I feel like I've left him behind." But, while Abdulrahman constantly joked about helping out around the house more than he did in Syria, this was always described as "helping." And when Faten was annoyed with Abdulrahman she wondered out loud why she "helped" him come up with extra income

saying "I should just let him fend for himself." Moreover, Abdulrahman still led on decisions about expenditures, for instance, threatening to delay the purchase of a new phone for Faten after she broke two in a row. While the relational content of men and women's labor shifted in ways that improved women's access to English and paid work, the men and women also attempted to maintain masculinities and femininities through framing their labor as "helping" each other, and through preserving men's decision-making power. The following sections explore the divergence in men's and women's experiences further, and their implications for new capital formation.

Men, work and Fatherhood

Most of the men in this sample, like Abdulrahman, were pushed by their own expectations for their labor and the self-sufficiency that required early entry into the labor market. These new labor conditions resulted in limited capital accrual for them, as they could not attend English classes regularly but also as the jobs offered limited skills. Amjad, who arrived in the United States with his wife Rima, and two young children, spoke to this point.

> I want to work. But I am new here. We just got here. We don't understand anything, but you want to push me, tedfeshooni, to work. So, we work whatever, hayallah. Most work in restaurants, doing whatever… Everyone is working against their will. No one is happy. In other countries, they allow us to study, to get assistance, they say you're not allowed to work so you can learn. Not here.

With this statement, Amjad was comparing his resettlement situation to that of his family in Canada who were supported financially by the government for their first year, with the

potential for enrollment in welfare thereafter. Amjad, meanwhile, felt that he was forced by the self-sufficiency imperative into a dead-end factory job. He explained, "The factory that I'm working at, even if I worked the rest of my life there, I am not going anywhere." Amjad could not speak to his colleagues and was isolated for most of the day anyway. A year into working there, his English had not improved. While the resettlement agency argued that work would expose the men to English, the men could only work jobs where English language communication was not a necessity, often with others who also did not speak English as a native language. Once Amjad expanded social network he began to work off-the-books. He fixed the cars of other Arabs, hoping that he could someday turn this into his full-time business. But, he would need the capital to rent a shop and to get equipment. Unlike the immigrants of an earlier time, who earned living wages, Amjad had few opportunities to build this capital (Gans 1992).

Meanwhile, Amjad's hours at work meant that he could not go to his children's school in case of an emergency or take them to their medical appointments, things that he could do in Syria where he owned his own tile-making shop. As a result, his wife Rima took on these responsibilities despite the fact that she-out of all of the women-had the least mobility in both Syria and Jordan. Once both of Rima's boys had gone to kindergarten and daycare at the resettlement agency, Amjad encouraged his wife to become more mobile asking her, "what if something happens to the kids while I'm at work?" Amjad felt unable to fulfill these tasks of fatherhood that he had performed in Syria where he was an entrepreneur.

Like Amjad, other men felt unable to meet their expectations for themselves fathers entering the American labor market as a result of the self-sufficiency imperative.

For instance, in America, without the ability to speak English, the only job Majid could find was as a line-cook at a pizza place in the city's downtown. Majid felt that this job was better than the jobs worked by other Syrians. He made $11.50 an hour, two dollars above minimum wage. And, his employer was a co-ethnic, which did not allow for English language learning, but enabled Majid to communicate with his colleagues, and to build a relationship with the proprietor himself. The proprietor purposefully kept Majid half-time off-the-books so that he could qualify for both TANF and the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), a tax subsidy for low-income working families (Halpern-Meekin et al. 2015).

Nevertheless, Majid felt he could not be the father he wanted to be-a provider of a future for his children-due to this menial job. His dreams of building a home for his children were thwarted;

> When someone works regular hours as an employee, they can't better their lives…Now that our house is gone and our store is gone and our citizenship is gone, our lives are restricted. At this age, I can't go back and rebuild all over again… So, I focus on my kids getting an education, because they are going to have to build their own futures, their lives are in their hands. We cannot secure their future anymore.

Rajaa, who was sitting with us in the living room, interjected "here we tell our children that they are going to have to rely on themselves." Indeed, Rajaa and Majid took the unprecedented step to accept a scholarship for boarding school, not only for their 16-year-old son, but also for their 14-year-old daughter. Despite the constant criticism from the Syrian community for sending their daughter to live on her own at such a young age,

Rajaa and Majid insisted on this choice. They shifted their expectations for their children's future responding to the demands of life in America. There was no business for their son to drop out of school to join, and their daughter would also need her own human capital to be able to be self-reliant in America. This level of education, a departure from their Rajaa and Majid's histories, was a strategy to meet the capital transfer expected of them as parents. This parental sacrifice for children's human capital existed across the sample, with men working menial jobs so that their children could "become something" that they could no longer become or offer them.

Importantly, one anomalous case, that of Zacherya, 32, a father of two, underscores the significance of the self-sufficiency policy as the key mechanism for men's entry into menial labor. When he was in Turkey with his wife, Narjis, they were approached by a famous photographer. Their photo went viral, and as a result, the photographer was able to raise $50,000 on their behalf. Moreover, the family received disability assistance due to the son's chronic condition. As a result of this support, Zachareya consciously stayed out of the labor-market for the first year, taking English classes in the morning and the evening. In this way, his case mimicked the assistance received by refugees in Canada, where there is an "integration" rather than self-sufficiency logic that allows refugees to stay out of the labor market for at least their first year of resettlement. When the choice came between who was going to stay home to watch their son and who would go to English, Narjis the designated caretaker, stayed home. Zachareya was going to be the breadwinner, and needed to gain the human capital. As a result of this choice, when Zachaerya finally entered the labor-market, a year after the family's resettlement, he was hired full-time at a wax factory earning well-above

minimum wage in a job with benefits. This anomalous case of Zachareya confirms that men's early entry into the labor market-due to the self-sufficiency policy interacting with expectations for their labor-curbs men's ability to gain human capital.

Women, English and Work

While the men worked menial jobs, complying with the self-sufficiency policy and their expectations for their labor, the women stayed out of the labor-market to fulfill their caretaking responsibilities. But, once the children had been sent to school, or had been found a spot at the resettlement agency daycare, the women chose to begin to attend English class. Even those women who could not secure childcare, like Narjis whose son was chronically ill, or Sarah, who had just given birth, tried to find tutors to come to their home at least once a week.

English language was important to women for three main reasons. First, it facilitated day-to-day activities, purchasing groceries, getting on the bus, paying bills, accessing service providers, and was, for this reason, a human capital resource. Narjis, who began English later than the other women due to her son's handicap explained "I want to be like other people, to come and go like them without fear." While Rima was initially concerned about getting lost in the United States, having had limited mobility alone prior to arrival, upon graduating from Level 1 to level 2 English, was no longer concerned about getting lost. Not only did she take the bus to English, but she also took the bus without fear to other women's homes and to the hospital. She could communicate with her son's teachers, and advocate for her family with the resettlement agency. Second, women wanted to be able to communicate with neighbors, to build social capital.

Sarah, part of the newer cohort, explained "I feel like I came to America but I'm not in America." Everyone she speaks to is Arab and she has not been able to make friends or connections outside her co-ethnic group. Rajaa, meanwhile, who had also graduated to level 2, was able to communicate with Betty, her Cultural Companion. Betty taught Rajaa to make chocolate chip cookies, and later, when Rajaa began to think of her crochet-work as an income-generating activity, she got Rajaa donated yarn. Finally, English for the women was crucial for taking their citizenship exam in five years. Citizenship would reinstate these families' full legal rights that they had lost in their home country's war, would enable them visit loved ones in the diaspora, and would entitle them to begin reunification petitions for family to join them in the United States.

Except for Faten, who had basic English upon arrival and who used her English to interpret at the dentist's office, the women imagined English as useful in the long-term for work but not in the short-term. Sarah, for instance, expressed a desire to secure her GED, and wondered what she would specialize in, and Narjis told her mother that she wanted to "become a doctor" which lead to an international game of telephone that ended in congratulations from her cousins. Earning this capital was important in its own right, but it also opened up the potential for future capital accrual.

While women did eventually enter the labor-market-leading to a slight shift in the family's structural form of labor-they did so in ways that maintained, for the most part, their care taking expectations and that confirmed the men's status as primary breadwinners. For women, this work was conceptualized as a way to help their partners earn an income. As Rajaa explained, "In Syria I took care of the house and he earned the money. Here I have to help him out. He can't do it on his own." To earn money Rajaa

utilized the skills that she had gained in her childhood, crocheting baby clothes and flower pins. While she communicated with customers about price and size when she sold directly at crafts fairs, she did not need English to produce her items, and did not need the language to sell them. Afaf, similarly, prepared food for the resettlement organization for arriving families. Coming from a large family, and bearing twelve children herself, she was a prolific cook for a crowd. She also helped conduct cooking lessons through a local non-governmental organization, for which English was helpful but not critical since they had interpreters. And, 26-year-old Ghada, whose husband Zafir had said with finality "our wives don't work," did work. She prepared sweets, Halawit El Laban and Kunafa, that her husband sold to other co-ethnics. And, while Najlaa took on cleaning jobs when her husband was diagnosed with cancer, she worked hours that allowed her to be present when her kids came back from school. The only women who worked in regular 9-5 jobs outside of the home were Madiha, who was a widowed single mom and Wedad, whose case will be described in more detail at the end of this section.

While such adjustments to women's paid labor was important, the management of the earnings reflects the relational work involved in maintaining traditional cultural expectations. The women's earnings from work were also earmarked as "their" money which separated their income from men's income which was seen as primary household income. For instance, When Majid worked a catering job, with Rajaa's help, he determined that his earnings would be spent on rent, though Rajaa wanted to buy new beds for their children. However, when she earned money through crocheting, that was her money to spend. The next day the couple drove to Ikea to look for the beds. Given their poverty, however, women's retention of their own income was not always an option.

For instance, Najlaa, a mother of four, who began to clean houses after her husband was diagnosed with cancer, contributed her earnings to basic household needs. Similarly, Sara, who earned money selling cookies, paid for her husband's traffic ticket with her earnings, since they had no other choice. He, however, apologized profusely that she had to spend "her" earnings on him, whereas the opposite would be commonplace. This position of women's earnings in the household both gave women heightened decision-making authority while also casting their earnings as supplementary, thereby maintaining the notion that men are the primary household breadwinners.

Importantly, it was not just in the family that there were expectations about women's labor, but TANF also had expectations about labor that were revealed when women attended meetings at Jobs First, an NGO that works with TANF to make sure that clients are actively searching for work. In one such meeting, with Rajaa, the caseworker informed her that for her family to continue to be eligible for TANF benefits, she would need to complete a weekly "Work Verification" log, accounting for 35 hours of her week. (This is even though Majid worked 20 hours on-the-books, and the 35 hours should have been the family total). English language, the caseworker said, could count towards this log as "job preparation." Rajaa would also need to complete an additional 15 hours of "job search." The care work that Rajaa performed for her 9-year-old daughter with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, or the cooking and cleaning she did each day did not count towards "work." Perhaps more importantly, Rajaa's crochet work did not count, neither did Madiha's sewing or Afaf's cooking for sale. Reading TANF's "Work Verification Plan" clarified that self-employment is "discouraged" because the program requires that the "client participate in other countable activities" (State of Connecticut 2014).

Moreover, while more of the men's work was seen by TANF, the work that they perceived to be a ladder out of poverty, like fixing cars, was also not "countable." Indeed, TANF's focus on countable work misses the bulk of family work and particularly women's work.

Finally, the case of Wedad and her husband Fawaz is unique as they were the only family to invert the structural form of their labor because he chose not to enter the labor-market. The couple had four children, two of whom were in their mid-20s and the youngest two were 8 and 14 respectively. In Syria, Fawaz was a government employee. Wedad was a homemaker. However, Fawaz resented the push to work menial jobs in the United States, and actively planned to move back to the Middle East. Fawaz's lack of work invoked the ire of the ethnic community, one of whom asked explicitly, "what is wrong with this man?" The sustainability of his aversion to labor-market entry was in part facilitated by the fact that they were resettled far from other Syrians. While they came through the resettlement agency, they were co-sponsored by a community group in another part of Connecticut, a group that dealt only with this family, and thus could afford to be more generous with their assistance than the resettlement agency. After a year of Fawaz's refusal, and fights with the sponsoring group which had withdrawn their support, Wedad entered the labor-market. She worked in a hospital kitchen, cooking hospital meals and delivering the meals to patients. Having had a year of English learning by that point, she could communicate some which made the job easier. Wedad was partially glad that Fawaz did not work, so that he did not act on his threats to move back to Turkey. She did not want to be "talked about" by her network as being left by her husband. Her concern with the broader co-ethnic community, and the reaction that

Fawaz's lack of work elicited clarifies the importance of gender meanings about men and women's labor.

Gender scholarship establishes that narrowing margins in heterosexual couples' relative involvement in paid and unpaid labor in the United States has not meant an abandonment of gender norms that distance women from resources (Bianchi and Milkie 2010; Blair-Loy 2009; England et al. 2010). This case of women and men who have just arrived in the United States captures the relational reinforcement of notions of masculinity and femininity within households even as behaviors change. However, it also shows that even when cultural understandings of men and women's work are retained, changes in behavior can still result in different distributions of household resources benefiting women. The relational view taken in this chapter captures the ways in which men and women uphold cultural meanings about their work, but also captures how change is possible despite this retention of norms.

In the case of Syrian refugees, this study shows that attempts to maintain breadwinner and caretaker divisions had the unintended consequence of men entering menial jobs that promised little capital accrual, whereas women stayed out of the labor-market to perform caretaking activities, but eventually had the opportunity to learn English and take on paid work. While human and later economic capitals acquired by the women continued to be interpreted within the framework of their primary responsibilities as caretakers, these also opened up possibilities for their future, and for this reason were consequential. Althought it is not possible to predict what happens later in the couple's resettlement, certainly women's resources have been expanded.

This expansion in choice, however, is constrained by the nature of the American policy context. TANF, a program that impacts refugees and low-income Americans, in its current design, effectively creates a tradeoff between building human capital and income-earning that women avoid because they are not the ones who respond to this policy demand. The clear solution is to incentivize human capital formation through longer durations of financial support to refugees, and to other Americans who need it. This has potential benefits not only for the individual but also for the American economy, as immigrants who learn English make higher economic contribution (Cheeseman and Shin 2005)However, a lack of political will towards higher distribution makes this a difficult policy maneuver. This chapter points to the importance of other short-term remedies, such as providing childcare and English courses with flexible hours. Another approach, attempted in Salt Lake City, combined English learning with paid work, resulting in 60% of participants finding full-time jobs with benefits at the end of that year (Jerabek 2017). As America continues to be a key resettlement site for refugees, and as the rates of extreme poverty continue to increase, policy solutions that recognize the importance of skill building and care work to families will ensure better outcomes for them and for the country.

-4-

Resettled but Unsettled

The Syrian refugees in this study began to arrive in the United States in the same summer that Donald J. Trump descended an escalator in the Trump Tower to announce his run for presidency. The two years that followed saw an escalation in anti-Muslim rhetoric, while the refugees attempted to rebuild their lives in the ways outlined in the previous chapters.

While the refugees in this study arrived in the historic moment of Donald Trump's campaign and election, the Islamophobia they experience, or the fear or hate of Muslims, is not new. After the attacks of September 11, 2001, the American government could not ensure the security of Americans through conventional tactics. The defining characteristic of "terrorism" was that it could happen anywhere at any time. Legislators, therefore, attempted to reestablish normalcy by typecasting Muslims as the most likely people to commit terror, and targeting them with heightened surveillance (Molotch 2012).

What is new, however, is the mainstreaming of this fear. In the days after September 11, then-President Bush said that America was not at war with Islam, but rather with those who perpetrated the attacks (White House 2001). Nevertheless, over the

course of the coming decade, this distinction blurred, and a fear of Muslims became part of the mainstream discourse. Christopher Bail (2012) referred to this process of making Islamophobia mainstream a "fringe effect," whereby organizations, like the tea party (of which Mike Pence was a member), received disproportionate coverage in the media due to their displays of fear and hate. Through this coverage, these organizations changed the discourse on Islam overall, lumping the world's 1.5 billion Muslims under a label of "Islam" as something to be feared (Afshar 2013).

