

Laborer, Citizen and Neighbor: Refugee Subjectivity in Pittsburgh and Berlin

by

Fiona Grace Eichinger

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Committee Membership Page
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This thesis was presented

by

Fiona Grace Eichinger

It was defended on

March 21, 2019

and approved by

Georgina Ramsay, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Delaware,

Department of Anthropology

Martha Ann Terry, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School

of Public Health, Behavioral and Community Health Sciences

Heath Cabot, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh, Department of Anthropology

Thesis Advisor: Tomas Matza, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, University of Pittsburgh,

Department of Anthropology

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With 68.5 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, on-the-ground evaluation of policy-level decisions is crucial for developing sustainable frameworks. To do so, we must engage the voices of refugees whose daily life is shaped by state bureaucracy and procedures. My case studies of Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh and Syrian refugees in Berlin investigate the subjectivity of refugees. Data from this ethnography indicate that this subjectivity emerges from the intersection of a state's imposed *subjectification* and a refugee's *agency* to replicate, appropriate and resist such institutional subjectification. Regarding the former, refugee-receiving nations envision a particular future for refugees within their borders, embodied in a multi-dimensional subjectification. I focus on three dimensions of subjectification: how refugees are expected to relate to the state (citizen figure), to the economy (laborer figure), and to society (neighbor figure). Refugee agency, a reality often overlooked in the bureaucratized refugee regime, shapes how individuals replicate, appropriate, and resist such subjectification. I addressed this intersection of the institution and the individual through 22 interviews and over 300 hours of participant observation at local refugee-serving non-profits in Pittsburgh (2017) and Berlin (2017, 2018). I argue that US policy emphasizes training refugees to become self-sufficient laborers, complemented by non-demanding citizens and inconspicuous neighbors. German policy prioritizes a dependent citizen, complemented by the skilled laborer and multicultural neighbor figures. In both Pittsburgh and Berlin, interviewed refugees replicate the principally desired figure while appropriating and resisting secondary expectations. Yet in both cases, the primary economic or political condition that is most uncertain in a refugee's life is reflected exactly in the principle

figure encouraged by the federal framework, thereby incentivizing refugees to inhabit a precarious subjectivity. States compel refugees to strive for the fulfillment of a particular figure without facilitating its actualization. This contradiction perpetuates the precarity of displacement and fails to provide a durable solution.

Table of Contents

1.0 Introduction.....	1
2.0 The Global Refugee Regime Complex	15
2.1 The Emergent Global Refugee Regime	16
2.2 The Global Refugee Regime Complex.....	19
3.0 Bhutanese Refugees in Pittsburgh.....	25
3.1 Historical Context.....	25
3.2 US Refugee Regime	28
3.2.1 Laborer	31
3.2.2 Citizen	33
3.2.3 Neighbor.....	34
3.3 Localized Refugee Regime	35
3.3.1 Laborer	39
3.3.2 Citizen	43
3.3.3 Neighbor.....	45
3.4 Bhutanese Refugees	48
3.4.1 Laborer	49
3.4.2 Citizen	57
3.4.3 Neighbor.....	61
4.0 Syrian Refugees in Berlin.....	66
4.1 Historical Context.....	66
4.2 German Refugee Regime	69

4.2.1 Laborer	70
4.2.2 Citizen	71
4.2.3 Neighbor.....	74
4.3 Localized Refugee Regime	75
4.3.1 Laborer	76
4.3.2 Citizen	79
4.3.3 Neighbor.....	80
4.4 Syrian Refugees	84
4.4.1 Laborer	84
4.4.2 Citizen	90
4.4.3 Neighbor.....	92
5.0 Conclusion	100
Bibliography	107

Preface

Musa used to stand on a mountain of rubble and watch the other kids walk to school, wishing he could join them again. As an Afghan refugee in Iran, he was denied an education beyond age 12. I met him while interning at a non-profit in Berlin two summers ago. He had arrived in Germany with his mother and brother a few months prior. In that short time, he had taught himself both German and English with the aspiration of becoming a dentist. I tutored him in English every day. Then, while the asylum requests of his mother and brother were approved, his was rejected. He appealed for over a year, impressing the judge when he spoke for himself in court. Yet according to the law, the judge says, his asylum will still be rejected.

As the daughter of German immigrants, to me borders used to signify visiting relatives abroad and collecting stamps in my passport. Working with refugees in the US, Spain, and Germany, though, gave me sobering insight into the reality of demarcation. Borders are a prize fought over for power and capital. They are a shoreline asylum seekers risk life to reach. Borders can deny one's nationality and home. Borders criminalize humans and humanity. Engaging with individuals for whom these statements are a reality compelled me to address forced migration not merely as a humanitarian crisis (two problematic words in and of themselves), but an academic imperative.

I express genuine thanks to the many individuals who made my first substantial contribution to this field possible.

I thank the many refugees who welcomed me into their home—be it a shipping container, a classroom, or an apartment. Thank you for patiently teaching me my first Arabic phrases, demonstrating the steps of Kurdish dances, and inviting me to share meals with you and your families. Above all, thank you for trusting me with your stories.

Thank you to the non-profit organizations in Pittsburgh and Berlin who welcomed me as an intern, volunteer, and researcher.