This chapter takes the reader from the beginning of Donald Trump's campaign through the first 100 days of his presidency, exploring the impact of the heightened anti-Muslim sentiment that characterized his ascendancy on the resettlement process of this marginalized, targeted community. Through this case, this dissertation adds "sense of security" as a part of the process of adjustment alongside an examination of refugees' economic lives. I define sense of security as the extent to which newcomers feel safe in their legal position and from attacks in public spaces.

I show that the heightened anti-Muslim sentiment in this moment of their resettlement diminished their sense of security. During this time, they were the targets of negative rhetoric and legal profiling through restrictions on resettlement imposed by United States governors, and later through the travel ban imposed by the Trump administration. Hate incidents also occurred against members of this community, and to others in their network. During this period, the men and women in this study began to recognize their targeting as racism. I track this through their conversations with each other online and offline, and with the resettlement agency. I show that they began to feel less safe in the United States as a result. They worried about their legal status and about

whether it was safe to walk outside. Women in particular, who wore the *hijab*, changed patterns of behavior to avoid interpersonal attacks. This all took an emotional toll, and in one case a toll on mental health, as families began to contemplate alternative futures in other places, restricted by their legal status. All of this, together meant that in resettlement they felt that they were members of a marginalized minority, rather than an integrated group.

The Campaign

On November 17, 2015, on a crisp afternoon, a man, a woman and a young child emerged from the sliding side-door of an International Organization for Migration (IOM) van.[9] Faten, the woman, wore a dark-green *manteaux* – a modest, double-breasted, trench coat that is fashionable in Syria – and a tightly wound *hijab*. Abdulrahman, her husband, wore distressed blue jeans and a leather jacket, his hair slicked-back. As Abdulrahman moved the family's luggage into the car of the caseworker, the couple's five-year-old son, Ahmed, pointed at the horse and jockey mural that advertised a three-story cylindrical, off-track betting venue that functions as the IOM's drop off point for refugees arriving to the city.

This family was not supposed to be in Connecticut. In fact, they had only heard the name "Connecticut" when they arrived in JFK that morning. The IOM caseworker in Jordan — where they had lived for three years after escaping from Homs, Syria — told them that Indiana would be their resettlement state. I served as an interpreter for their

[9] The UNHCR registers refugees and conducts preliminary interviews. The IOM does the bulk of the interviews—except for one done by Homeland Security. The IOM also does the "cultural orientation" for Syrian refugees and arranges refugee travel to America.

arrival, and it was only in the backseat of my car that they learned that they were rerouted. I told them that Mike Pence, then governor of Indiana had rejected their resettlement to his state.[10] Governor Dannell Malloy, meanwhile, had welcomed their resettlement to Connecticut, and attended their arrival without press.

Faten and Abdulrahman, in their packing and travel, had not paid attention to the news coming from Paris. On Friday, November 13, 2015, nine men opened fire at the *Bataclan* Concert Hall and detonated suicide bombs outside *Stade de Paris*. In total, the attack left 137 people dead (130 victims and 7 of the perpetrators). In the aftermath of the attack, an investigator found a Syrian passport next to the stadium. This led to media speculation that a Syrian may have been involved. As a result, Pence made the following statement:

In the wake of the horrific attacks in Paris, effective immediately, I am directing all state agencies to suspend the resettlement of additional Syrian refugees in the state of Indiana pending assurances from the federal government that proper security measures have been achieved…as governor, my first responsibility is to ensure the safety and security of all Hoosiers (State of Indiana 2015).

Pence's position did not change however, when investigators found that the Syrian passport was unrelated to the attack, and that most of the attackers were citizens and permanent residences of the European Union. None had any Syrian origin (Parlapiano et al. 2015). He maintained this position even as American government officials and resettlement agencies issued statements about the extensive vetting that

[10] Mike Pence was not alone. In fact, thirty other governors also said that they wouldn't accept Syrian refugees in their states.

refugees undergo before they arrive in the United States (Whitaker 2016). Unlike asylum seekers who arrive to Europe and apply for refugee status once they are there, the refugees who are resettled to the United States are invited by the American government after a strict procedure.

Indeed, Faten and Abdulrahman, through the policy described in Chapter 2, were vetted for 18 months prior to their arrival. The family was interviewed five times by the UNHCR, IOM and Homeland Security. Each time they were asked to recount the harrowing details of war and their escape. Any discrepancies in their responses across visits, or as compared to one another, would have disqualified them from travel. Over those 18 months, United States National Security Agencies – including the National Counterterrorism Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Department of Homeland Security, the Department of Defense, and the Department of State, as well as the intelligence community – were all conducting security screenings. These included biometric reviews, a fingerprint check, eyeball scan, and DNA analysis that are checked against databases maintained by these security agencies. Due to this process, according to the State Department, "refugees are screened more carefully than any other type of traveler to the US" (U.S. Department of State).

Governor Pence remained steadfast in his position despite all this information. What ultimately stopped Pence's injunction was a federal judge, who found that position to be illegal, and based on "nightmare speculation." In his decision, Judge Richard Posner, wrote that it was:

> "the equivalent of his saying … that he wants to forbid Black people to settle in Indiana not because they're Black but because he's afraid of them, and since race

is therefore not his motive he isn't discriminating. But that, of course, would be racial discrimination, just as his targeting Syrian refugees is discrimination on the basis of nationality (Posner 2016)."

Nevertheless, throughout the campaign, both Pence and the man who became his top-of-the-ticket running mate, Donald Trump, maintained a strong anti-Syrian, anti-Muslim position, claiming we "don't know who these people are," and saying that they only want people who will "love this country" to gain entry (Tribune 2017). Central to their campaign platform was an immigration stance that linked Muslims, and Syrian refugees specifically, to what they called "Radical Islamic Terrorism." Trump likened the Syrians' children to Omar Mateen, the Orlando Night Club Shooter, and to the Boston Bombers. He told his supporters that the children of these Syrian refugees were threats to American children (Beckwith 2016).

While Trump and Pence were crisscrossing the country, holding rallies attended by thousands who shared this fear of Muslims, Faten, Abdulrahman and Ahmed were adjusting to life in a new country. Faten enrolled in Community College, in their English as a Second Language sequence. Abdulrahman worked as a dishwasher at a local pub, and proudly updated his Facebook cover photo to an image of the American flag.

The Election

On November 8, 2016 Rajaa and her husband, Majid, allowed their 8-year-old daughter, Yasmine, to stay up to watch their first presidential election in the United States. The election occurred thirteen months after the family's arrival to America.

While those first thirteen months in America were trying for the family, like Faten and Abdulrahman, the family was beginning to feel resettled. Majid, who owned his own restaurant in Syria, now worked in food preparation for a pizzeria downtown, making slightly above minimum wage. Since the proprietor was an Egyptian, who hired other Arabic-speakers, Majid could communicate with others on the job. Rajaa and Majid's son and daughter, Hesham, 17, and Maisa, 14, like Ahmed, also got a scholarship. They attend a prestigious boarding school in Vermont where they have learned to speak fluent English, to ski and to Instagram. A month prior to the inauguration, Rajaa and Majid had finally moved out of their rat-infested apartment, to a single-family home in the suburbs. Rajaa had slowly begun to switch-out the donated second-hand furniture that the resettlement agency had used to set-up their home with new furniture that she bought on installments. She purchased a set of couches, leather upholstered with carved wooden frames, and committed, along with Majid, to buy an additional piece each month.

On election day, around 11:30pm, after Ohio and Florida had both been called for Trump, Hesham posted on Facebook in Arabic from Vermont, "guys, whoever sees a free tent in *Zaatari*, for god's sake, hook a brother up." Zaatari is the largest, most notorious refugee camp in Jordan that his family had avoided, due to Majid's charisma and ability to secure a Jordanian sponsor. I responded in Arabic, "Wait, the results aren't in, she could still win." Rajaa responded to me, "Heba, I packed the bags already, just figure out for me if he's going to pay for the plane tickets." Both son and mother deflected their fears with humor, as did their friends from Jordan who said, "yea, I'll be on the lookout," and their Syrian friends in the United States who said, "find me one beside you."

At the end of the night, when the results were clear, Rajaa put Yasmine to bed. As she was getting tucked in, the girl asked her mother, "what will happen to the couches if we have to leave?" Rajaa hesitated before responding, "I'll get them shipped for you wherever we go. I promise." Yasmine, like many other children who survived the civil war, could not sleep through the night, and still wet the bed (both symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder).

The morning after the inauguration, Rajaa got dressed to go to English class as she always did. She hesitated to leave her house, however, and called her children in Vermont to make sure they were okay. On the day after the *Bataclan* attack, Rajaa made her daughter, Maisa, go to school wearing a hat instead of her *hijab*, for fear that she would be targeted for what had happened in Paris. Now, after Trump's victory, she was again worried about her children. What did it mean that the president of the country was the one leading an Islamophobic call?

On the phone, Hesham and Maisa were terrified, on the verge of tears. Given their stronger command of the English language, and the conversation that surrounded them at their liberal boarding school, they recognized the full magnitude of what this event could mean for their family. For her part, Rajaa was incredulous. "I thought I was done with worrying about going out," referring to a fear she felt in Syria and in Jordan. "What kind of democracy is this?" She wondered about the hate that people harbored against her family. Could it be that people she knows voted for him? How is it that he won when "nobody" voted for him? What reason did people have to harbor such hate against her family?

Ten days later, Rajaa, who had stopped going to English class, finally began to go again. I drove down Ella T. Grasso Boulevard where she was sitting on a metal guard rail, dressed in her *hijab* and navy *manteaux*, fully visible from the four-lane thoroughfare. In the car, she confided in me that she and Majid had been talking about what life would be like if they moved back to Jordan. Jordan no longer accepted Syrian refugees. But, she speculated, maybe if they got their Green Cards, it could be an option for them if things got bad – if they were deported, or if they became so badly treated that they could no longer stay. She found herself questioning: If they went back, what would happen to her family? What about the house they were renting? What about her children's education? Where would they be able to learn? America was supposed to be their forever home, now all that was brought into question.

Hate and the *Hijab*

Three days after the election, and almost a year to the day of Faten and Abdulrahman's arrival, on November 12, 2016, Zafir, a Syrian refugee, and his family were stopped at a red light on Chapel Street when another car cut them off. The driver was screaming. Because Zafir had little command of the English language, however, he could only make out "fuck" and "home." Zafir's wife, Ghada, sat in the passenger seat of the white Kia Sedona, wearing her hijab. The couple's four children rode in the back.

Zafir clenched the steering wheel with his left hand, and held down the horn with his right one. He was prepared for a fight even though, as a non-citizen, he could be threatened with deportation if the fight resulted in a felony charge. The man, however,

finally gave up his tirade and drove off. In his fourteen months in America, Zafir had never experienced anything like this. “Just since Trump,” he said. In his own words;

We escaped from our countries, from war, and we came here to find comfort and security and a future for our children. We are Muslim. My wife wears a *hijab*, and my daughter too… And Trump is a divisive person. I am afraid of what this divisiveness will mean for our family’s future.

A few weeks later a handwritten letter from “Americans for a Better Way” was left in the mailbox of the local Islamic Center. Addressed to the “Children of Satan” the letter claimed that it was a great time for patriotic Americans and wished President Donald Trump a “long life.” It said;

> There’s a new sheriff in town, President Donald Trump. He’s going to cleanse America and make it shine again. And, he’s going to start with you Muslims. And, he’s going to do to you Muslims what Hitler did to the Jews.

These incidents are part of a national surge in hate crimes against Muslims. While the overall rate of hate crimes increased by 7% in the United States, hate crimes against Muslims increased 67% in 2015. These numbers approach the highs that were seen in the immediate aftermath of 9/11. Moreover, the number of hate groups that specifically target Muslims tripled in 2016, according to the Southern Poverty Law Center. In the first 10 days after Trump's election, the same week that Zafir’s family was targeted, the SPLC documented 867 incidents, including more than 300 that targeted at immigrants or Muslims. Some speculate that these numbers represent only a fraction of actual crimes committed. Indeed, many confrontations, like what happened to Zafir and his family, go unreported (England 2017; Okeowo 2017).

While all Muslims have seen an increase in crimes committed against them, women are the most vulnerable, because they conspicuously carry their Muslim identity in the form of the hijab. As a result, the women included in this study are concerned for their interpersonal safety. Narjis, a young Syrian refugee, prays under her breath each time she had to go to the C-Town Supermarket, right across the street from her apartment, for fear that someone will attack her while she is buying her groceries. This concern to be in public, this diminished sense of security, had real, damaging consequences for the women included in this study. For instance, Faten, who attended Gateway community college, used to go to class alone; sometimes walking the mile and a half to the city center, other times taking the bus. With the rise in targeted attacks, however, she no longer felt comfortable doing so. Instead, she would either ask her husband for a ride, or she would drive herself to class on her learner's permit;[11] an infraction that could cost her 4 points on her license, and a $300 fine if she was caught. While Faten could drive, and therefore continued going to her classes, other women's attendance dropped as a result of Trump's election. For instance, Ghada, who had just begun to take the bus to her English class, and to her daughter's daycare, stopped going, impacting both her and her daughter's learning.

While these reactions were an immediate result of a spike in hate crimes, that has since subsided, and while most of the women, including Ghada, have gone back to class, the women remain on high alert when in public. The school in Vermont, for instance, did not allow Maisa, Rajaa's daughter, to take an Amtrak or Greyhound for fear that someone

[11] People with a learner's permit cannot drive with that alone unless they have a licensed driver in the car with them.

would attack her. This kind of constant vigilance, and heightened sense of physical insecurity have led the families to question whether they will be able to life in America on the long term. While Zafir, for instance, felt that his family did not really have anywhere to go, he was concerned that his wife and his daughter would be so mistreated that they would *want* to leave.

Questions and Fears

On the second Friday after the election, November 18, 2017, several women gathered for breakfast at the home of Fadila. Fadila, 54, arrived in Connecticut along with her 18-year-old son and her husband in December of 2015. Quick to laug and known for her kindness—sometimes to a fault—she is referred to by the other women as *Khala*, a term of endearment that literally means "maternal aunt" appropriate for a woman who is the age of one's mother. The get-together was attended by Afaf, Faten, and Fadila's daughter Hala, who arrived in Connecticut along with her husband and three children 6 months after her mother.

After pleasantries and kisses, the conversation quickly turned to Trump. "Can he really kick us out?" Fadila asked the group of women. Faten, the most educated of the group[12], responded that it was unlikely. Afaf, also a *khala*, who spoke in the thick Hourani accent of her native Daraa, was concerned about her Green Card application. She had talked to Barbara, the lawyer at the resettlement agency, who told her that she would only be able to apply for her Green Card a full year after her resettlement. This would take her family to January 13, 2016, too close for comfort to Trump's

[12] Faten is one of three women in this sample to have completed high school.

inauguration. Could he change the rules about residency or citizenship acquisition in his first weeks? Would that mean that they would not get their green card? Where would they go?

These questions were particularly important to Afaf, who is also 54, because she wanted to be able to bring her sons and daughters and their families to America. She needed to continue her pathway to citizenship in order to accomplish this goal. A mother of twelve, she was only able to bring four children with her (aged 10 to 17), which left eight of her sons and daughters and their families in the diaspora, between Jordan and Lebanon.

She pleaded with the UNHCR to allow these sons and daughters to be joined to her resettlement file. For the UNHCR, however, a family unit does not include children who are married or over the age of 21. To Afaf, by contrast, her family was all of her children, irrespective of age or marital status. In Syria, she had always lived with her children in the same building, or on the same block, as was typical for Syrian households (Rabo 2008).

Once in Connecticut, Afaf had contacted the lawyer at the resettlement agency to try to petition for her family's reunification. She even tried Senator Chris Murphy's office. Despite her efforts, Afaf always received the same response. Reunification would only be possible when she became a citizen. Until then, she would have to wait for the rest of her family to be resettled the way that she was – by waiting for the UNHCR invitation. This prospect was unlikely. So, when Afaf's daughter Naeema finally got a call from the UNHCR to go begin the vetting process, it seemed to her to be a miracle. With the election of Donald Trump, however, Afaf was now fearful of what her

daughter's pathway would look like. The resettlement agency held an information session after the inauguration, in which Afaf asked whether her daughter's application would be okay. The head of the resettlement agency, responded that he could not anticipate the actions of Donald Trump.