Thank you to my thesis committee—Dr. Tomas Matza, Dr. Georgina Ramsay, Dr. Heath Cabot, Dr. Martha Terry—for your encouragement, expert insight, and commitment to this process and lengthy thesis. Special thanks to my primary advisor, Dr. Matza, for introducing me to ethnography in my freshman year, trusting me to assist and learn through your project, and supporting all my research endeavors since. I am extremely grateful for your guidance in helping me develop as a student and researcher.

A deep thank you to my family. The value of your constant encouragement, love, understanding, and enthusiasm for my work is indescribable.

1.0 Introduction

The Refugee Welcome Office¹, a local non-profit supporting refugees in Berlin, was hosting another neighborhood viewing for the 2018 World Cup. I would often attend, and was usually the only German in the room. The Syrian fathers and students with whom I watched tuned into the German channel, frantically switching to an Arabic one only when the German stream lagged. During halftime, everyone stepped outside. I stayed inside as the German news update automatically came on. Looking to the left, I saw a group Syrian refugees gathered by the door—talking, laughing, taking a smoke break, and trying out a donated desk for size. Looking to the right, I saw a screen projecting the images of conservative Interior Minister Seehofer and Chancellor Merkel debating ‘Fluechtlingspolitik’ (refugee policy). I saw the discourse and its subjects side by side, yet unequivocally detached. In seeming indifference to the rhetoric, the refugees paid no attention to the debate, filtering in again only once an orchestral crescendo marked the end of a commercial break and a return to the game.

This moment from the summer of 2018 captures four key actors in refugee settlement: global phenomena shaping the interests of nation-states, national governments mandating policies, local organizations enforcing them, and refugees themselves existing at a juncture of all the former. The scene also highlights a disconnect between the policy makers, enforcers, and target population. Dorji, a refugee from Bhutan in Pittsburgh, explains:

There are parts...the government is one part, the agencies are another part. And the individuals are one part. So the individual is here at the bottom, they don't know all these things that are going on, how the welfare department is assisting them—Medicare, food

¹ I have used pseudonyms for all organizations and informants. The gender of some informants has been changed for anonymity. In some instances I have lightly edited statements for clarity.

stamps, SNAP card. They have no idea.

Dorji's reflection indicates a separation of institutions and individuals. The refugee, he describes, is at the bottom of a hierarchy—unaware of the policies and procedures affecting his daily needs, such as food and healthcare.

Liisa Malkki (1996) likewise highlights the disconnect between institutions and individuals in her aptly entitled essay “Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization.” Conducting research among refugees from Rwanda and Burundi living in Tanzania, Malkki noted the homogenizing effect of bureaucratic humanitarian interventions. Rather than being seen as an individual, refugees caught in the system are dealt with as “pure victims in general: universal man, universal woman, universal and, taken together, universal family” (378). This reductionism delegitimizes the refugee's individual voice and story. Malkki argues that these populations have “a peculiar kind of speechlessness in the face of the national and international organizations whose object of care and control” (386). Challenging this disconnect, Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017) affirm the need to explore the role of each actor, arguing that “a more comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the global refugee regime must include an account of the diverse actors and forms of power present in institutional contexts at the global level, and implementation contexts at the local level” (8).

To that end, this thesis explores each set of actors to understand how refugee resettlement and integration are structured to shape a multi-dimensional refugee subjectivity. Institutional actors define subjectification because they create and enforce policies that impact a refugee's livelihood and place in society. Among other functions, migration policy is a mechanism by which refugees are trained to reproduce a particular figure that prioritizes and enacts different dimensions of subjectivity. I focus principally on the type of laborer, citizen and neighbor refugees are

expected to become. These figures refer to the ways in which a refugee is expected to relate to the government, workforce and society. The idea that institutional practices create circumstances to enforce ideal refugee figures in society indicates that refugees are compelled to become ‘normal’ citizens. Their refugee status is an abnormality to overcome, and any subjectification they may have known from their country of origin is deemed incompatible. This introduces the debate of whether assimilation, integration, or inclusion is most appropriate goal of a federal resettlement framework. This thesis will not further explore this particular question; additional insight on refugee exceptionalization and the question of citizenship can be found in Arendt’s (1943) essay “We Refugees” and the works of Agamben.

Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017) call the characterization of figures (subjectification) *productive power*—the “production of subjects through diffuse social relations” (11). A nation, for example, wields productive power when it creates and enforces policy that confine refugees to a particular livelihood and place in society. Understanding this productive power is crucial for defining a national framework’s model refugee figure, particularly because such rhetoric is both conspicuous and pervasive.

Refugees reproduce, resist, and appropriate institutional subjectification. As Butler (1997: cover) writes, subjectification “consists precisely in this fundamental dependency on a discourse we never chose but that, paradoxically, initiates and sustains our agency” and “signifies the process of becoming subordinated by power as well as the process of becoming a subject.” It involves both mastery and subordination. I thus pay special attention to refugee agency, the second aspect of multi-dimensional subjectivity. Agency shapes the ways in which refugees subordinate themselves to top-down expectations, appropriate them for their own ends, or resist such characterization all together. Cabot (2013), for example, highlights the “social aesthetics” involved in the process of

determining client eligibility at an NGO supporting asylum seekers in Greece. Asylum seekers' subordination, reshaping, and resistance of the figuration of a deserving recipient of aid underscore their agency in a system that expects vulnerability and victimization.

Migration studies must thus acknowledge refugee agency and engage refugees as active participants rather than passive subjects. Incorporating refugee voices and experiences as a primary component of analysis shifts the forced migration discourse from representation, whereby discussion *about* the refugee is confounded with dialogue *for* the refugee (Gatrell 2013), towards participation. Dykstra-DeVette (2018) likewise argues for the centrality of refugee voices, maintaining that a "lack of rhetorical agency, or the ability to communicate otherwise, impacts refugees' lives.... In the ongoing production of empowered refugee subjectivity, agency (or the lack thereof) in self-presentation is a material rhetoric that can have significant and continual impact on resettlement" (188).

Mapping the ability of different actors to enact or be shaped by productive power fosters comparison between the creation, implementation, and ramification stages of policy. It also allows for an analysis of policy processes in different national contexts (Milner and Wojnarowicz 2017). The case studies of this thesis illustrate how contemporary responses to forced migration have differentially taken shape. Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017:13) conclude that "as global refugee policy is implemented, local dynamics intersect, influence, and shape what a policy actually achieves in practice. This is where a gap emerges between the global prescribed intent of the policy and the change it actually makes in the lives of refugees."

Thus, this thesis explores the intersection of global refugee policy with other global, national, and local dynamics in the United States (US) and Germany. These are two important global powers and refugee-receiving states that exemplify two of the three durable solutions

proposed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The first resolution is “voluntary repatriation”, in which refugees return to their country of origin. In the second solution, refugees remain in their country of asylum (“local integration”). Finally, refugees may also be resettled from their country of asylum into a third country (“resettlement”) (UNHCR). These solutions only specify the geographic location of refugees: home country, asylum country, or third country. Refugee receiving nations have relative freedom to design the subsequent integration or resettlement framework that impacts the daily lives of refugees. Thus, it is these systems that must be examined to evaluate durability. To understand the rationale and outcome of the resettlement framework in the US and integration framework in Germany, I ask the following questions: How do global regimes intersect to shape national refugee policy and thereby refugee subjectification? How does national policy compel local organizations to enforce expected refugee figures relating to the political, economic, and societal spheres? And finally, how do refugees employ agency to reproduce, appropriate, and resist this subjectivity? In short, I explore what future the nation envisions for refugees, and how refugees have responded.

I ask and will address these questions in the presented order precisely because it mirrors the insertion of refugees into existing frameworks. Each chapter reflects the reality that refugee voices come last. This organization is thus an intentional analytical approach to illustrate the implication of refugee regimes and discourse that precede the human being.

I begin in chapter 2 on the global scale. Forced migration cannot be understood as solely a problem of the nation-state. Factors such as state repression, violent conflict, and deprivation of basic necessities, even when confined within a state’s borders, are invariably global once individuals flee across borders (Boswell 2003). Moreover, transnational organizations, primarily the United Nations (UN) today, have worked to coordinate state responses. The 1951 Refugee

Convention, a UN multilateral treaty, outlines the international cooperation measures, such as granting asylum, resettling refugees, and providing financial support (Betts 2010).

A signatory nation's (non-binding) obligation to this agreement intersects with national interests related to globalization, such as security, economic competition, and cultural preservation. This complex juncture shapes a nation-state's asylum policies.

In turn, nation-state policy priorities play a significant role in shaping the practices of local organizations. Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017:13) argue that "given the highly institutionalized nature of the making of global refugee policy, only a limited number of actors, namely states belonging to ExCom and UNHCR, participate in this process. Other actors, including NGOs and refugees, are not able to participate directly in the formal and informal process." Local non-profits thus often enforce national policies without having a significant say in their development.

This power dynamic between federal and local entities is mirrored in the relationship between local organizations and refugees. Federal policies are aimed at creating particular refugee subjects. This strategic framework is imposed on and enforced by local organizations. On-the-ground implementation of state-level policies, though often framed through a humanitarian lens, thus contribute to perpetuating a particular refugee subjectification. Anthropologist Aihwa Ong, for example, explores "institutional policies, processes, practices, and actors that not only offer assistance and resources but also serve in the production of American subjects" (Benson 2016:526). This perpetuation of refugee subjectification allows the national border to pursue a refugee long after he or she has crossed it. Fassin (2011:215) claims the border has "imposed its presence on social relations." Rather than merely a physical barrier, the border shapes a refugee's daily life by regulating their relation to the state, economy and society. As Fassin (2011:215) describes, "[Refugees] cross borders to settle in a new society and discover boundaries through

the differential treatment to which they are submitted.” This differential treatment continues even as they become fellow residents, co-laborers, and neighbors within a host country (Fassin 2011). These figures correlate to three significant relations in which an individual engages: to the government, economy, and society.

Since policy shapes such fundamental relations of life, a refugee’s experience must become a crucial part of policy evaluation. Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017:9) argue: “Indeed, critical migration and citizenship scholars have demonstrated the benefits of using the perspective of refugees and migrants as an entry point to interrogate the functioning of global regimes, especially when understanding manifestations of power, resistance, and contestation in the local context.”

To understand the juncture of global and national power at the local and individual level, this thesis is rooted in ethnographic engagement with both refugees and staff at non-profits in Pittsburgh and Berlin. It specifically investigates the dimensions of refugee subjectification pertaining to a refugee’s expected engagement with the government, workforce, and society. I heuristically refer to these as the citizen, laborer, and neighbor figures. I argue that, in the United States, emphasis is placed on training refugees to become hardworking, self-sufficient laborers in order to be non-demanding citizens and assimilated neighbors. This was manifest in limited state support. If a refugee fails to achieve self-sufficiency, he must rely on his social network or voluntary community assistance. The German case evidences a different combination emphasizing a dependent citizen complemented by the skilled laborer and multicultural neighbor figures. Federal policy mandates a high degree of state involvement to ensure linguistic and cultural integration, as well as dependence on the state. If a refugee evidences commitment to integration by attending language and orientation courses, he is supported by the government and does not need charity.