As Donald Trump ascended to the presidency, and given the promises he made during his campaign, the families were concerned about what would come of them, and whether they would be afforded the rights that they had been promised when they moved. Since a war had torn the families of these Syrian refugees apart, a key wish in resettlement was to reunify family in the diaspora. Threatening Syrian refugees' arrival limited this potential for reunification, which is an exclusive right of American citizens[13].

Epilepsy or Donald Trump

Indeed, the stress caused by Trump's election was too much for some to manage. For those refugees, who have experienced a bloody war, whose families still live in limbo, and who are figuring out a new life in a new place, Donald Trump is an additional, meaningful stressor. Breakdowns stimulated by these stressors have not been uncommon among refugees, as reported by the resettlement agency caseworkers. However, there was one Syrian man who had his first mental health issue *ever* since Trump's election. Atef and Sara's family arrived to the United States the latest in this study, in August 2016, as the Obama administration was rushing to admit the last of the 10,000 Syrian refugees for the 2015 to 2016 fiscal year. Atef arrived brimming with excitement. He began attending English class immediately after arrival, and supplemented those classes with the mobile

[13] Except in the event that the person left behind is a spouse or a child under 21.

app DuoLingo. He was reunited with his long-time friend, Zafir. Sara was pregnant and had their baby girl two months after their arrival.

On December 21, 2016, I got a call from a resettlement agency social worker that Atef had passed out in English class that morning. She needed me to call Zafir and Sara, as an interpreter, to figure out if this had happened to him before. The English teacher, Danny Stone, had been teaching the students holiday terms, so that they could communicate with their neighbors. The next day, Afaf, who was also in English class, described to me what had happened. She said that Atef had mumbled that he was tired before he slowly collapsed. She caught his head with her lap. Atef, by all accounts, had been perfectly fine until that morning. Zafir had called him the night before, and the resettlement staff saw Atef outside smoking a cigarette before class. Atef, according to both Sara and Zafir, had no previous medical issues.

Over the course of the day, Atef underwent a battery of tests—blood, catscan, MRI. While in the hospital, Atef became more and more upset. "What are they saying?" He asked, "Is something wrong with me?" Over the course of the day, he slipped in and out of consciousness. As the tests continued to come back negative, the doctors were left with two explanations: his physical ailments were either psychosomatic or due to epilepsy.

When I interpreted to Zafir that the doctors were speculating that it was a mental health issue, I thought he was going to reject this explanation. Instead, after a brief silence, he responded that Atef had been very stressed ever since the Trump victory. Atef had not yet found work in the United States, and was fretting over his family's future here. He was concerned over his wife's safety, whether they would be able to truly settle

in Connecticut given the political climate. Atef had also been worried about paying his rent. He had just had a conversation with Kate about approaching the end of his resettlement agency rental assistance, which lasts a maximum of six months. While I would later watch Zafir reject the mental health explanation in the hospital in front of doctors, and with the caseworkers at the resettlement agency, his immediate reaction to that explanation was different.

The following morning, On December 22nd, at the local hospital, Atef was visited by a neurologist. He asked Atef a series of questions (i.e., What is your name? Where are we? What year is it? What month is it?). At one point the doctor asked what he had in his hand. Atef responded that he saw two pens, although the doctor was only holding one. He asked Atef who the president is, and Atef said it was Obama. At this point, Sara turned to me to whisper, "This is all because of Trump. This is all because he's afraid of what he'll do." Sara told me that Zafir had said to her the night before that Atef was the type of person who could be distraught but hold things in. In this context, Atef was a Syrian refugee, with a new baby, in a new country, with no money, and no job, under a Trump administration.

The following day, epilepsy was ruled out and Atef was discharged from the hospital. He was not diagnosed, but he was given sleeping pills, and referred for psychiatric treatment. In the subsequent weeks, he was hallucinating, and unable to sleep through the night in his home. Sometimes, he told me, he would stay up thinking about how he could possibly make ends meet. Other times, he would wonder if America was the right place for his family. But mostly, he would think about his mother being cold, due to a lack of heating oil and electricity, in Homs, Syria.

Atef was not the only person hospitalized for mental health issues that have been associated to Donald Trump's presidency. While it is difficult to give an exact number, I have heard from caseworkers that there have been at least three other incidents of refugees reporting hospitalization due to distress over Trump's presidency. These include an Iraqi mother of four, who arrived in America after her husband was shot in retaliation for her son's service to the American military. While mental health issues cannot be determined to be "caused" by a particular factor, it also cannot be discounted that in the minds of friends and family, Atef's condition could be explained as a reaction to the election of Donald Trump.

The First Executive Order

On Friday January 20, 2017, Donald Trump was inaugurated president of the United States. One week into his presidency, he sought to fulfill one his campaign promises. In a move that he said would end "Radical Islamic Terrorism," Trump signed an executive order which suspended the immigration of individuals from seven Muslim majority countries (Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen) for a period of 90 days. The order also suspended the whole refugee program for 120 days, and the Syrian refugee program indefinitely. It stated that the national refugee program would be reduced by half from 110,000 refugees to 50,000.

Caught in the wake of the order were Mona,[14] a 51-year old Syrian refugee, her 16-year-old daughter, and her 75-year old mother. An "anti-illiteracy" teacher—who

[14] Mona is not one of the original 16 families. I met her after her arrival with a journalist from NPR, Kaari Pitkin. Mona is her actual name.

taught adults to read and write Arabic—Mona left Syria, along with two of her daughters and her mother in 2013, after being beaten and incarcerated at the hands of Syrian authorities. She fled without her husband, who she later divorced. Mona describes her time in Jordan as a constant struggle for daily bread. Single and middle-aged, she was frequently passed over for work. She fretted about how she would be able to pay rent. When she received the call from the UNHCR, she could not believe her luck. She accepted resettlement immediately. America was the dream.

As Mona finished her medical requirements for resettlement, however, Trump was elected president. She prayed that, as President, he would not follow through with his Islamophobic campaign promises. She prayed that god would grant him peace, and that he would not follow-through with threats to condemn her family to life without a future in Jordan.

On January 27, 2017, she got a call from the IOM that everyone's travel was being halted. Mona, through tears, emptied her family's luggage. What calmed her, however, was the Americans who filled the airports in protest. The American people, she thought, would be stronger than their leaders. She watched in anticipation as the case was taken to court. She swore that, if she ever made it to America, she would send the judge in Seattle a rose for his efforts.

On February 5, 2016, at 5pm, two days after Judge James Robart blocked key parts of the travel ban, she received a call from the IOM. She would be travelling that night. Unable to think straight, she threw her family's clothes into their luggage, and said tearful goodbyes to her daughter and her son in law who she would be leaving behind in Jordan. By 11:30 pm she was at the airport.

At the airport, Mona finished the last of her pre-departure arrangements. She completed paperwork, passed the final medical clearance, and took the pre-departure pills. Though these arrangements were supposed to take place a day before travel, the IOM was not risking another change in policy. They would be done on the spot. After a lay-over in Turkey, her family arrived in the United States. They were greeted by signs of welcome at JFK airport. She was overcome with emotion. Despite Trump's Islamophobic targeting, Mona felt that she was home.

The only thing that tinged Mona's happiness was the fact that she left her daughter behind. Over 21 and married, her daughter could not be joined to her resettlement file. Mona hoped that one day she would be able to reunify with her daughter in the United States. With this hope, she joined countless other parents, siblings, and children who were hoping to reunify with loved ones, including Afaf.

The week before Trump's executive order was issued, Afaf got news that her daughter's meeting with Homeland Security—the last step in a long process—was only a few months away. Having seen a leaked draft of the executive order, I listened silently to her optimism that she would be reunited with her daughter by the end of the year. Afaf hoped that her other kids would follow, particularly 20-year-old Batoul who lived in a refugee camp with a cruel mother-in-law who chastised her daily for not being pregnant, or 30-year-old Ahmed who had severe diabetes.

When Trump issued his executive order, Afaf was so hysterical, she could not get out of bed. Her son, 17-year-old Radi, brought her coffee and breakfast. Later that day, I picked her up to take her to a gathering with Rajaa, Sara and Narjis, that was convened to lament the events of the day. The conversation moved, as it always did, between the

serious and the hysterical. The women sipped on black tea and ate nuts as thoughts of moving to Canada, gave way to school-girl giggling over Trudeau's dreamy eyes and hard physique. Rajaa made the joke "oh, if you see him cry over us" referring to his tears upon meeting a Syrian refugee. Narjis chimed in "write him to come save us." To which Afaf replied "you can't even compare him to this one here. An orange with yarn taped on its head."

The women also spoke about what options they had. Rajaa wanted to return to Jordan. At least she would be near her family, and while there was discrimination, there was not this level of hatred. Sara did not want to go back to Jordan. She was the last of the women to arrive to the United States, and still felt the sting of being treated as an outsider and second-class human in what was an Arab and Muslim country. "Send me back to Syria, if it's all bad at least I'll be in my country" she said. The women discussed whether Trump would actually put up the safe zones he promised. They liked the idea but wondered about the execution given the mess of Russia, Hezbolla, ISIS, and the regime that Syria had become. "They'll put us all there and bomb us all at once" Narjis concluded.

While the women took heart in the stoppage of the executive order in the Seattle court, they remained worried about their future in America, as Trump promised to issue another travel ban. Besides, where would all of this hate go? Afaf wondered aloud whether her daughter *should* resettle to the United States even if she *was* allowed to come. She asked incredulously, "we escaped injustice, just to come find it here?"

The Executive Order and the Resettlement Agency

Although Judge Robart blocked key parts of the executive order, the reduction of the American refugee program from 110,000 refugees to 50,000 was not blocked, because the number of refugees admitted to the United States is under the direct purview of the executive branch. This reduction had a significant impact on the ability of the resettlement agency to do its job. For *each refugee* that arrives in the United States, the resettlement agency receives $975 to be spent specifically on that refugee. More importantly, however, the resettlement agency also receives from the federal government $200 in "pool money" to be spent on any refugee, and $925 that is to be use toward overhead (e.g., employee salaries, office rent and utilities etc. etc.). Cutting the number of refugees that the American government resettles means that this latter part of federal assistance (e.g., pool money, and overhead money) to the resettlement agency would also be halved. The agency would not pay half their rent or lose half of their staff, however. Moreover, the resettlement agency continues to be responsible for serving the refugees resettled in the years prior. This cut in funding amounts to approximately a third of the resettlement agency' budget, according to their executive director. This is a relatively small cut in comparison to other resettlement organizations, because the resettlement agency benefits from substantial private funding (i.e., donations from individuals). Nevertheless, this cut had meaningful consequences for the refugees in this study.

Even as compared to other refugees fleeing from war, Najlaa has had a rough life. In Syria, the Assad regime had imprisoned her husband, Nabil, and had tortured him for three weeks. When her family of six arrived in Jordan, they had to pay smugglers, twice, to escape the notorious *Zaatari* refugee camp where their mobility was limited and their lives were confined to a caravan. Then, four weeks after the family's arrival in the United

States, Nabil was at a dinner with a man (a doctor in Syria before the war) who noticed a lump on Nabil's neck. He encouraged Nabil to get it checked out. Nabil was diagnosed with lymphoma. Najlaa felt that the family had been evil-eyed. It was everyone's dream to go to America, and now that they had arrived, her husband had cancer.

Nabil was being treated at the Cancer Center at a local hospital, a leading national institution for cancer treatment. His Medicaid, through the Affordable Care Act, covered his treatment.[15] Due to the advanced stage of his cancer, however, treatment was slow-going, requiring over a year of treatment, including chemotherapy. Nabil had applied for Social Security, but the office rejected his disability claim. He did not have a chronic condition, they said, because cancer is curable.

Because of his condition, Nabil could not work. Neither could Najlaa. She had never worked, had no educational credential, and had four children, two of whom were under five years old. She also took care of her husband who regularly lost consciousness.

Understanding their hardship, the resettlement agency stepped in to help the family pay their rent for their first year of resettlement. This was twice the amount of assistance that most families received from the resettlement agency. However, in February 2017, the organization's executive director called a meeting with Najlaa and Nabil. the resettlement agency could no longer afford to help the family pay its rent due to the reduction in the number of refugees who would arrive to the United States due to the Executive Orders that Trump had issued. A social worker helped Najlaa find childcare for her two youngest children, and required Najlaa to attend English class each morning. They would begin to find her work. Najlaa was shocked. Her husband walked

[15] Syrian refugees, as recipients of Medicaid, are susceptible, like millions of Americans, to threats to this program made by the Trump administration.

out of the meeting, crying. He felt defeated and suggested that he should stop treatment and find a job himself. Najlaa asked how the agency expected her to take care of her family and work; without any kind of human capital—English, education, or money—to do so. The resettlement staff was apologetic, but felt there was nothing more that they could do. Najlaa, with no other options, began to attend English class, and to look for a job.

Marching for Refugees

It is no question that Islamophobia has had a significant impact on the lives and sense of security of Syrian refugee families. However, it would be a mistake to ignore the efforts of others in the United States who have actively sought to combat this Islamophobia, by reaching out to Syrian newcomers.

On February 6, 2017, days after the Donald Trump signed the first executive order, the resettlement agency held its annual "Run for Refugees." The Run for Refugees is a 5K held each year on the morning of Super Bowl Sunday. Braving often frigid temperatures, runners traverse a serene but circuitous route through East Rock Park. As a result of Donald Trump's campaign, victory, and executive order, the 2017 Run had a record-breaking 2,500 participants. Indeed, organizers were forced to turn away over 1,000 would-be participants, due to a lack of space on the run's route. This participation was a boon to the resettlement agency fundraising efforts, after the cut in federal assistance.

After the run, a grassroots group in the city organized a March for Refugees. Senator Richard Blumenthal, Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, and Mayor Tony Harp

marched alongside an estimated 3,000 people, including refugees, from Wilbur Cross High School to the historic center of the New England city. Citizens chanted, "Say it loud, say it clear, refugees are welcome here," as they walked through the city center. They held signs that read, "CT loves refugees," "Not our America," and "Diversity is what democracy looks like." On the mile-long march route, people hung their heads out of their windows, and stood on their balconies, chanting in support of the march below. At the Green there was a rally, where refugees, elected officials and members of the community, spoke defiantly about the executive order, and enthusiastically about their support for the refugee community. Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro told the crowd to raucous applause, "we will not cower in fear. We will stand up and be counted."

As the lead organizer of this march, I asked Rajaa, to speak about her family's experience of resettlement, and how she felt in light of Trump's presidential victory. To a roaring applause, in what would be her first time to address a crowd of any size, she told attendees of how a "dream of peace and security" brought her family to America. She said that she hoped they would live a good life in the United States, "as members of a society that aims to have no discrimination or division." She spoke of the success her family has had up to this point in America, but she also told of the fear she held. She said: "people were settling into their new lives, until president Trump issued his decision against refugees. This returned us to a state of fear and anxiety for the future and a lack of peace and security."

She described her fear of the threats of repeal of the Affordable Care Act, concerns about being able to reunify with family, and her sadness over the other refugees that would not have the opportunities that her family had. She told the crowd, "I am a

Syrian, a Muslim, and I wear the *hijab*. But I am a human first. I hope to live in peace and security again with your help."

Watching from the crowd was Narjis. She sobbed inconsolably as Rajaa spoke and the crowd cheered. Rajaa specifically mentioned Narjis' son, Ali, when she talked about the Affordable Care Act. Ali is afflicted with Spina Bfida, which was caused by a lack of folic acid in Narjis diet, caused by the unavailability of pre-natal care during the Syrian War. Narjis was overwhelmed by the injustice that she felt her family had faced with the threats to their health insurance, personal safety and legal rights. She asked "what did these children do to deserve this?" But, at the same time, she felt moved by the sizeable crowd that had gathered for them in a small town.

The night of the march, and that following week, I saw Facebook posts by refugees from within and outside of the Syrian community that posted photos of the both the run and subsequent march. Many of the photos were accompanied by the captions, "This is what democracy looks like" and "Say it loud, say it clear, refugees are welcome here."