1.1 Methods

To investigate refugee subjectivity and sustainable livelihoods in the resettlement and integration durable solutions, I designed case studies in the US and Germany. I conducted ethnographic research at two local refugee-serving non-profits: the City Service Center (CSC) resettlement agency in Pittsburgh (2017) and the Refugee Welcome Office (RWO) in Berlin (2017, 2018). Globally-informed national policies, local enforcement, and the refugee experience intersect at these sites. Conducting ethnography at these two sites in Pittsburgh and Berlin lends insight into how transnational processes have differentially shaped refugee lives at the state and local levels. Ethnography through participant observation and semi-structured interviews helps catch a glimpse of the everyday life of refugees caught up in these bureaucratic webs.

The CSC was one of three resettlement agencies in Pittsburgh at the time of interviews (January – March 2017). I had initially been in contact with a different resettlement agency but was ultimately not able coordinate with the staff to schedule an interview. I had reached out via email four days after the Executive Order Protecting the Nation from Foreign Terrorist Entry into the United States was issued on January 27, 2017. The order suspended for 120 days the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program. Indeed, the staff member with whom I was initially in contact responded to my request stating that “it is not business as usual as a result of the executive order.”

Since I was unable to re-establish contact with the first agency, I turned to the CSC in mid-February, whose staff agreed to participate in interviews. Resettlement is only one aspect of the CSC’s activities. Other primary activities include support for seniors and individuals with disabilities. Within its refugee resettlement program, the CSC provides basic services including safe and affordable housing with essential furnishings, bureaucratic assistance for obtaining social

security cards or school enrollment, employment service and job training, and a cultural orientation.

The office is not located downtown, but rather in a peripheral neighborhood of the city. When I arrived at the correct street on an unusually warm February day, I noticed that the CSC contained a number of doored offices and rows of cubicles, a waiting area, and a conference room. I interviewed two staff members, Jane and Kate. The interviews were each an hour long; I audio-recorded the conversations and took additional jot notes in a notebook. While settling in for the second interview, the informant apologized for the mess in her office, explaining that the organization is “very much a non-profit.” Indeed, one of the three agencies in Pittsburgh terminated its resettlement operations in 2018 due to a lack of funding and refugee arrivals.

After conducting interviews with Jane and Kate, I completed online training modules and returned to the CSC for ten hours of volunteering and participant observation. I mainly worked in an office and the basement, filing paperwork and organizing clothes donations. Consequently, I did not have the opportunity to observe many interactions between the CSC staff and refugees. However, I have been involved in the US resettlement process over the past four academic years as a weekly tutor for refugee families from Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The tutoring program is organized in a partnership with a university student organization and the Pittsburgh resettlement agencies. I am additionally on board of this student organization that supports the refugee community in Pittsburgh. Through this role, I regularly interact with local migrant-focused organizations and gain experiences that fill out a broader picture of refugee resettlement in the city.

To learn from refugees, I decided to focus on the Bhutanese community in Pittsburgh. With over 6,000 resettled Bhutanese refugees in the city, this is one of the largest ethnic refugee

communities in the city. I contacted my friend Dago, whom I had met through a university course. He had come to the US as a Bhutanese refugee and co-founded the Bhutanese Community Group (BCG) in Pittsburgh. After I explained the research project, he agreed to help recruit informants for me. I visited the BCG on two Saturdays in March 2017, interviewing four and five refugees on each day, respectively, whom Dago had selected for me. He said he recruited both males (6) and females (3), as well as both naturalized individuals (8) and a GreenCard holder (1) so as not to bias my sample. He included only one GreenCard holding informant because “those who are not naturalized have been in the US for a shorter time and may not have good English.” Since the majority of informants have been in the US for at least five years, my sample lacks the voices of newly arrived individuals or those who have a lower level of English. Interviews were conducted in English and lasted about an hour each.

The BCG is located in a Pittsburgh neighborhood that is home to about 1,000 Bhutanese residents. Most of the remaining 5,000 Bhutanese residents live in a neighborhood about four miles west. Bhutanese refugees have been resettling in Pittsburgh since 2008; the BCG was established in 2012. The BCG building has since moved to a parallel street, still within the same neighborhood. This second street houses a number of Bhutanese-owned establishments, including grocers, a jeweler, dance studio, and furniture store.

To gather parallel data in Germany, I interned at the Refugee Welcome Office (RWO) in Berlin. Like the CSC, the RWO office is situated in a peripheral neighborhood of the city. It sits in a residential area located about a 20-minute bus ride from the neighborhood’s center, in which establishments such as the bank, grocery stores, and local government offices are located. With over an hour of travel and multiple transfers, residents can reach the historically Turkish and Arab

neighborhoods of Berlin via public transportation. The refugees I interviewed did travel to these neighborhoods once or twice a week to shop for groceries.

The RWO building is a former grocery store situated next to the office of the landlord, a stationary shop, and a bar. The row of establishments is centrally located among apartment complexes in which about 30 refugee families live. Residents thus pass by the RWO when returning home. The refugees' apartments are interspersed within the buildings alongside those of German residents.