Indeed, besides this action of the March and Run for Refugees, this community had been exposed to other meaningful interpersonal and instrumental support. Hesham and Maisa's received letters of support from their clasmates after the second executive order saying, "Dear Hesham, I just want you to know that the whole school and I have your back and support you." Hesham told me he wasn't worried about their future in America. "I have a *wasta*," he said. Wasta literally means "middle-man," which is an important operative in the authoritarian context of Syria, where rules are arbitrarily enforced. "Oh yea, who?" I asked. "Bernie" he responded. "Bernie Sanders?" I asked. He

didn't know his last name, but he knew that he ran for president. The counselor at the school knows Bernie, Hesham assured me. "Bernie is from Vermont," and the counselor said that she would not let anything bad happen to Hesham and his sister.

Conclusions

The mainstreaming of Islamophobia in America, that bolstered Donald Trump's ascendancy, and is furthered by his rhetoric, has had meaningful consequences for the Syrian refugees in this study. Islamophobia decreased their "sense of security" — or, their feeling of legal and interpersonal safety — which in turn changed their day-to-day behaviors and perspective on the future. Legally, the executive orders, that were found in courts across America to be based in Islamophobic sentiment, challenged the rights of refugees to enter the country and their prospects of being reunited with family. Moreover, legal *threats*, such as a threat of a Muslim Ban and promises to return Syrian refugees to their country during the campaign, led to a sense of unsettlement among these men and women who had just fled from war. Coupled with interpersonal fear due to a spike in hate crimes associated with the rhetoric of the Trump campaign, these resulted in Syrian refugees reconsidering whether America would be the place that they would indeed be able to settle down. The opposition of American civilians to Islamophobia shown in civil disobedience, as well as of through the courts, has been a significant counterweight for the lives of Syrian refugees. However, as Faten put it, "one bad voice speaks louder than a hundred good ones."

-5-

New Minorities

In the heart of Homs' Al-Khaldiya neighborhood, the families of Basil and Zafir lived two blocks apart. The two families have three and four children, respectively. One child in each family became deaf in early childhood. Both Basil and Zafir were chefs and owners of their own restaurants. Their wives, Ghada and Dania are cousins. As the death toll mounted, taking with it their relatives and friends, both families decided to flee to Jordan early in 2012. Basil's family left a few months ahead of Zafir's. They left behind them the sights, smells, and sounds of their block. They also left behind a war that would turn it all to rubble.

For three arduous years, these once middle-class families were undocumented. The Jordanian Labor Police arrested Zafir for working without a permit and a month before his resettlement to America. Zafir's release from jail was on the condition that his family live in a tent in the notorious *Azraq* refugee camp. Basil's family had slightly better accommodations, paying to squat on the floor of a former office building where his wife's family still lived in 2018.

In 2015, both families were invited to resettle, but by different countries. Basil and his family moved to Canada. Zafir and his family moved to the United States. They were resettled only a few months apart, in June and August 2015 respectively. And, although their homes would be just 475 miles apart, the border drawn between them meant that these families' once parallel lives would bifurcate. In the United States, Zafir found himself delivering pizza for below minimum wage and without a driver's license.

In Canada, by contrast, Basil worked part-time as a chef (where he got paid $15 an hour), while he attended English classes.

This chapter explores *why* the experiences of Zafir and Basil diverged so widely in their early resettlement. I compare their experiences to those Syrians who sought asylum in Germany, as well as those who— through a series of conventional and unconventional channels— found themselves in Italy. Through this four-country comparison, I capture the ways that the United States system sets-up refugees to become newly disadvantaged minorities. It does so through the same social service system that has prevented other minority groups, and particularly African Americans, from being able to work their way out of poverty. The systems in Canada and Germany offer different prospects, though with caveats. And finally, the Italian case, which is an outlier, reveals what these other cases have in common and what enabled resettlement despite variations in assistance: a strong labor-market.

To be sure, a fuller comparative analysis would provide a more extensive and detailed account of each country's immigrant and welfare policy history. However, my goal in this chapter is to focus on a specific and limited comparison in order to track how different policy regimes lead to variable outcomes affecting refugees' experience.

Systems of Incorporation

As I have argued throughout this dissertation, the United States resettlement system makes limited investments in newcomer refugees through its adherence to the goal of "self-sufficiency." This goal draws on a history of the erosion of social services in the United States (as I described in Chapter Two). The welfare system has long limited

social assistance by treating poverty as an individual failure. Its neoliberal approach to welfare sees poverty as solved by the poor becoming workers. This perspective is built on racist and classist notions that the poor need to be pushed to work (Katz 2013; Ridzi 2009).

The Canadian system, by contrast, draws on notions of social liberalism. In this context, the state not only protects the rights of individuals to participate in a market, but also plays a positive role in investing in the potential of people. Craig and Porter (2006) have described it as a system "to empower individuals to take their place in markets" (p. 110). This system includes substantial social investment in children in order to "help parents to parent" (Mahon 2008). This includes providing childcare services, as well as a child tax credit that helps parents confront the needs of their children. This assistance is available for all Canadian legal residents. And, while Canada does over-sample on skilled immigrants in its immigration system, it offers incorporation services for all newcomers. In addition to the childcare services and language learning services, varying access to financial support from the state is also available to immigrants. In her work on Canadian immigrants, Irene Blomeraad (2006b) showed how these services increased a sense of belonging for immigrants in Canada resulting in more becoming citizens of the country.

A term often used in Canadian resettlement is *integration*. Under this system, refugees are expected to become productive members of the Canadian workforce, but with the support of the Canadian government – and, by extension, the Canadian tax-payer. The goal of this system is to have the immigrant to enter the labor-market, but the government offers much more substantial support to the immigrant to achieve that end.

The German system of resettlement, by contrast to the previous two, embraces the welfare state. Myra Marx Ferree (2012), in her work comparing the United States and Germany, describes the German system as "nonliberal." Here the state plays a much more central role than in either of the previous cases. Ferree describes this as part of the German state's role in "producing the nation." This means that the German state makes substantial investment in social services, as well as a substantial bureaucracy that defines how individuals should participate in German life.

While Germany has a less of a history with permanent immigration than the United States or Canada, the system in place for the Syrian refugees draws on both the generosity and bureaucracy that are characteristic of the German state. Refugees receive substantial state assistance—only a few Euros less than that received by native Germans. They also receive an investment in their language learning and skill building. But, they are also expected to "become a part of the nation," and must become credentialized as other Germans. For this reason, I call this system, *credentialization*.

The Italian system is the outlier to these other three cases. I included it in this study to reveal the importance of contextual resources to newcomers attempting to start over. The Italian system has a limited social safety net. Moreover, the financial assistance that is available is targeted towards Italian pensioners. For this reason, charity groups and non-profits have stepped-in to provide welfare services on behalf of the government. The distribution of refugee assistance as charity leads to a lack of a sense of entitlement in the assistance refugees receive. And, while the previous three cases have strong economies with low unemployment rates, the Italian system has a very high unemployment rate (11%) making it difficult for these newcomers to find good work. The Italian case

clarifies that human capital investments or restrictions (or not) on labor-market entry only matter, insofar as there is a labor market to enter.

So, what did these three systems—self-sufficiency, integration, credentialization and the Italian outlier— look like in the lives of refugees? To begin to answer this question, I return to the cases of Zafir and Basil.

Self-sufficiency in the United States

The first time Zafir ever drove a car was to take his white Kia Sedona off the salesman's lot, a week after hurricane Jonas hit Connecticut with a foot of snow. Zafir had no legal driver's license, and his lesson consisted of a lap around the parking lot watching his friend Amjad's feet. Zafir was 35 years old; a fact you could tell from his playful humor, but not from the deep circles that took shape between his thick mustache and receding hairline.

Zafir had purchased the van two weeks after he was fired from his first stable job in America as a dishwasher at a restaurant. He appreciated the $11.50 an hour pay, and, as a former restauranteur in his native Homs, hung on the employers' promise of promotion to cook if he learned English. There were two obstacles stood between Zafir and this dream, however. First, his work schedule made it difficult for him to attend English class. Second, his hour-and-a-half to work, on public transit (if everything went as planned, which it rarely did) – put a strain on his ability to get to work.

Zafir's commute woes would eventually lead to his firing. On a rainy morning in January of 2016, there was a bus holiday. As a result, he had to walk to the train station. The icy rain had numbed Zafir's fingers and soaked through his thin coat on the mile

walk to the train station. When he finally arrived, he found that the train was delayed. Zafir decided to turn back and go home, rather than go to work soaked and many hours late. When he called in to explain the circumstances, his friend (who was translating for him) said that the employer had scoffed at rain as an excuse to miss work. In hindsight Zafir – who claims that he had only been missed work due to his father-in-law's premature death in Jordan and his deaf daughter's medical appointments in his four months – wishes he had anticipated the employer's harsh reaction and pushed on.

Upon arrival to the United States, Zafir's family, like the other families in this study, received their $925 per family member from the government (and through the resettlement agency) in welcome money, as well as rental assistance from the resettlement agency. As a new member of America's poor, Zafir was also entitled to both welfare assistance and food stamps. As I describe in previous chapters, this made up the bulk of his state-provided assistance. Although he did not make enough as a dishwasher to lose his welfare assistance, his earnings did lower his food stamps from $925 to a few hundred dollars. When Zafir was fired from his job, the DSS not only refused to reinstate his food stamps, but they *also* cut his welfare payments. TANF, as a "work first" initiative, is not available to people who do not actively search for work, let alone for those who do not maintain work when it is given to them.

During this time, when I was over at his house, Zafir opened up his fridge to show its bare shelves. "I have four children, I need the money," he said, "Why are they refusing me this assistance? How is it their [his children's] fault?" I helped Zafir write a letter to the resettlement agency, asking why the DSS would not reinstate his money. In an email, his resettlement caseworker wrote back the following:

> The DSS worker called his employer to ask about that while Zafir was at the DSS office, and the employer's answer led them to believe that he did not make a good faith effort to keep his job, and therefore he should be penalized, according to the law under which DSS operates.

Zafir had to prove, with medical records, that he did not miss work without reason – as his former employer had alleged. Unless he could do so, Zafir would have no assistance from the federal government.

To make matters worse, by that point in his resettlement, he had depleted his rental assistance from the resettlement agency. Moreover, the resettlement agency was not inclined to help Zafir in his situation stating. In the same email, the resettlement caseworker stated that the agency was not sympathetic to Zafir's plight.

> ... we do not believe that medical appointments had anything to do with his being let go. What we heard from the employer was that he was let go because he voluntarily chose not to come to work for reasons like 'it was raining.' We are not inclined to help [Zafir] try to prove something that is not true.

In another email, a head of the resettlement agency also wrote that the employment officer would no longer advocate for Zafir to find work saying, "we have to explain as a united front that [we] cannot offer employment assistance to people who are failing to meet minimum job requirements and hurting the chances of other refugees." From their perspective, they had found him an opportunity and he had squandered it. As a result, Zafir found himself without an income; without money to pay for rent or food. He also

found himself without the support of the resettlement agency, who clearly stated that they would not help him.

He needed immediate work, but jobs were hard to come by for someone in his position. Prior to the dishwashing job, he had only gotten odd jobs, including butchering sheep during *Eid Al-Adha* in New York City. So, when a Turkish mosque-goer (who does not speak Arabic) offered Zafir a job as a pizza delivery man, which paid $9.50 an hour (ten cents below the minimum wage), he was grateful. He had hoped for on-the-books employment, which would make him eligible for the Earned Income Tax Credit, but he did not have the chance to be picky.

This job opportunity was not without its challenges, however. Unfortunately, the state of Connecticut did not offer the exam in Arabic at the time (this later changed). Because he could not speak English, he could not get a driver's license in the United States. To compensate for this, he paid $200 to have a fake international license shipped to him from Syria. He also did not have enough money on hand to pay for the car. As a result, he paid with the help of a Syrian acquaintance (a do-gooder from the mosque), whom he promised to repay from the EITC money that he received from lying on his taxes.

The day after he purchased the car, he drove to his first delivery job. This was his first time ever driving a car. While Zafir would later get his DSS money reinstated the following month—he *had* in fact been in the hospital with his daughter and could prove it through medical records—this experience had resulted in a prolonged stint in poverty, as well as the commission of multiple illegal acts, any of which could endanger his legal status in the United States; were he to be caught.

Integration in Canada

What would Zafir's experience have been like had the state that resettled him, and his family, not pushed him toward this goal of self-sufficiency? An approximation of this answer exists 475 miles away.

Basil's family had a very different experience of resettlement. Each morning, at 9am, Dania and her husband attend their respective English classes. While his was co-ed, she prefered a Syrian women's class, where she felt more comfortable. Her classmates were able to leave their children in a free day care center, while they attended classes. Because of the courses, Dania was able to nod along to a phone call from a physician, and answer his office in English – something that would be impossible for her cousin across the border.

When she and Basil first arrived from Jordan, they lived in a Toronto hotel. Unlike the United States, where a resettlement agency pre-leases an apartment for each family, in Canada, Basil and Dania were given the time to search for their own place. While other Syrian arrivals chose to resettle in cities like Kitchener or Hamilton, or stay in pricey Toronto, she and Basil used their $5,000 start-up check (provided to all governmentally sponsored refugees in Canada) to move to a three beroom apartment in a high rise in Mississauga. Located 20 minutes away from Toronto, they took comfort in being surrounded by other co-ethnics, and the Arab restaurants that lined the main drag of Burnhamthorpe road. Their apartment in a high rise bore no comparison to the rat-

infested apartment in which Zafir and Ghada were first resettled, as well as the subsequent low-cost apartments to which they moved.

The $1800 refugee assistance the couple received each month more than paid for their $1400 rent. And, the Canadian universal Child Tax Benefit, which all permanent residents receive, covered their day-to-day expenses. (All Canadian permanent residents, and even some temporary residents, qualify for child assistance calculated inversely to income, with families earning under $30,000 receiving the full amount.) Moreover, Basil's family also receives supplemental assistance to offset the cost of Dania's gluten allergy, and disability payments for their deaf child.

Because of these financial arrangements, Basil and his wife were able to put away some money in their savings and purchase a car outright. And, while Zafir and his wife were unbanked for some time in the United States, Basil and Dania were able to apply for a credit card provided by the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (CIBC) Syrian Refugees Program, which requires no fees, no job history, and no preexisting credit.

Moreover, in contrast to Ghada, Zafir's wife, who often feels unwelcome in her neighborhood in Connecticut, Dania feels comfortable in Mississauga. Locals—even non-Muslim—sometimes say *Assalamu Alaikum* as they pass her on the street. Her street ends at the Mississauga flea market, a transporting place of Arabic haggling, wafting spices, and lines of eye-shadowed manikins displaying hijabs.

The elevator in the building that Dania and Basim lived flaunted the diversity of its residents. In my visits I was accompanied up by a man in a *salwar kamees* and henna'd beard, a woman in a tightly tied hijab, and a Chinese college student. By contrast, in the racially segregated city in Connecticut to which they were resettled, the

neighbors looked askance when Zafir and his wife moved in, only softening when reassured by the landlord that they were "good people."

In summary, Basil was afforded opportunities not offered to Zafir. While Zafir was unable to find work in his field, Basil had employment opportunities available to him within the Arabic community. The resettlement assistance empowered him to pick the right opportunity and to demand a raise, to $15 an hour once he proved his worth to his employer. Basil drives his van with a legal license, acquired through an Arabic exam, and his wife, who had gotten a learner's permit, paid a female Arabic instructor to train her to drive as well.

Legal Framework for Canadian Resettlement

Basil and his wife arrived in Canada in the summer of 2015. During that summer of 2015, as Donald Trump was campaigning for presidency of the United States, Justin Trudeau was campaigning to become Prime Minister of Canada. The two political hopefuls watched, along with the rest of the world, as a million refugees teemed on Greece's shores. The two campaigns, however, had different reactions to those images.

Justin Trudeau promised the Canadian people that he would admit 25,000 Syrian refugees within months of his election if he were to succeed. He evoked the memory of Alan Kurdi, the toddler who washed up on a Greek beach. He spoke of the boy whose aunt, a Canadian, attempted to petition for him to resettle in Canada, but was short on paperwork. Donald Trump by contrast, promised that he would stop Syrian resettlement entirely, and that he would deport those Syrians who were already in the United States. Justin Trudeau assumed office on November 4, 2015 and though he missed his goal of

25,000 Syrians by that December, by February 2016 he had taken in that number, which was a substantial logistical feat.