In contrast to the individual doored offices layout of the CSC, the RWO was reminiscent of a community center. The one-story building has a large window covering two-thirds of the front wall. It is decorated with pictures from an Eid al-Fitr celebration that was held in the RWO, as well as signs declaring "Welcome!" in multiple languages. Passersby can look through the window into the classroom area, which is sectioned off from the waiting area by red patterned curtains. A large, L-shaped couch is situated in the waiting room next to a shelf of children's books. A small table offers daily fresh Turkish tea from a 2-tiered teapot—the bottom being for boiling water and the top for concentrated tea. A locked closet with donated clothes and other items is behind the couch. The rear of the building is comprised of a hallway parallel to the back of the classroom. It leads to a small kitchenette on the right, two bathrooms to the left, and a single office straight ahead. The office contains two desks and two computers, and is shared by the hired staff (two in 2017 and three in 2018). The only doors in the building are those for the donations closet, the bathrooms, and the office. The bathroom closest to the office is marked with the sign "staff restroom". When I came out of the non-staff restroom one day, a staff member told me to use the staff restroom next time because it is nicer.

I interviewed four individuals who worked at the RWO over the course of two years (Susanne, Paula, Antje and Stephanie). These informants did not all work at the RWO concurrently. The positions represented by these individuals are supervisor, staff member and volunteer. Interviews were conducted in German and lasted about an hour each. I interviewed four Syrian refugees, two of whom live in the neighborhood for which the RWO was responsible and two of whom were tour guides at the time of the interviews. I met the former two (Burhan and Rasha) through my internship at the RWO; their interviews were conducted in German at the RWO. I met the latter two (Sayid and Tarek) by attending their respective tour and requesting an interview at the end. I met with each individually at a coffee shop and conducted the interview in English by their request. Since I interviewed refugees who were engaged in RWO activities or as tour guides, my sample is biased towards individuals who are active in the community. However, frequent home visits conducted as part of my internship responsibilities introduced me to individuals of diverse ages, language ability, and employment status. For example, I spent hours in the homes of refugees learning Arabic from adults and seniors with whom I could not communicate enough to conduct a formal interview. Yet personal engagement and participant observation in this manner gave me a glimpse into their experience of settlement as well. Their stories are not outlined in this thesis, but they corroborate the accounts that informants shared in their interviews of fellow community members.

Due to my role as an intern, I gathered 240 hours of participant observation at the RWO over two summer internships. This method of data collection is secondary in this thesis to the interviews. Participant observation helps fill out a more comprehensive understanding of refugee settlement in Germany as a whole. Although I have more recorded participant observation time in Berlin, I have been involved in the US resettlement process over the past four academic years in

the capacities described above. To match the hours of refugee engagement in Pittsburgh over four years, I spent two summers of concentrated participant observation in Berlin.

Although I have primarily used data from interviews as opposed to participant observation to equalize the data volume from each site, the lack of ethnographic engagement with interviewed Bhutanese interviews likely impacted the amount and type of information I could obtain. I was introduced to all informants at the time of their interview, so I had built up no individual rapport with them. Gaining *entrée* to the community via an interlocutor, Dago, was thus valuable. One Bhutanese informant told me that he had only agreed to this interview because I came with Dago. Since all interviews took place on only two days, I spent hours in one conference as one after another informant arrived for their appointment.

The Berlin interviews, in contrast, took place on different days and in different locations—the RWO, a park, a café. Two of the Syrian informants in Berlin had interacted with me each business day for weeks before conducting their interview. The dialogue thus flowed as a natural conversation, and they shared details of their journey to and experience in Germany on their own accord. I interacted with the other two Syrian informants on multiple occasions as well before conducting the interview, and the conversations were thus also more natural and personal.

The results and analysis from these data are documented in the following chapters. In Chapter 2.0, I describe the global refugee regime's origin and its intersection with other global processes to create a complex of factors influencing national policy decisions. Chapter 3.0 focuses on the US refugee regime and is subdivided into a history of Bhutanese refugees (3.1), followed by analyses of national policies (3.2), local implementation (3.3), and refugee responses (3.4) with regard to the three aforementioned figures: laborer, citizen, and neighbor. I conclude that the US model emphasizes the figure of a self-sufficient laborer in order to produce a non-demanding

citizen and unassuming neighbor. Chapter 4.0 mirrors chapter 3.0 within the context of Syrian refugees in Germany. In this case, I argue that federal policy emphasizes creating a dependent citizen complemented by the skilled laborer and multicultural neighbor figures. I conclude in Chapter 5.0 by addressing the figure primarily emphasized in both the US and Germany case studies, allowing for a reflection on precarity. I argue that the primary economic or political condition that is most uncertain a refugee's life is reflected in the principle figure encouraged by the federal framework, thereby incentivizing refugees to inhabit a precarious subjectivity. Together, these results contribute to existing dialogue by underscoring the complex motivations of a refugee-receiving nation. National agendas affirm a resettlement or integration that is conditional on a refugee's fulfillment of subjectification. Indeed, Ramsay affirms that "resettlement puts refugees into new contexts of ambiguity in which it is not their politico-legal status that is problematised, but the futures that they, as subjects who are marked by assumptions of difference and inferiority, represent to the agenda and interests of the host state in which they have been settled" (Ramsay 2018:188). I argue that the US resettlement system qualifies care and protection on economic productivity. The German settlement conditionalizes refuge on linguistic and cultural proficiency. Yet both nations create precarious conditions that prevent the actualization of these expectations, thereby perpetuating uncertainty and failing to provide a durable solution.