Canada has two systems for refugee admission: government sponsorship and private sponsorship. Refugees, resettled by either system, are admitted with full residency rights, which is the equivalent to having a green card in the United States. As of June 2015, refugees can apply for Canadian citizenship four years after their arrival. To do so, they must pass a language test and a knowledge test. In this way, the Canadian pathway to citizenship is like the one in the United States, but a year shorter.

Basil and Dania were admitted vis-a-vis government sponsorship. And, although they arrived prior to Justin Trudeau becoming Prime Minister, their experience and the assistance that they received, were typical of this process. They, like many others, would receive assistance for the first year. After that, on "month 13," the assistance available to them would be Canadian welfare. Although a few hundred dollars less than the refugee assistance, this welfare assistance was still an ample support for these refugee families. The government sponsorship system resettled 15,000 refugees, out of the initial group of admitted under Trudeau.

Because of the policy that allowed admitted refugees to determine their own housing, throughout Canada, during early 2016, there were hotels full of newly arrived refugees. While at the hotel, the newcomers were processed by COSTI, an organization tasked by the Canadian government to process the new arrivals. The COSTI staff, some of whom had arrived in Canada as refugees themselves, asked the newcomers questions about their health, their educational backgrounds, their previous occupation, the city they originated from etc. etc.

In one hotel, a group of 10 families (who met at the hotel) decided collectively to move to Hamilton, Ontario, with the goal of establishing their own community. Similarly, another group decided to relocate collectively to Kitchener, Ontario. Like Basil and Dania, they would receive ample financial assistance from the Canadian government in this locations, that would cover their families' basic needs as they embarked on a new chapter. Moreover, these newly arrived refugees would have their International Organization for Migration (IOM) loans for their travel expenses covered by the Canadian government. Basil and Dania, as well as the refugees in the United States, would have to pay back this amount.

In addition to the 15,000 resettled through the government sponsorship system, an additional 10,000 refugees were admitted vis-a-vis the private sponsorship system — which is the inspiration of the co-sponsorship program in Connecticut described in Chapter Two. One of three kinds of groups can do this private sponsorship: (1) a Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH), which is an organization that has signed an agreement with the government of Canada to support newcomer refugees; (2) a "Group of Five," which consists of five or more Canadian citizens or private residents; (3) a Community Sponsor, which is an organization, association, or corporation. Each, and particularly the last two types, must show that they can financially sponsor refugees for a period of a year. Importantly, these sponsors could not sponsor an individual refugee within a family, but rather had to sponsor the whole family. The minimum amount for a family of four for instance 28,200. Through this money, the group had to provide for the costs of food, rent, utilities, and other day-to-day expenses, as well as clothing, furniture, and household goods. The group also had to locate interpreters who spoke the refugees'

native language, connect the family to medical care, and enroll children in school and adults in language training—which is free for all immigrants in Canada. The government also stipulates that these groups have a responsibility to connect newcomers to people with similar interests, orient refugees to their surrounding area—where to locate banks, transportation services etc. etc.—and help them look for work.

Varied Experiences in Canada

Although all the families in the Canadian case received approximately the same amount of assistance—whether they were sponsored governmentally or privately—there were variations in their entry into the labor-market and ability to rebuild their resources.

For instance, Samih, 30 years old, like Basil, was able to find work within a year of his resettlement. He and his wife arrived in Canada, as government sponsored refugees, in the winter of 2016. An electrician in Syria, he was determined to become an electrician in Canada as well. Though he spoke no English upon his arrival, in his first year, he registered in English classes and went every day – even when others in his friend group were not as interested. By the end of the first year his English was fluent enough to land him a job working in a technology firm, where he was making $15 dollars-an-hour. This was the first step toward achieving his goal of working as an electrician, where he could make $20 dollars-an-hour. Because he found the job by the end of the first year, Samih never used the Canadian welfare system. Samaa, Samih's wife, meanwhile, learned very little English in the same duration. She was pregnant with their third child and had two small toddlers in the house when they first arrived. Although a volunteer came to her home to teach her English, once a week, she felt herself making limited progress.

Unlike either Basil and Dania or Samih and Samaa, Oday and his wife, Mona, were living on "Ontario Works" the Canadian welfare system. While the money that they got from the Canadian government limited their ability to send money back home to their family members, they were able to make ends meet off of this assistance. The investment of the assistance also allowed for them to figure out their employment pathway. While Oday, during our first meeting, proudly showed off the wrought iron doors he had made for wealthy clients in his native Idlib, his attempt to find work as a blacksmith in Canada fell short of his expectations. While he found an employment opportunity, he quit two weeks in. The work was physically taxing, and he felt he no longer had the stamina for it. He also recognized on-the-job that if he did not learn more English at a sufficient level he would not be able to get ahead. Oday, falling back on the Canadian welfare system, reenrolled in English class. Meanwhile, he took advantage of a training to become a forklift operator, and contemplated a career as a long-haul driver.

Similarly, his wife, Maha, who early in their resettlement had been critical of other women who were entering the labor-market, saying they "thought they were Canadian," began, in her second year in Canada to work part-time in the restaurant of an Iraqi acquaintance. When I asked her whether her perspective had changed she confirmed, "life here changed me." She wanted to be able to secure a middle-class life for her children and realized that a dual-income household would be the way forward. Alongside her husband, she attended in English classes, and both had reached the intermediate course.

Both of the cases of private resettlement included in this study were of families who were selected vis-à-vis the same humanitarian system as the government program,

and therefore were comparable to the government sponsored refugees in my study. These families, however, differed markedly from the families that were included in York University's focus group discussions, who had relatives already in Canada that sponsored them, and were on average from a wealthier background. It is unclear what percentage of privately sponsored refugees admitted into Canada fall into which category. However, the similarity in selection of refugees in my study from both groups allows for a comparability of the private and government programs.

The two major differences between the experiences of the privately sponsored refugees in my study and the government sponsored refugees was that the privately sponsored families had substantial day-to-day interaction with English speakers supporting their family. This had the greatest impact on their children who were able to receive tutoring and other services from the private sponsors. Also, it allowed access to resources such as summer camps and mental health support that other refugees did not know about. However, the privately sponsored refugees were also resettled in very expensive Toronto. Unlike the government sponsored refugees they could not pick where they would initially live because sponsors wanted them to be proximate to their homes. This resulted in their inability to continue to pay their rent past their first year of resettlement. While one family was able to stay in their apartment through very tight budgeting, the other family was forced to move out.

For these families, the outcomes were slightly worse than the families who I included in this study who were government sponsored. However, this variation is likely individual rather than programmatic. Like the government sponsored refugees, they could turn to Ontario Works at Month 13, and both of these families did. In one family,

the mother was taking an active role in pursuing her nursing license, as she was formerly a nurse in Syria. Her husband, suffering from chronic depression, had dropped out of English class. In the other family, the father was driving a delivery truck for a local business, making a low wage, after trying and failing to start his own business.

In conclusion, although these newcomers in the government and private systems showed diverse patterns in their resettlement—with some finding great jobs and others lagging behind—they all were supported in their new lives in Canada. All five felt resettled, and for those interested in learning and integrating, the opportunity was available to them. Moreover, in all five cases, all of the children were supported financially through the child tax credit. The Canadian system invests in newcomers, and also allows them to enter the labor-market when they are ready. This system provides a sense of security to the newcomers who are still figuring out an entirely new system and trying to find their footing in it.

Credentialization in Germany

By contrast to the United States' self-sufficiency system, Germany invests heavily in newcomer refugees. By contrast to the Canadian system, however, Germany requires newcomer refugees to acquire credentials equivalent to those had by native Germans to enter the labor-market. For some, this pathway feels arduous and insurmountable — particularly those who had employment experience. For others, this pathway bolsters their employment prospects — particularly those who are new entrants into the labor-market.

Refugees who arrive in Germany have made the difficult journey, over both sea and land, to the European country where they sought asylum. Angela Merkel, with the blessing of the German government, suspended the Dublin III regulation, and offered them safe passage in Germany (as explained in Ch.1).

Iman, along with her husband, Amin, and their three children, arrived in Germany in the summer of 2105. (Iman is Rajaa, in New Haven's cousin.) Amin was a truck driver in Damascus. Although he lacked a formal education, like other respondents in this study, he and his family were financially comfortable in Syria, and he was the sole income earner.

Iman and Amin fled to Turkey in 2013, after Amin was arrested and released from Syrian prison. They lived in a camp in Gaziantep. Due to violence in the camp – which was the result of wartime allegiances – and a lack of economic prospects, the family decided to flee from Turkey the summer of 2015. Boarding an inflatable raft destined for Greece, Amin remembers praying "dear God, save my family. I never went to sleep knowing that someone else was hungry." The family made it safely to Greece, and after 18 days of trekking through Europe – including 3 days of detainment in Hungary, which Iman describes as the worst days of her life including the war— they arrived in Germany $400 in debt. While others they were traveling with moved onwards to Sweden, Iman and Amin stayed in Germany because their money had run out.
Iman, Amin, and their three children were five of half of a million Syrians who would be admitted to Germany in this wave of refugees. In Germany, after a welcoming arrival, they spent two days in a police camp, the family were placed in refugee camp in Leipzig for one month.

In Germany, refugees do not have a choice on where they would be placed. The German government places refugees in areas based on a federal allocation "schedule," which is the same schedule used to administer government financial assistance to German states. For this reason, refugees who want to be reunified with a family member, who is not a spouse or a child, have to evade the German authorities until they are in the German state of that family member; to increase the chances that they will be able to remain there. If they do not succeed, they wait until they have their residency—assigned through a court—after which they are granted full mobility.

During their stay at the camp, Iman and Amin were assigned a date in court. During the proceedings, the refugees are asked about their reasons for fleeing Syria, and whether they had been involved in violence there against others. Following the proceeding, they received a three year, renewable, residency permit. All the Syrian refugees in my study (and most of those who arrived in Germany) received this residency permit. Unlike refugees who were resettled in the United States or in Canada, in Germany this residency permit represented neither a guarantee of permanent residency in Germany nor a direct pathway to German citizenship.

Until they received their residency permit, all of the refugees in this study were supported by German social security. Their daily needs (i.e., food, water, shelter, basic clothing etc.) were provided for in the camp, and they received a small amount of cash assistance. Upon receiving their residency (most Syrian refugees wait between 6 months to a year for their residency document to arrive), however, their file is transferred to the *Jobcenter*, which the German social benefit system for those who do not work (for various reasons). The German *Jobcenter*, like TANF in the United States or Ontario

Works in Canada, is focused on the promotion of refugees' employment. However, unlike their American or Canadian counterparts, its focus on employment is not immediate. Instead, the *Jobcenter* focuses on refugees getting the credentials that will allow them to become employed in Germany.

Like in Canada, the *Jobcenter* assistance offered to refugees ensured a good quality of life. For example, *Jobcenter* helps families cover their rent. When I met Amin and Iman, they lived in a large, three-bedroom apartment on a beautiful street in Dusseldorf, having moved there from Meissen a year after their resettlement, once they received their residency.[16] Moreover, the *Jobcenter* also provides familes with cash assistance. Amin and Iman's family received 1500 Euros a month, from which they were able to manage their day-to-day expenses, as well as pay their cable and phone bills. Importantly, the assistance that the Syrian families received from the *Jobcenter* was only a few euros less than the assistance a German would receive, which representatives from the Ministry of Family Affairs told me was to prevent tension between locals and newcomers. As a result, there was no expression of a fear of being able to afford rent, or purchase food or buy day-to-day necessities. And, most refugees reported also being able to send money home to their family in Syria.

This financial assistance that Syrian refugees received from the German state, however, was contingent on their pathway to certain credentials. The first credential was learning the German language. Unlike in the United States or Canada, the German government mandated that refugees learn the German language, under the threat of

[16] They moved fearful of local neo-nazi activity, as did other families who moved from Dresden. I will discuss this phenomenon further in this section.

reducing cash assistance. The German language system is administered through courses offered through the Integration Center. The first course covers the ABCs for those who are unfamiliar with the Latin alphabet. Then, a refugee goes through the A-level courses: A-1 and A-2 which teach the basics of German vocabulary and grammar. This process takes a year minimum of newcomers who do not have previous experience with the language, but it often takes two as refugees often do not start classes while still living in the camps.

To secure work in Germany, refugees must be proficient at a B-1 level of German, which is the basic "street level" qualification. Upon receiving this designation, some low-skilled work opportunities open for refugees – such as working as a cash register in a local cafe or bussing tables. Nevertheless, the employment opportunities for a refugee at this stage remain limited. To complicate this process of language acquisition, integration classes teach "formal German," and not the colloquial language or regional dialects that might be used in a given workplace. For instance, one Syrian man, who was offered a construction job in Regensburg, could not understand his boss' Bavarian dialect, due to his formal German language training.

Upon achieving a B-1 level of German, however, refugees need to become further credentialized through an *Ausbildung* if they want to secure work that is not low-skilled. The *Ausbildung* is the German apprenticeship system. A person applies for it in their field of choosing, and they are either accepted or rejected. If accepted, the program takes three years, during which the person is minimally paid. After the program, however, the apprentice would most likely receive employment at the place where he/she did their

apprenticeship. Importantly, this credential is required for all skilled and semi-skilled work, like hairdressing, carpentry, or long-haul driving.

Importantly, although the German government offers sufficient assistance through the *Jobcenter,* refugees felt pressure to leave the *Jobcenter* and enter a job or an *Ausbildung,* for three reasons. First, refugees have financial needs that exceed the *Jobcenter's* assistance. For example, many desired to send more money home than the *Jobcenter* assistance would allow. When I asked Amin if the *Jobcenter* assistance is sufficient he responded, "It is but it isn't. If you don't have to send money back home then it is, but if you do—I send 300 Euros a month— then there's not much wiggle room. But I don't feel like I have a choice. I have people who are dying of hunger. Who can't have a glass of tea. Who forgot what apples smell like."

Second, refugees expressed that *Jobcenter* extensively monitored their activities. Refugees describe regular requests to go to the *Jobcenter*; as well as requests to provide documentation for a *minijob* (or, rather, a job that does exceed 450 Euros a month), other sources of income, and proof of attending German classes. For some, this sense of being consistently monitored was a sufficient enough incentivize to enter the labor-market. For instance, one respondent, 20-years-old, decided to work as bicycle delivery person – a job that earned him only 100 Euros more a month than the job center (once the rental subsidy was removed by the center) – in order to avoid the "nagging" of the job center employee.

Third, there was a pervasive feeling among refugees that the three-year residency permit meant that they were *impermanent* residents in the country. Indeed, refugees expressed the sense that their residency in Germany was conditional – on their acquisition of the German language and their entering the labor market – and, should they

not do either, then the German government will have no incentive to renew their refugee status if the war in Syria abated. This feeling was not unfounded. Refugees from the Balkans were sent back to their countries when the war ended in the 90s. The way to avoid this, one man explained, is to show that one is a productive member of German society, and to get on a pathway to citizenship. By law, refugees, who maintain a permanent residence in Germany, can apply for citizenship after 6 years (shortened from 8 years for non-refugees). However, the requirement is that they have at least a B-1 level of German, pass a citizenship test, and prove that they need no assistance from the state, which is done through tax records.

Varied Experiences in Germany

The credentialization process, and the pressures to enter the labor-market, was experienced differently by Syrian men and women in Germany. For Amin, this pathway to employment felt arduous. So, too, did learning the German language. He attempted to stay out of German class as much as he could. In his late forties, he felt like he was unable to learn the language or retain what he heard in class. He attempted to work outside of the system, for a man importing car parts who was an Egyptian co-linguist. He reported that work to the *Jobcenter* as a *minijob*. He was working long hours, and off-the-books – which was illegal in Germany. However, due to the decline in the Egyptian pound—a ramification of the aftermath of that revolution— that business closed, and Amin became newly unemployed.