2.0 The Global Refugee Regime Complex

I begin with the historical context of the refugee regime to understand its present-day functioning. Outlining the evolution of the dominant institutions today lends insight into the agendas that determine federal policies. Furthermore, prefacing the refugee narratives of chapters 3 and 4 within this structure mirrors the reality that refugee lives are inserted into predetermined frameworks.

Asylum seekers cross national borders in pursuit of refugee status recognized by another country or the United Nations. As such, migration involving border crossing is innately an international issue. An increasingly globalized world, facilitated by transportation and communication technology, has strengthened ties among governments, entities, and individuals worldwide. In short, this development can be defined as the expansion and intensification of worldwide interactions (Steger 2009). Jurgensmeyer, professor of global studies at UC Santa Barbara, further describes the study of this phenomenon as “transnational ... interdisciplinary ... contemporary and historical ... postcolonial and critical ... and promoting global citizenship,” (Juergensmeyer, 2011:1-2) These terms mean that the effects of globalization are geographically and thematically comprehensive; this process impacts every nation to some degree and encompasses disciplines such as economics, politics, culture, and the environment. Yet this is the contradiction of globalization: while goods, capital, and information have been circulating more freely, human mobility is more repressed than ever (Fassin 2011). As historian Donna Gabaccia (1997:186) concludes, “To defend free labor, labor activists had curtailed free migration. Immigration restrictions in turn helped to replicate under capitalism some of the inequalities of colonialism.” Forced migration scholar Bridget Anderson (2009) notes that restrictions to movement have not resulted in fewer border crossings. This illustrates the gravity of repression and persecution individuals endure and ultimately flee. Despite the magnified comprehensive cost

in terms of livelihood, money, safety, and rights, people still embark on the journey. As Somali-British poet Warsan Shire describes in her poem “Home” (Shire 2015):

*you only leave home
when home won't let you stay...
no one puts their children in a boat
unless the water is safer than the land.*

The 2017 UN Population Division’s International Migration report counts 258 million international migrants, up from 220 million in 2010 and 173 million in 2000 (United Nations 2017). Of these, 68.5 million people worldwide are forcibly displaced, the greatest number since World War II (UNHCR 2018b). Considering the history of mobility lends insight into the factors contributing to this shift towards restriction of legitimized human movement. Analyzing the global trends of nationalism, controlled travel, securitization, humanitarianism, and neoliberalism sets the stage for understanding the rationale of the American and German refugee resettlement and integration frameworks.

2.1 The Emergent Global Refugee Regime

Development of the nation-state system is inextricably linked to displacement. Borders define boundaries of belonging and non-belonging. Migration documentation has the power to legitimize border crossings by classifying humans as legal or illegal. The era of globalization and transnationalism has furthermore created fear surrounding the loss of geographic sovereignty and the culture contained within it. Many states have responded to this fear by shifting towards a defensive nationalism associated with border control (Kearney 1991), imposing a surveillance apparatus that polices borders, detains aliens, and deports illegals (Fassin 2011). The passport,

created in 1920 in the aftermath of WWI, is used by many states to monopolize legitimate movement (Torpey 2000).

Indeed, the concept of a “refugee” emerged only with the creation of the modern nation-state (Barnett 2002). While a nascent refugee regime developed with the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, which outlined the right of religious minorities or dissidents to emigrate with their property (Golden 2012), neither a formal definition for ‘refugee’ nor a global system of policies existed (Barnett 2002). In other words, though displacement has long existed, an international sense of responsibility has not.

It was not until the fierce nationalism fueling two 20th century world wars and leading to mass global displacement that countries recognized refugees as an international matter. This notion was manifested in the League of Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (HCR). Created in 1921, it was the first organization transcending national borders to address forced displacement (Barnett 2002). Oxford scholar Alexander Betts (2010) describes this emerging refugee regime as “virtually the only form of institutionalized cooperation in the area of human mobility” (13).

Following World War II the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) replaced its League of Nations predecessor. The UNHCR’s role is to oversee the implementation of the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees, which outlines the definition and rights of a refugee. The UNHCR and its Convention legitimize forcibly displaced individuals with “transnational nobility” (Fassin 2005:374). These institutions furthermore codify an agreement to asylum rights that transcends domestic politics and nation-state sovereignty. This international cooperation is manifest in two forms: asylum-granting and “burden-sharing” (Betts 2010). In the former, states comply with an international law that individuals have a right to seek asylum and have their case reviewed while receiving minimum standards of housing and subsistence. “Burden-

sharing” is expressed in financial support or the resettlement of refugees from a host nation to a third country. The label “burden” merits critical analysis, as such language implies that refugees themselves are the burden while neglecting structural factors such as conflict, environmental disasters or climate change, and economic instability that instigate migration. While the UNHCR has no formal enforcement power (Barnett 2002), states often comply for the purposes of legitimacy and reciprocity, though this compliance is increasingly under threat (Betts 2010).

It is crucial to highlight again at this point the distinct US and German contexts. In relation to the Bhutanese, the US is a third country of resettlement. As such, the state conducts its own vetting process of individuals already granted asylum in a host country. The US thus individually selects Bhutanese refugees to resettle. In relation to Syrians, Germany is primarily a host country that grants protection to individuals who have crossed its border and applied for asylum. These individuals complete several application renewals to secure permanent settlement in Germany. I will thus use “resettlement” to refer to the US refugee regime and “settlement” to refer to the German regime, or “re/settlement” when discussing both. Despite these distinct methods of refugee reception and re/settlement, discussing both side-by-side is valid due to their shared conditional refuge. I argue that both the US and German refugee regimes shape refugee subjectivity by enforcing subjectification and prompting refugees’ agency to respond. Indeed, in her analysis of the Australian refugee regime, Ramsay (2018:202) affirms that “refugees are not only expected to be subservient but to dissolve the apparent burden of their resettlement to Australia by becoming a particular kind of citizen whose value is measured through economic productivity and whose differences must be subsumed into the dominant culture, rather than embraced.” This conditionality perpetuates displacement as an “existential condition” that creates

a precarious livelihood in both the present and future (Ramsay 2018:203). As such, refuge is not simply a politico-legal condition (Ramsay 2018).

2.2 The Global Refugee Regime Complex

With increased globalization, Betts (2010) argues, this global refugee regime headed by the UNHCR has become a refugee *complex* of multiple regimes, including *controlled travel*, *securitization*, *humanitarianism*, and *labor*. To begin, the refugee regime interacts with travel and security regimes to enforce state sovereignty and limit a state's obligation to the Convention without violating it (Betts 2010). Even as border crossings increase, the comprehensive cost magnifies as well, in terms of money, safety, and rights. Borders are more militarized, expensive human smugglers have become the only feasible means to migration for many, and rights-bearing statuses are more difficult to obtain (Anderson, et al. 2009). Within the EU, a nation's obligation to provide an asylum seeker with basic necessities while reviewing their application is activated only once an individual has crossed their border (Hansen 2014). Thus, a state can limit its obligation by curbing an asylum seeker's access to its territory. These efforts are evident in visa requirements, declarations of safe country of origin, interdiction at sea, and the designation of airports as safe zones (Hansen 2014).

Access to asylum thus becomes managed by the travel regime's control of mobility. Such regulations constitute "regime shifting" (Betts 2010:14), transferring responsibility for a problem from one regime to another. States employ this shifting in order to minimize their commitment to reviewing applications, complying with minimum treatment standards, and granting asylum without violating the Convention (Betts 2010). Furthermore, language of a refugee crisis evokes fear and is used to justify harsh border protection laws that limit entry at the expense of asylum-seeker rights (Zolberg and Benda 2001). Similar to the "burden-sharing" terminology, the

implications of such loaded language merit a critical analysis outside the scope of this thesis (see Holmes and Castaneda 2016).

Minimizing a state's obligation to asylum seekers through enforcement of the travel and security regimes concurrently magnifies the role of globalized humanitarianism. This redirects the refugee system from the political to the non-governmental sphere in a "humanitarianization of asylum" (Fassin 2005:372). Miriam Ticktin (2016) identifies three problems with this shift. First, humanitarianism is rooted in notions of innocence. A worthy beneficiary must be a victim detached from the politics and responsibility of their plight. Yet it is unrealistic to imagine an apolitical individual lacking will, agency, or acumen, as it is often these very traits that facilitated their flight. Ticktin (2016:259) describes this as requiring "innocent sufferers to be represented in the passivity of their suffering, not in the action they take to confront and escape it."

Furthermore, innocence quickly entangles with its counterpart, guilt. For example, the 2015 ISIS attacks on Paris shifted refugees' characterization as innocent victims to guilty terrorists in a moment. This binary of innocence and guilt leaves no room for refugees who are neither victims nor criminals. Ticktin (2016) maintains that this schema "leave[s] no space for experiences of life... There is no way to recognize them, no law or language by which to give them space to live or die regular or mundane lives" (257-259).

Second, humanitarianism responds to emergency situations deemed unpredictable and transitory. This framework neglects the historical context and root causes of a crisis (Ticktin 2016). The global refugee condition, as described above, has a sustained history. The fact that the European border management agency Frontex has developed technologies such as sensors, cameras and drones, or that the EU and UNHCR have offshored asylum procedures to border countries such as Morocco since the 1990s to block migrant entry, betray the unpredictability and

temporality of an emergency (Ticktin 2016). Yet emergency rhetoric allows states to address the present rather than confront histories such as the drug war and arms trade or forsake the lucrative surveillance, detention and prison industries. This, again, limits a nation's obligation to asylum seekers (Ticktin 2016).

Finally, humanitarianism relies on compassion. In this context, asylum is granted through moral imperative, not political ideals. Fassin (2011) describes this as a discretionary humanitarianism that replaces the right to asylum. As such, the specificity of refugee status wanes and the asylum system loses validity (Fassin 2011). Ticktin (2014) refers to this as the "politics" or "regimes" of care that play a role in governing immigration. The humanitarian regime may thus actually delegitimize the human rights regime. In 1990s France, for example, a law was passed granting residency to critically ill undocumented immigrants. This consequently compelled some *sans papiers* ("those without papers") to self-inflict injury or infection (Ticktin, 2011). Within this humanitarian regime, rights rooted in legal principles have been reduced to paternalism. A state's display of humanitarian aid demonstrates generous compassion rather than recognition of a right to asylum, once again narrowing a nation's responsibility to asylum-seekers.