Men who felt the pressure to support their family and needed to send money home, attempted to avoid the *Ausbildung* process altogether. This desire, however, often

lead to exploitative labor opportunities. For example, in Regensburg, Bavaria, a car manufacturing hub, firms like BMW sought to avoid paying wages that would be required for *Ausbildung*-holders. As a result, they hired refugees through a temporary agency, which took a proportion of their hourly wage (about .50 Euro) in exchange for connecting them to the company. Employees of the Temp Agency had no stability at BMW, and no prospect for growth in the company. They were also paid less than the Germans who worked next to them on the assembly-line.

For men who did not feel this pressure, typically single men in their 20s or 30s, there was little objection to earning an *Ausbildung*. These men looked for jobs that would work for them (i.e., blacksmiths, carpenters, or painters), and were excited about the prospect of building future in Germany for themselves. They contrasted their self-aspirations with those who took temp work with BMW. "I refuse to become a part of a machine," one man said, reflecting on temp work on an assembly line which he felt was a dead-end job. These younger men also found learning the language easier. Two of the respondents had German romantic partners, which facilitated their learning process.

Still, this credentialization process was not always easy. In one case, a 25-year-old Kurdish man, who had been a carpenter in Syria, was admitted to a professional school in Germany due to his high level of skill. Although he has been performing well in the practical instruction, he has not been able to pass his written exams, given his lack of German language proficiency.

For women, the experiences were also varied. Older women with families, like Iman, did not contemplate employment. A household caretaker in Syria, Iman intended to complete her German language education and then stay at home to take care of her

children. Given her and Amin's particularly conservative relationship (more conservative than that of her cousin in the United States), she did not perform any public tasks that she found unfeminine, including buying groceries. Although she was learning German (she went to class each morning), two years into her resettlement, she was still only at the A-2 level.

By contrast, for women who arrived as part of younger couples (i.e., in their 20s and even early 30s), the experience was markedly different. Yara and Marwa, arrived in Regensburg, Bavaria at roughly the same time. Marwa had one child, and Yara was without any children. Though neither had been employed in Syria, or even contemplated employment there, they were both planning to work in Germany. Yara, who had married her husband—a Palestinian refugee in Syria—when she was just 15 years old, said that she would not have continued education or worked in Syria. "I dropped out of school young," she said, "I wasn't a particularly good student, and I got married young. In Syria I would have taken care of my house and our kids." In Germany, however, she said that she wanted to become a dental assistant. Three years after arriving in Germany, she was finishing up her B-1, and in the process of applying for an *Ausbildung*. Similarly, Marwa, who arrived with her husband and one of child and who was pregnant with the second a year into their asylum, knew that she would also enter the labor-market. "Of course, here you need two incomes," she explained, shrugging when I asked her if she and her husband had discussed it, "It was an obvious thing."

In summary, there was a clear variation in experiences by gender and age, which reflects a variation in history of experiences with education and employment in Syria. For people who had a longer history of employment in Syria and dependents—typically

married men above the age of 30—the *Ausbildung* system in Germany was difficult because their previous experience went unrecognized as relevant human capital for the German job market. However, for those who had limited employment or educational investment—including women and younger men—and particularly for those who did not have a family to support financially, the system allowed opportunities for mobility otherwise unavailable.

Experiences of Racism in Germany

For those Syrian refugees who were regularly mobile in Germany, and particularly for those who were clearly dark-skinned, or who wore the *hijab*, racism in was an issue in their day-to-day experiences. For instance, while Iman and Amin originally found an apartment in Meissen, in Eastern Germany, they moved after a refugee home near to theirs was burned down by Neonazis. The family decided to move to Dusseldorf, in West Germany, where they heard that there was more ethnic diversity, and people were supposed to be kinder to immigrants. Similarly, Mayar and Rami moved from Dressden to Regensburg due to repeated experiences of public harassment. In Dressden, Mayar took off her *hijab* for a year due to the harassment she experienced. They moved to Regensburg, sight unseen, after a German friend – who was a volunteer in their arrival camp – told them that his cousin had an apartment for rent.

However, Regensburg was not experienced as a safe-haven for all. Maryam, a mother of two in her mid-30s experienced racism in Regensburg. Although she was elated to finally move into a new apartment (she had been searching for a year), a week after moving in, she began receiving anti-Muslim fliers in her mailbox. A woman living

alone—her family remained in Saudi Arabia, while she was trying to reunify with them—she was terrified that a neighbor felt compelled to leave her these notes. The anonymous person photocopied articles or clipped newspapers writing anti-Muslim messages in German in the margins. She went to the police, but they told her that they would have no way of identifying the perpetrator. Out of fear for her safety, she locks her windows when she goes to sleep at night, even when it's hot outside. Refugees have also been the victims of physical violence in Regensburg. For example, Hala, a 20-years-old *hijabi* woman from Damascus, was physically pushed her and her sister-in-law into the street by a German man, who was yelling something about Muslims as he did so.

Finally, there was discrimination against *hijabi* women in job searches. For instance, one 22-year-old woman was told by a government employee at the *Jobcenter* that she could not work in a daycare while wearing her *hijab* on because, "it would send a wrong message to the children." Another woman had a job offer rescinded at a pharmacy because she showed up to the interview with her *hijab*. The proprietor asked if she would take it off while at work, and she said no. She thanked her, and the interview ended. These experiences of racism created a reduced sense of security and belonging among the newcomer refugees in Germany more similar to that in the United States than Canada.

The Italian Case

Finally, the Italian case shares similarities with the other cases, but in its distinctness reveals the importance of the nature of the labor market itself, which a key variable identified in the immigration literature for determining immigrant outcomes (Portes and Rumbaut 2014).

Like the Canadian system, the Italian system has both "private" and "government" resettlement systems. Like the American system, the Italian government's resettlement system operates through NGOs who resettle refugees on behalf of the government, with some governmental oversight. And like the German system, the Italian resettlement system was launched in response to the Syrian crisis. However, unlike these three countries, which each have low unemployment rates, ready to absorb newcomer labor, the Italian economy is struggling with high levels of unemployment – 11% for Italians, overall, but 19% for Italians who are young, or new entrants to the labor-market (OECD 2018).

Italy, due to its geographic location, has many undocumented immigrants enter the country each year, which causes substantial conflict with other countries, whose borders are not surrounded by water. The Italian government expressed frustration that it shoulders the burden of processing of these newcomers, per European law which requires that the port of first entry register refugees (Erlanger 2018). Many of these migrants, however, do not want to stay in Italy, and see it as a first stop on their journey to seeking asylum elsewhere (Brenner and Giannelli 2015). An interview with a UNHCR official in Italy confirmed that at least 100 Syrians offered resettlement in Italy had left the country. In this way, the Italian case highlights the fact that resettlement are not ends to the issue of displacement, but rather are new beginnings. Moreover, it clarifies that having opportunities for advancement of newcomers should shape policies for their admission.

It cannot be understated that Italy offered refugees a safe-haven, which was much needed. The case of Walaa and her family reveals this point. On a morning in June of 2016, at a Viking-themed amusement park in the outskirts of Rome, Walaa watched her

10 year-old daughter, Hania, jump on the bright yellow inflated castle; her ponytail moving back and forth around her flushed, smiling face. As Walaa watched, she commented that the smallest things make children happy.

She contrasted her daughter's smiles to how difficult the last few years had been on her family. Like many others in this study, Walaa and her family arrived to the shores of Europe by boat. Her daughter had only been able to bring one toy with her from Syria, a doll that she had protected with three plastic bags from the treacherous water between Turkey and Greece. The raft that took them from Turkey to Greece, Walaa explained, was made of the same rubber as the inflatable castle that Hania jumped on that morning. Walaa described how she and her husband became $2400 in debt to put their children on the raft and in danger. She does not count those three hours on the raft as a part of the hours she has lived, experiencing them as "closer to death."

Walaa, her husband, and two children represent four of the twelve individuals brought to Italy by Pope Francis, on his well-documented flight from Lesbos to Rome on April 16th 2016. The families that he brought to Italy had arrived in Greece in a later cohort of refugees. While most Syrians had arrived the previous summer, these families moved late. And, by the time they had made the journey, the borders had closed.

The conditions in Greece were difficult. Walaa and her family were living in camps with low-quality food and poor accommodations. They were told that they would need to wait their turn to see if any European country would offer them asylum. But, in April, Pope Francis made a visit to Lesbos to make a statement about the issue of Syrian refugees. He surprised the staff at the camp he vested when he asked for them to suggest three families for him to take back to Italy. Walaa and two other families were called into

the office, where they were asked, if they wanted to go to Italy with the Pope. They needed to respond immediately. With no other prospect, and with the Pope standing in front of them, smiling, Walaa said yes to the question.

While the Pope was the reason for their travel, the Catholic lay Community of Sant'Egidio, a movement of volunteers that advocates for social justice for the past half-century, coordinated their movement. The organization initiated the Humanitarian Corridor, a private refugee resettlement program that brought an additional 1000 refugees to Italy directly from Lebanon, Morocco, and Ethiopia.

Daniella Pompei, who developed Sant'Egidio's Humanitarian Corridor, was inspired by Canadian private resettlement. After organizing the resettlement of 3,000 refugees from Italy to Canada beginning in 2005, she developed the idea of having a private resettlement system in her own country, which would be funded and supported by Italian citizens' contributions. The Syrian crisis propelled her to act on this idea. Through a committee of experts, including a Judge, she argued that Article 25 of 2009 European Union Visa Code did not prevent Italy from bringing refugees directly on Humanitarian Visas. Over the following year, she, along with Waldesian and Evangelical Churches, collaborated with Italian government representatives to get the program approved. Thanks to the Italian tax system, which allows individuals to earmark .008 or .005 of their taxes to go to an organization of their choice, individual tax contributions have financed this project.

While Daniella Pompei was developing the Humanitarian Corridor, the Italian government was launching a national resettlement program, in response to the Syrian refugee crisis. Like the United States or Canada, the UNHCR would suggested refugee

families to the Italian government, who would invite them to resettle. The experiences of refugees resettled by these different systems were quite different, however.
Families who arrived through the national resettlement program, confronted the challenges that came from a newly formed system. For example, one family, who were resettled in Bologna, was initially placed communal housing. When they were eventually moved to their own place, however, they found that the NGO in charge of their resettlement used a front-room as their office. This lack of privacy was upsetting for the family who felt that they had no privacy and were constantly surveilled. The organization, for instance, would dictate who could visit them.

Moreover, Syrian refugees—in the private and government programs-- were resettled far apart from each other by design, in an attempt to thwart "ghettoization," as it was termed by the Italian government – or, rather, the clustering of people in the same location that would result in their insulation from other Italians. The result of this system was a strong sense of social isolation among the refugees resettled. Moreover, this desire to forestall "ghettoization" resulted in the resettlement of a double leg amputee and his family on a mountain city in Umbria region of Italy, which made it difficult for him to get around. However, because of the exclusive interaction with Italians, refugees learned the language quickly.

In terms of financial assistance, these private and government systems were similar in that they treated the money given to the refugee as "charity money." For example, because Community of Sant'Egidio wanted to "prevent dependency" of refugees on the Italian state, they gave much of their assistance on cards that could be

used at the super market to buy food. Moreover, refugees felt as though this assistance was conditional on their continued participation in the Community of Sant'Egidio.

And, because the Italian government's resettlement system is operated through NGOs, each NGO was able to exercise discretion in the amount given to families. For instance, while one family with two young children in Umbria received around 1,200 Euros a month, a family in Bologna with three older children received just shy of 1,000 Euros a month, which was a "good salary in Bologna" in their estimation. A government official at the Interior Ministry stated that they left cash assistance up to the NGOs because of the substantial differences between Italy's various regions. However, it created a sense among the refugees themselves that they were at the mercy of the agency rather than welcomed immigrants entitled to clear support.

And, this feeling of economic precarity was consequential for refugees because of their inability to find employment. For example, Ahmed, a man in his late 40s, was resettled in Bologna. Although he worked as an English teacher in Syria, he could not find comparable work in Italy. In fact, he could not find any work at all. He attempted to work as a docent in a museum but was told there were too many Italians looking for the same job. Two years after their resettlement, none of the men who were resettled in Italy could find regular employment. Walaa's husband helped the super in their building, without pay, to offset the fact that the building—also associated with the Catholic church—provided their apartment as a charity.

Indeed, with the high unemployment rate, particularly for new entrants, the fact that refugees could not find employment is not surprising. While the Italian government explained that they were looking for pathways into work for refugees, such a policy

would create tension with unemployed Italians. As a result, although financial assistance was promised through the first year of resettlement for all refugees, the assistance continued for most into their second year.

The exception to this lack of job access is the case of three women in Rome, including Walaa. Sant'Egidio found them work cleaning the wards of a catholic teaching hospital. The women were paid less than the assistance that they had once received from Sant'Egidio. The work was also only part time: five days a week, half-time. Though the work did not promise upward mobility, Walaa saw it as the family's only way off charity. This lack of prospects led some, including those resettled through the government, to contemplate moving again. As I noted earlier, Italy has had an issue with retaining resettlement and asylum seekers. For example, a young single man, who was resettled by Sant'Egidio, tried to leave Italy, but was stopped at the Swiss boarder and was sent back to Italy by their authorities. Another attempt, this time successful, was made by Abdelhamid, a man in his early 50s, and his family. Frustrated by the lack of prospects for the family's future and being forced to share a communal apartment with other Syrians in a small Italian town, and concerned that his children were not getting a strong education at the local schools, Abdelhamid took the risk and escaped with his family to Germany. They were ultimately successful in their escape, and found residence in a refugee camp outside of Bonn, Germany. Although being resettled in one country invalidates one's asylum claim in another, the German government accepted his claim and allowed him to stay in the country after a 6-month stint in a camp. The drastic move to go to Germany was his plan A, with a plan B of attempting to go back to Lebanon, which he felt had more prospects for his family than Italy.

This case of Italy, which is less systematic as a refugee policy than the other cases described here, is not a direct comparison with either the United States, Canadian, or German cases. However, it reveals important aspects of resettlement that matter for all of the aforementioned cases. First, although the refugees in Italy receive more assistance in economic terms than those in the United States, they are less hopeful for their future having little prospects for work. Second, giving resettlement assistance as "charity" casts it as a non-entitlement. In a sentiment expressed by refugees who are co-sponsored in the United States, this can create discomfort when it is unclear what assistance a refugee can rely on and what might be denied to them. And finally, the Italian case highlights that a strong labor-market is a prerequisite for successful resettlement outcomes. Even if a government invests in refugees, and even if there are no formal barriers to labor market entry, having no jobs means that there will be no economic prospects for these newcomers.

Conclusion

In summary, this chapter compared the experiences of newcomer Syrian refugees in the United States, to their counterparts in Canada, Italy, and Germany, capturing how these different systems of resettlement—which provide different amounts of investment and barriers to labor-market entry—shaped the pathways of both refugees and asylum seekers. It showed how the United States pushed refugees into the lowest rungs of the labor-market by investing little in newcomers, and how the Canadian system provided stronger economic support thereby increasing refugee choices about their labor-market entry and futures. By contrast, it showed how the German case invested in newcomer

refugees but stilted their labor-market entry by insisting on their meeting of clearly defined benchmarks that some—who had invested in careers or educations in Syria—found arduous. Finally, the Italian case, an outlier, showed how important a robust labor-market is to the admission of refugees.

This study clarifies the importance of state investment in newcomers, which allows them to build crucial human capital that will allow them to become productive members of the destination countries' labor-market. It also highlights how restrictions on labor market entry can be detrimental to new arrival's expression of their preexisting skills and capacities. The varied programs in these countries shape the trajectories of newcomers, pushing them to become new poor minorities, or giving them the resources to achieve economic wellbeing. In this way, this chapter clarifies the role that the state plays in producing new minorities out of these refugees, by showing how different policies of support and approaches to incorporation shape refugees' process of recuperation.

Conclusion

On the transatlantic flight between the country of immediate refuge and the United States the refugee is suspended between the two interrelated parts of resettlement policy: the admission procedures that allow them to board the plane, and the incorporation policies that meet them when once they are on the ground.

In this dissertation, I described the ways in which these policies that comprise the resettlement program in the United States shaped refugees' ability to recuperate crucial resources—human capital, social relations and sense of security. I compared their experiences to refugees in Canada, Germany and Italy. Privileging process over outcomes, by focusing on the first 2 to 3 years of resettlement and asylum, this dissertation asked *how* these losses were managed by refugees within the constraints of a country's resettlement policy in the early years of immigration. What kind of trajectories do different systems shape for Syrian refugees?

To do so, I examined refugees' *process of recuperation*—or the way that refugees rebuilt these resources within the constraints of a new policy context. I show that the process of recuperation also occurs within a relational social context - or, within families and emergent communities who manage, together, in their new setting, their loss of these resources, and begin new lives (Bandelj 2012; Tilly 2006; Zelizer 2012).

Through my focus on process and family life, I contributed to immigration literature in two ways. First, I reexamined three key variables discussed in immigration

literature. I showed that human capital is a relational product of the recognition of newcomer potential, and the investment in that potential by the state. This diverges from the treatment of human capital, as an individual attribute that fits (or not) the demands of a given labor-market. I also argued that in addition to the disruption of immigrant's social relations *outside* of the household, there is a disruption of their relationships within the household that they have to manage in their resettlement. This approach combines insight from the social capital literature and literature on gender and immigration. I argue in this dissertation, that this household relational management can have implications for men and women's differential production of human capital as expectations for men and women's labor in the household are reconciled with expectations of labor inherent to social service systems. And finally, I contribute to literature on race and immigration by showing that despite their privileged legal status, immigrant's sense of security can be disrupted by the rhetoric and policies associated with their admission, and particularly their racialization and othering.

Second, and in addition to this treatment of variables, I also contribute to immigration literature by looking at an understudied period—the initial two years of resettlement—in which newcomers receive government services and first experience being minorities. By looking at this period, and the aforementioned variables, I center the crucial role that the state plays in the lives of newcomers, facilitating or blocking the reclamation of these capitals through its admission and social service policies. In this way, the state not only produces refugees by recognizing their status *as* refugees, but it also shapes their trajectory as economic and racial minorities.

Having established these arguments in the preceding chapters, in this concluding one, I reflect on what the experience of refugees in this study says about the broader social service and admission systems in the United States, that impact both other citizens and other immigrants. Refugees are an important group in the United States, given the strong history of resettlement policy. They are also a numerically small group, only tens of thousands are resettled each year. However, in their privileged access to social services and their privileged immigration status they are a strategic site to think about the nature of these legal systems in the United States.

First, I argue through this dissertation that insufficient social services negatively impacted Syrian refugee's process of recuperation, putting at odds humanitarian admission with the assistance that followed it. However, the same system that denies refugees assistance, denies the same to the rest of the American poor. Indeed, this system was built *for* the American poor. The case of Syrian refugees—who were once middle class and productive people in their home economies—clarifies the way in which this system structurally pushes the downward mobility of all recipients, regardless of their background or past experiences with poverty, through its focus on immediate labor-market entry and its lack of investment in skill-building. This case disrupts tropes that continue to linger in poverty policy by showing that it is not just those who have always been poor who respond to the policy in this way (Katz 2013).

Second, in terms of the admission policies in place in the United States, I argued in chapters two and four that the resettlement system's focus on security—through law and rhetoric that surrounds the law—amplified in the era of the Trump campaign and presidency, resulted in refugees' diminished sense of security. However, in this

conclusion, I show how the current focus on security is counterproductive *for* security. I also show how this focus on security, linked to a long history of racism, impacts other groups of immigrants particularly under a Trump presidency.

Finally, I end the conclusion with broader reflections on the findings of this dissertation from the four-country comparison, and my prognosis for how the Syrians in this study will do in the coming years as they traverse their economic disadvantages and racial minority status in these new countries.

Social services and Poverty

On the day of her travel from Turkey to the United States, Narjis remembers an overwhelming feeling of disorientation. With only a vague idea of how time-zones worked—she had never travelled outside of Syria before—she experienced the literal longest day of her life. The months before had seen the end of her family's vetting for resettlement in the United States.

Like the other refugees in this study, the family of four's mobility was enabled by the 1980 Refugee Act, which coordinated the government agencies involved in the United States Resettlement Program. Unlike the other families in this study, thier process was expedited due to her son's illness and the insufficient treatment for it available in Turkey; it only took three months rather than the usual two years. As a result of this program, Adam had a chance at living. It was because of the resettlement policy that Adam was able to wheel his mechanical chair, with a red balloon tied to its back, to put his finger in a case managers' retirement cake at her 20-year anniversary party. The room, including Adam's parents, erupted in laughter at the sight.

But, alongside their happiness at their son's condition was also trepidation caused by the requirements of the same 1980 Act which specified the goal of "self-sufficiency." As a result of the goal of self-sufficiency resettlement agencies received limited funding, meaning they could offer refugees limited support. The Act also states that the only regular assistance offered to refugees is through the United States welfare system.

The assistance for a family of four through this welfare system, as showed elsewhere, is limited. For this family it was only $701. They paid less than others in this study for their rent (the landlord was sympathetic to their plight as refugees) but even this reduced rent was $950. The welfare system pushed for them to enter the labor-market, but they both lacked the skills to do so effectively. Narjis had a third-grade education and had only ever worked on the family farm. Zachareyah was illiterate in Arabic. He had worked briefly as a men's tailor, but most of his life had also been spent on the farm. Zachareyah's first job when they arrived in the United States was at a falafel shop downtown where he was not paid for his first week of work, exploited by the business owner who knew that he needed the job and required him to undergo a week of unpaid "training."

The case of refugees, however, shows what happens when welfare *is* available. This welfare system is also the only assistance available to other low-income people in the United States. Scholars, however, who have examined the experience of the poor have shown that it has become less-and-less available to them, leading some to claim that "welfare is dead" (Edin and Shaefer 2015). They find that this is the result of a culmination of factors such as block grants that have limited funding to states to provide this assistance, but also the requirements of the assistance itself. Narrow definitions of

poverty, life-time limits and requirements to work, make it so that this assistance is not available to everyone.

The case of refugees also shows the way in which the policy completely ignores structural determinants of poverty even when it is available. Inherent to the welfare system is an understanding of the individual poor as culpable for their poverty, a fault that can be reconciled through work—an idea that derives from the idea that the poor have different values than the non-poor (Katz 2013; Ridzi 2009). This focus on individual culpability, however, ignores the structural conditions that produce poverty.

In the case of the refugee family, the reason for poverty is a war that pushed them out of a home they owned, their son's chronic illness, and human capital unsuited for the United States labor-market. These are the conditions on which they were admitted in the United States. With these losses they encountered the United States welfare system, which pushed them towards the labor-market under the mantra of "work first," as it does all other people who receive it. But entering the labor-market without skills like language or other income-earning credentials, would mean entry into low-paid jobs, that do not pay living wages, with little chance at upward mobility. More still, these jobs would preclude the refugees, due to long hours, shift work, and a lack of expendable income, from investing in their own skill-building by attending English class or earning an additional credential.

So, what did the refugees do? They tried to stay out of the labor-market as long as possible. They lied to caseworkers, they tried to patch-together income from work and income from welfare. The reason for this is that *neither* income from low-skilled work nor welfare is on its own sufficient to support families. This pattern is reminiscent of

findings from other studies of how families stay afloat on government assistance—they cobble together resources to make ends meet (Lein and Edin 1997).

And, while the war is unique to refugees, chronic health burdens, having young children, and lacking an education relevant to the labor-market are experiences had by other low-income people, including those who are born and raised in the United States and particularly those who are racial minorities. Systematic racial segregation had led to subpar access to services including education, and well as limited childcare options and healthcare services (even with universal healthcare). All this disproportionately impacts low-income African Americans leading to a structurally diminished ability to build human capital (Massey and Denton 1993; Wilson 1987).

The underfunding of the welfare system has long been a part of the process of disenfranchisement of people of color in the United States. Scholars have shown how debates around the formation of social services, and the reform of those services, have centered on racist tropes. The culture of poverty is embodied in the image of the "welfare queen" an African American woman who gets rich off of welfare, which has always been an impossibility (Katz 2013). The case of these formerly middle-class Syrian refugees, who enter this system from an entirely different background, confirms the adverse incentives of United States welfare, which is a poor solution to poverty. In this way, this social service system which has long upheld the disenfranchisement of old minorities, is disenfranchising new ones.

I chose Narjis and Zachareyah's case for this conclusion, because though they shared the trepidation of others in this study, and their family had the most acute health crisis of any other refugee, they also experienced an unexpected windfall that enabled

them to withstand the impact of the United States welfare system (as I described briefly in Chapter 3). In this sense, they are a counterfactual case to what usually happens in the United States, where refugees are offered the same limited social assistance offered to other poor through the United States' welfare system. Unlike them, Narjis and Zachareyah had additional financial support.

In 2015, a photographer, Brandon Stanton, happened to be in Gaziantep, Turkey. Narjis and Zachareyah are still unsure of how this happened, but his team knocked on their door and asked if he could photograph Narjis and their son whose spina bifida is obvious to the observer due to his enlarged head. Someone who knew of their story had likely sent the photographer, but the couple never found out who that was.
Narjis, not recognizing what the Facebook group Humans of New York was (or its huge popularity on Facebook with millions of followers), and not wanting to embarrass this foreign guest who stood at her door, agreed to be photographed by Brandon. He asked her about her son, and she told him that they escaped Syria because each time he had a fever it was a risk to his life, there was no medical care due to the bombardment.

As a result of Brandon's photograph, a fundraiser was launched. Over $60,000 was raised for their family. The family could not receive this money, as it would exclude them from the benefits that they needed, since these benefits were predicated on a maximum income. If they were to accept it, they would lose free medical care for their son, his social security insurance, and the family's access to TANF and food stamps. However, working with the NGO, the resettlement agency, and Homeland Security, that knew of this money, the family was able to receive an amount of this assistance each month without threatening their benefits. They were also able to deposit additional cash

into a “Stable Account” a bank in Indiana—set up by then-Governor Kasich—that allowed families with children with disabilities to save money without losing their benefits. The existence of this system clarifies that the issue of charity money for disabled children is an issue that touches more than just refugee households.

Due to the monthly assistance the family received, they were able to stave-off Zachareyah’s entry into the labor-market for a year. After the week worked without pay and other such short-lived attempts at joining the labor-market, Zachareyah recognized that if he learned enough English he could find a good job, one that would allow his family to make-ends-meet without welfare. Over the course of the year, the family used the donation money to pay their rent, and welfare money plus food stamps to live off of. Zachareyah was also able to get odd-jobs here and there which added another $100-200 a month for incidentals.

Sustaining themselves this way for the first year, Zachareyah was able to learn enough English to work in the kitchen of a local restaurant. The next job he got, however, was even better. He was an employee at a wax factory, making candles. Proudly, he gifted me two sets of candles that he had made himself—pointing to the shades of red, yellow and purple that he was in charge of.

In order to get this job with an employer who intended to hire a refugee, he had to interview with 8 other people, some of whom had gotten to the United States before him and others who had arrived later. The only two taken were the two who could speak English. The family gave up their welfare assistance, they did not need it any longer.

In this way, because he had financial assistance from elsewhere, Zachareyah was able to stay out of the labor market and to learn English. Though he could not read or

write his own language, he was able to acquire enough skills to have basic conversation, communicate on the factory floor with his manager, and get along in a workplace in the United States that offered him benefits, and longevity. Zachareyah and Narjis's experience was in this way more reminiscent of people a few hundred miles north in Canada than it was of their neighbors in the United States. This case reaffirms the returns on investing in people, to both the person—in this case the family is able to live well off of Zachareyah's salary—as well as to the system itself.

The Danger of Focusing on Security

Narjis and Zachareyah's positive outcome in their resettlement is a result of donations from people in the United States who cared about refugees. They saw a photograph of a family in need, and they chose to use their expendable income to support them. This donation of money (and of time) is crucial to the functioning of the resettlement system, given limitations on federal funding for resettlement. It also reflects a political position of many in the United States who are *not* fearful of refugees.

However, even as these people were donating to Narjis and Zachareyah, and even under President Obama, who was attempting to raise the cap on the resettlement of refugees, refugee families like Narjis' were assumed to be dangerous until proven otherwise. In Chapters 2 and 4, I showed that admission systems are a reflection of the country's immigration history and how it has come to determine *who* is worthy of entering. In the United States, this was a decision that was once explicitly determined by the race of the newcomer (Fox and Bloemraad 2015). Over time, the language of race, as I argued in Chapter 2, was supplanted by a language of "identity" and then "security."

The intense vetting of refugees is an example of this focus on security. All of the refugees in this study were vetted under president Obama, in a process that took two years. The benefits of this kind of vetting, however, are not clear. Whether or not someone commits a terrorist act is not something that can be vetted in advance. Most acts of terrorism are a result of unanticipated radicalization. While the motivations are disputed, scholars have pointed to socioeconomic status, feelings of isolation and alienation motivating the so-called "lone wolf attacker" or groups of radicalized men (McCauley and Moskalenko 2008; Spaaij 2010; Wilner and Dubouloz 2010).

Refugees are tied to these attacks as a result of the assumption that they are likely to commit terror because they are Muslim. For instance, in November 2015, in the wake of the terrorist attacks on the *Bataclan* and the *Stade de Paris*, though no refugees were involved and no Syrians, critics of the program questioned whether the vetting system was stringent enough. Thirty-one governors, including Mike Pence, then-governor of Indiana, banned Syrian refugees from their state as a result of the attack, citing a need for more intense vetting (State of Indiana 2015). This is despite the fact that all three Bataclan attackers were raised in Europe, as was Omar Mateen who would later commit an attack on Orlando's Pulse night club (Beckwith 2016; Parlapiano et al. 2015).

But perhaps more troubling is that the attempted banning of refugees by the Thirty-one governors prompted a letter from Janet Neopolitano and Michael Chertoff, two former secretaries of the Department of Homeland Security, which defended the current vetting system for resettlement stating: "The process that is currently in place is thorough and robust and, so long as it is fully implemented and not diluted, it will allow

us to safely admit the most vulnerable refugees while protecting the American people (Meyer 2015)."

While this statement is oft-quoted by proponents of refugee resettlement, and was intended to *support* that resettlement, implicit in it is the notion that refugees *do* pose a larger threat to the United States than other kinds of people. By defending the vetting program in light of a terrorist attack in Paris that involved Europeans who happened to be Muslims, the position of Neopolitano and Chertoff makes the same kind of link that was made by McCarran in 1950 when he attempted to strengthen United States' anti-immigration policy: that people from a certain region are dangerous to the United States. This is despite the fact that no refugee has committed a terrorist act since the signing of the 1980 Refugee Act (Levenson 2017). This statement maintains the blurring between "Syrian" and "Muslim" and "Terrorist" which is lumping Syrians into a larger group and holding them accountable for the actions of others to which they have no relation.

On the one hand, this focus on security is dangerous because it does not stop terrorism. A more effective use of resources would be to ensure that refugees have a smooth integration, and that they feel that they belong in the country, something that can be done by providing instrumental support and access to resources, following the Canadian model (Bloemraad 2006a). On the other hand, it is dangerous because it puts the refugee program at risk. In the unfortunate event that a refugee arrives in the United States and is radicalized—joins a group like ISIS or Al-Qaeda or any other kind of terrorist entity—then did the vetting fail? Will the refugee program be halted because of a natural variation between good and bad people? Will millions be denied the possibility for safe-passage as a result?

Finally, this focus on security does not only hurt refugees. In the United States in 2018, Donald Trump's travel ban, recently upheld by the conservative supreme court, has resulted in the indefinite separation of families from 8 countries, all Muslim-majority except for North Korea. And, asylum-seeking parents are being separated from their children also under the banner of keeping Americans safe (Liptak and Shear 2018). There is also an effort to de-naturalize naturalized citizens, who may have "lied" on their paperwork, again in the name of security (Wasem 2018). This focus on security, targeting people of color, that always existed in the history and implementation of the United States immigration law, is become a less and less thinly-veiled policy that harkens to its White supremacist past. In conclusion, the vetting process which is based on the historical notion that people from a certain background are more likely to be dangerous, is racist, illogical, expensive and exacerbates and prolongs refugees' exposure to harm by slowing down the vetting process.

Producing Minorities

In this dissertation, I examined how the four countries in this study—the United States, Canada, Germany and Italy—admitted and incorporated refugees. This concluding section summarizes the findings of the dissertation, showing how different systems of incorporation shaped refugees' sense of security, human capital and social relations in each of these countries. It ends with some predictions about what may come next in the lives of the families included in this study.

First, I showed that the different experiences of Syrian refugees in the four countries studied reflect differences in national systems of admission and the rhetoric that

surrounded that admission, which shaped refugees' *sense of security*—or their sense of legal and interpersonal safety. In the United States, the immigration system, as I argued in the previous section of this conclusion, is shaped by a focus on security. Also, hate crimes against Muslims increased in correlation with Donald Trump's campaign and anti-Muslim rhetoric, which painted Syrians and Muslims as potential terrorists further diminishing their sense of interpersonal safety (England 2017).

The situation for refugees in Canada, however, was markedly different than that of refugees in the United States. Both countries are long-time immigrant destinations, and Canada has often resettled the second highest number of refugee's each year internationally (toggling for this position with Australia). However, in her book comparing political incorporation of immigrants and refugees in the US and Canada, Irene Bloemraad (2006) argued that while there are indeed similarities between these countries, in the 1970s, they diverged in their policies creating different environments for newcomers. Canada, she showed, creates a more welcoming space by providing more support to newcomer immigrants and encouraging political participation.

The Syrian refugees in my study who went to Canada experienced a heightened sense of belonging. They were vetted for a much shorter duration of time prior to their arrival: only 3 months. While hate crimes also increased against Muslims in Canada in 2015—a reflection of local debate around the elections as well as a likely Trump effect—Canadians elected Justin Trudeau who ran on a platform of admitting 25,000 Syrian refugees (Harris 2017). Trudeau welcomed Syrian refugees who arrived through his campaign promise very publicly and inclusively, meeting families at the airport. The Canadian Children's Choir sung a Muslim hymn about immigration in three languages:

Arabic, English and French to welcome the Syrian refugees (Guff 2015). Also, the Canadian system of private sponsorship encouraged private Canadian citizens to get involved in resettlement. They became stakeholders in the arrival of refugees as a result: 10,000 of the 25,000 Syrians were resettled through this private system. As a culmination of all of this, Syrian refugees in Canada expressed feeling "resettled" something not expressed by any other refugee in this study. Three of the families in my study hung Canadian flags in their living room windows. The diminished sense of security felt among refugees in the United States was not expressed in the Canadian case.

While Canada and the United States are long-time destinations for immigration where to be "American" or "Canadian" regularly comes with a series of modifiers such as "African" or "Arab" Or "Cuban," Germany and Italy do not have this history of immigration. The German case, of course, carries with it a history of the killing of minorities which was aided by the Italians under Mussolini in WWII. In both of these countries, these histories result in a more cohesive ethno-national identity. Syrians there feel a push towards cultural assimilation into this cohesive whole, something which is less clear in the case of the United States or in Canada that are defined by their diversity. Moreover, a lack of history of immigration means that there is a convoluted pathway to citizenship, rather than a direct one promised to refugees who arrive in Canada or the United States.

There is not a large wave of Syrians who were resettled in Italy. Syrian refugees are less a part of national rhetoric as African Immigrants, who are targeted by far-right groups in their policies and rhetoric (Cappiali 2017). Italy, because of its geographic reality (surrounded on three sides by water) is a destination for people who want to make

the journey to Europe from Africa. However, these immigrants often do not want to stay in Italy which has fewer opportunities for employment than other European countries (Brenner and Giannelli 2015). Still, there is frustration by the Italian government which feels that it is unduly shouldering the expensive economic burden of processing asylum-seekers (Erlanger 2018).

The establishment of the private and public resettlement programs for Syrian refugees was an attempt to systematize refugee admission in Italy and curb the influx of undocumented immigrants. The experience of Syrian refugees in Italy is not one of blatant discrimination experienced by other immigrants, but rather one of microaggressions. Because they are Muslim, they feel misunderstood by some of the Italians resettling them who do not have experiences with people from diverse backgrounds. However, due to the small number of refugees in Italy, the Syrian refugees did not experience random acts of discrimination or hate speech.

In the case of Germany, which has admitted over half a million Syrian asylum-seekers, the situation is different. Germany has seen an increase in the activity of the far-right, targeting Syrian refugees (Schmidt 2017). The Syrians in this study were grateful for their admission, which allowed all Syrians to seek asylum, rather than focusing on the issue of security. However, some Syrians have experienced interpersonal violence. Women wearing the *hijab* in particular have received hate mail and experienced physical attacks.

There is also a perceptible push to assimilate to German society felt by both women and men. For instance, in the language classes, they are pushed to speak without an accent. And, women who wear the *hijab* are discriminated against in employment

opportunities by employers who want them to take off their headscarf. These experiences, together, leave the Syrians feeling out-of-place and physically insecure. The lack of clear legal process for accessing citizenship also makes them feel legally insecure. Respondents question whether they will be allowed to become citizens if they are productive enough in the German economy.

Second, I show that these countries shape the extent to which refugees are able to recuperate human capital and reconfigure social relationships through their social service systems. These social service systems are shaped by the same national histories that shape immigration law. In the case of the United States, the social service system, and particularly welfare policy, is developed in relation to histories of structural racism. This structural discrimination means that Black and non-White Americans are disproportionately represented in the ranks of the poor. The social service system in the United States is part of this structural disenfranchisement. It's neoliberal approach, which places the burden of poverty on the poor without accounting for the structural conditions of their poverty or attempting to rectify them, leaves the low-income without a safety net. I showed in the first part of this conclusion, and in Chapters 2 and 3 of this dissertation how this limits Syrian refugees' ability to recuperate human capital as the jobs they are able to access do not allow a living wage or upward mobility, and do not offer an opportunity to learn English—a crucial human capital. I also showed that when families face the need to enter the labor-market compelled by this social service system, men enter on behalf of the household in keeping with expectations for their labor. Women, staying outside of the labor-market, are able to learn more English than their male counterparts.

The Canadian case, by contrast, provides much higher levels of assistance. Taking a social liberalism approach, it protects the rights of refugees to participate in the labor market, but it also invests in their ability to do so. This meant that the Canadian government offered regular monthly assistance to refugees, in addition to cash grants and loans to get started in Canada, for the first year of their resettlement. Subsequent years offered cash assistance by way of welfare payments which were also sufficient to make-ends-meet, but a bit less than the refugee-specific assistance. The result was that refugees in Canada had a higher ability than refugees in the United States to learn English—a crucial human capital. This created more options for both men and women, creating a variation of outcomes. There were women who stayed home, and did not learn the language, due to having young children or getting pregnant, and there were also women who learned English and contemplated careers.

Third, the Italian system, while offering ample financial assistance in the initial two years of resettlement, tapering off the assistance in the third, did not provide a pathway out of the resettlement support system because it did not provide ample employment opportunities. Both men and women learned Italian where it was provided. However, the limits in job prospects made it so that they were not sure what to do with this gained capital. While three of the women entered the labor-market, cleaning a local hospital, they had no choice for other kinds of work. Only one of the men—a single English-speaking man in his late 20s—and none of the other women were employed at the end of two years. The man worked as an independent contractor, selling Vatican tickets to tourists for a commission. For the two women, the employment opportunity was provided as a courtesy to the organization that resettled them. The Italian system

clarifies the central role of a robust labor-market to the earning prospects of refugees, and to the ability to activate their earned human capital.

Finally, in the case of Germany, the social assistance system offered Syrian refugees only a few Euros less than what is offered indigent Germans. It was the most generous out of all the other systems. The social service system, called "non-liberal" by Ferree (2012) or a welfare state, sees the state as playing a central role in the lives of its citizens, including its poor.

However, state assistance in Germany is also attached to expectations that the refugee will learn a sufficient amount of German, and that they will earn labor-market credentials via the German system. While the refugees in the case of Germany do learn the language, they are also frustrated that their preexisting skills are not recognized. For instance, one respondent who was a carpenter was forced to recertify through a three-year course. Unable to pass the written exams, and acing the practical ones, he was worried about his ability to be able to join the labor-market as a carpenter. His father, also a carpenter, dropped out of the labor-market entirely, feeling frustrated by the need to recredentialize in his older age. In Germany, women and men learned the language. Women were more likely to contemplate employment than in Canada, citing the possible pathways for them to receive an education. I found that the German case was empowering for people who did not have extensive labor-market histories—younger adults and women, but repressive for people who had histories of labor market involvement—often older men.

Third, in this dissertation, I showed that reclaiming social capital was the result of both systems of admission and systems of incorporation. First, where there were previous

immigrant communities—in the United States and Canada—there were opportunities for newcomers to meet cohorts resettled before them. In the United States, newcomers relied on these older cohorts of immigrants to try to find work in the early stages of resettlement. Because they did not speak English they would be unable to find jobs, even low-skilled ones, in other places. This created high levels of competition between the newcomers over very few labor-market opportunities and drove-down their hourly wages. Co-ethnics were hiring newcomer Syrian refugees without a contract and not paying minimum wage. Though there was an Arab population where these Syrians were resettled in Connecticut, it was not sizeable.

By contrast, in Toronto, where I did the majority of my research in Canada, and particularly in Mississauga, a part of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), a large Arab population exists, enabling the newcomers to purchase the clothing that they are used to wearing, and eat food that they are used to consuming. Mississauga has the characteristics of an ethnic enclave, enabling men and women to purchase their groceries and do other day-to-day tasks without having to speak in English. The ease of mobility for refugees in Canada, enabled by a relatively streamlined social service system allowed refugees to relocate internally, including to areas with large Arab populations.

The German case does not have a history of immigration like in either of the cases of Canada or the United States, but it also saw the asylum of over half a million Syrians. This resulted in areas completely populated by newly arrived refugees. Some of those who sought asylum were wealthy in Syria, and therefore had the resources to start businesses, and to employ others. There wasn't a strong Arab population that pre-dated these refugees, but there was a Turkish population that was also Muslim (though they

spoke a different language). For Kurdish Syrians, Turkish Kurds were a particularly useful resource in finding employment or housing, as they shared a language. While it is still early in their asylum, and all of the Syrian refugees are at a similar stage of strangeness to the German system, the presence of a large cohort of co-ethnics provided a strong word-of-mouth system about job openings and may be the beginnings of opportunities for the establishment of enclaves and for entrepreneurial collaboration.

Finally, in the Italian case, by design, the Syrians were resettled far from each other in an attempt to avoid the creation of what the authorities called "ghettoization" in interviews—a term which they used to mean that Syrians would establish communities of co-ethnics isolating themselves and preventing their "assimilation." While refugees do begin to connect with other immigrants—such as Egyptians who have long been in Italy—through mosques or churches, the current economic climate in Italy limits their opportunities despite these connections. Co-ethnic businesses are staffed by members of the networks of the business owners, and even these, according to the refugees in my study, are closing and leaving the country.

In summary, while refugees in Canada have a facilitated process of recuperation when it comes to human and social capital, and experience a high sense of security, refugees in the United States experience obstacles to recuperating all three of these resources. In Germany, human capital is achievable, but its use to enter the labor-market is blocked by a requirement to achieve credentializations. For refugees, their sense of security is diminished as the large numbers admitted, coupled with the presence of hate groups, has created an inhospitable environment for immigrants. Finally, in Italy, a lack of economic opportunities stilts human capital formation and the building of social

relations. While in the Italian case there was not active anti-Muslim action towards the Syrian refugees in this study, they do not feel that they are fully respected by the Italian staff tasked to resettle them—citing situations in which they felt belittled, that their time was unappreciated, or unsupported in their search for employment.

This study focuses on the first years of immigration, leaving open the question of what might happen next in the lives of these refugees. We cannot know for sure. However, in the Canadian case, the Syrians seem to be following the pathway for the many immigrants who have come before them—to become integrated parts of the Canadian system while retaining their own identity (Bloemraad 2006b). They are well-supported by the Canadian government, are earning credentials, and are in the process of entering labor-markets. There is no reason that they would not also become active members of Canadian civil society as other immigrant groups have done before them.

In the German case, I anticipate three possible trajectories for refugees. First, they could concede to the German system, earn the relevant credential and ascend into the German middle class. They would earn, with the apprenticeship, what the native German would earn in their same position. However, if they feel overwhelmed by this process, or for some reason are unable to earn the credential (learning disability/ having young children/ family back home to support) they may either (1) withdraw into the German social service system—becoming dependent—or (2) return back to countries of immediate refuge. Syrians in Germany that I interviewed reported that some refugees returned back to Lebanon or Jordan, feeling that they would not be able to make it in Germany. Finally, a third opportunity—not available to all Syrian refugees—is that they enter a temporary contract market. This was true of the Syrians who I interviewed in

Bavaria—a long time industrial area in Germany. This is where individuals are hired through Temp Agencies that take a portion of their income, rather than at a company where they would have, according to German law, strong benefits and stability. German businesses, in need of labor, are turning to these agencies to fill positions. This is cheaper than hiring someone with the requisite Germany credentials. It also means that Syrian refugees make a living fast, and do not have to credentialize. If this situation continues in Germany it is possible that the German system creates a class of precarious worker at the bottom-rungs of the labor-market out of the half a million newcomer refugees.

The situation in Italy is anomalous, and the future looks bleak. Following refugees into their third year there, I have seen one family flee to Germany after resettlement in Italy. The German authorities approved their stay, despite a legal interdiction on moving from one country for asylees or refugees. I have seen another be threatened to be placed in a shelter for indigent families by resettlement staff, since they have been unable to find employment three years into their resettlement. Yet others have negotiated situations where they offer in-kind work for agencies or buildings in order to be able to shelter and feed themselves. The Italian authorities are aware of this crisis and have been working on an employment project for resettled refugees. However, there is considerable political push-back as Italian youth also cannot find jobs.

Finally, in terms of the case of refugees resettled in the United States, despite the limits to human capital advancement imposed by the social service system, there is evidence that the refugees are manufacturing opportunities for themselves. Initial attempts at entrepreneurship, enabled by the Earned Income Tax Credit—which they receive in bulk-payment in April once they are employed—have all failed. The failure

has been in part due to a lack of know-how on how to run a business or what kind of returns are offered, and a forced intimacy with others. By definition the Syrian men and women in this study have only known the others who are in their co-ethnic community for two years (maximum) prior to opening a business with them. However, these entrepreneurial attempts may, at some point in the future, be successful as the refugees gain more knowledge about the economy in the United States and as they establish firmer relationships with one-another.

The real hope, however, lies with the prospects for upward mobility of the second generation. Families vary in their approach to education. For the most part, the parents themselves are not educated beyond a high school level. For the children who arrived 16 and older, doing well in school and focusing on education was particularly difficult. They had to learn the language in a short period of time. Also, due to the poverty of the parents caused by the United States resettlement system, some boys—keeping with expectations for their labor as breadwinners supporting their fathers or in their stead—needed to enter labor-markets. Two of the boys worked at a gas station, and one worked at a local lawn club. All earned minimum wage.

However, other parents, younger in age, were able to educate their children, and took that education very seriously. One family sent both their daughter and their son to boarding school, despite criticism from the Syrian community for sending their children so far away where they could not keep a watchful eye on them (particularly the girl). Another parent took his son out of the labor-market when he felt that his future was going to be jeopardized, saying that he did not come to America so that his son could be a gas station worker.

The issue of discrimination interacts with these trajectories. It is unclear what the future of the Syrian refugees are in the United States if the discrimination continues to get worse. Do they stay in the United States? Will they be protected in labor markets against discrimination? Do they move to an ethnic enclave? One family, a sister of a respondent in my study, moved to Dearborn, Michigan, the only Arab ethnic enclave in the United States. Two other participants in my study drove out there to explore the area.

Due to these kinds of variations, it is not clear whether the Syrians will eventually "assimilate" joining some version of the mainstream as Alba and Nee (1997) would predict. I also do not believe that they will experience downward mobility as Portes and Zhou (1993) have shown has happened to other cohorts of immigrants, such as those from Mexican origin, who were disadvantaged due to systematic discrimination and a lack of resources. Instead, while their integration will not be smooth, there is the possibility that at least some –whose children are able to receive a proper education, or whose entrepreneurial pursuits are successful—will eventually find their way into a comfortable living status. It is unclear, however, how this will interact with their experiences of discrimination. Anti-Muslim sentiment is acute in this historic moment in the United States, and for these Muslim immigrants, whose decedents may continue to be visibly Syrian and Muslim, the roads may still be rocky ahead.

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