Finally, I consider *labor* as a fourth regime interacting with the *controlled travel*, *securitization* and *humanitarianism* regimes to shape a refugee regime complex. The labor regime is tied to the growing global dominance of the neoliberal project. In short, neoliberalism is rooted in self-governing actors who engage society through market-based relationships. This is manifest in the breakdown of public safety nets, deregulation of markets, privatization, and "commercialisation of nonprofit activities" (Evans, et al. 2005:92). Ticktin (2014:1018) declares that "neoliberal economic policies have increasingly become the global norm." To compete on the

global scale, the nation-state develops its bureaucratic, intellectual and common practices to shape a cultural revolution towards a capitalist society (Kearney 1991).

In addition to these internal transformations, Kearney (1991) describes two global processes that contributed to the development of the nation-state: “tension with other emergent absolute states...[and] the tension between the nation-state and its dependencies” (53). In other words, borders promote national unity, thus differentiating people on a global scale as citizens of particular nation-states to compete with other nations. Nation-state borders thus became important markers for belonging and non-belonging. Yet at the same time, socioeconomic differentiation is magnified *within* a country to garner cheap labor, such as through the blue-collar or undocumented working class.

These tensions are evident within the refugee regime. Regarding global tensions, nation-states compete with another and with transnational corporations on a stage dominated by neoliberal capitalism. This fierce race has contributed to forced displacement. The late Director of the Institute of Race Relations, Ambalavaner Sivanandan, argues that global capital has power. Through transnational aid and development agencies, for example, poorer nations are compelled to accept austerity measures that erode indigenous welfare provisions and tie them to foreign powers and capital. Sivanandan declares: “Resistance to economic immiseration is inseparable from resistance to political persecution. The economic migrant is also the political refugee... While giant corporations, richer than whole continents and more powerful than nation states, try to cohere the world economically, more and more people are being displaced from their countries and their homes” (Sivanandan 2001:88). This argument underscores the need to complicate the category of “refugee”. The 1951 Refugee Convention defines a refugee as “someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for

reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion” (UN General Assembly 1951). Yet this definition has considerable limitations. It neglects, for example, poverty or climate change as causes of flight. The UN estimates 50 million environmentally displaced persons in 2020, and up to 200 million by the middle of the century (Wennersten, et al. 2017).

In addition to impacting the movement of asylum seekers, neoliberal ideology is also embedded within their reception, illustrating the tension between nation-states and dependencies. Economic pragmatism can trump asylum pleas. Globalization increasingly calculates the worth of humanity in terms of marketplace value and economic contribution. Regarding migration, this competitiveness prioritizes highly skilled, wealthy, self-sufficient individuals who can immediately contribute to the economy (Arat-Koc 1999). Thus, the neoliberal regime integrates with the travel regime in order to favor a particular migrant (or refugee) subject.

The Canadian Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement (RCIS) highlights a trend in academic literature surrounding “neoliberalism’s concentration on the more immediate economic benefits of immigration and the economic focus of immigration policy making” (Root, et al. 2014:4) Dobrowolsky (2013:197) outlines the Canadian policy measures that neoliberal calculations favor, which are applicable to other neoliberal-driven states such as the US and Germany:

- a. attract highly skilled immigrants
- b. expand low wage, temporary foreign worker programs
- c. diversify immigration “entry doors” and make some more flexible
- d. cut admission and settlement costs
- e. encourage settlement in less well-populated areas
- f. tighten border controls and crack down on undocumented migrants
- g. change citizenship rules to reduce risks of undesired costs and unrealized benefits to the state

- h. sell immigration to the Canadian public ... through a policy rhetoric that emphasizes the hoped-for benefits of immigration while downplaying risks and disappointing outcomes (Dobrowolsky 2013:197).

Using this framework of a multifaceted global refugee complex, I use chapters 3.1 and 4.1 to consider how transnational regimes are unevenly integrated to shape the national re/settlement frameworks of the US and Germany. Rather than focusing merely on policies that are either conformed to or broken, I analyze how the nation-state attempts to shape refugee desires so the expected subjectification is a priority of the refugee as well. Instead of persuading a refugee to reproduce certain relations to the government, economy and society, the state uses constitutive rhetoric to teach values of identity (Charland 1987). As Dykstra-DeVette (2018:183) describes, “Charland’s (1987) constitutive rhetoric interprets resettlement not as an attempt to persuade refugees to be ‘good’ workers, community members, and citizens, but as a rhetorical process that teaches these values, and thereby constitutes refugees as ideal citizens.” James Boyd White (1989:x), founder of the constitutive rhetoric theory, describes this discourse as “the art of constituting character, community and culture in language.” Through this lens, I focus on three particular figures: the type of laborer, type of citizen, and type of neighbor a host nation envisions for a refugee. These correspond to the expected relations a refugee should have towards the economic, political, and social spheres.

In sections 3.2 and 4.2, I explore the discourse and practices of staff at refugee-serving organizations. By implementing federal policies, these organizations help bring refugee subjectification into lived reality. In sections 3.3 and 4.3, I recount refugees’ individual agency in the reproduction, appropriation, and rejection of three particular figures comprising this institutional subjectification. This intersection comprises the composite refugee subjectivity.

3.0 Bhutanese Refugees in Pittsburgh

3.1 Historical Context

The forced migration history of Bhutanese refugees reveals the junction of the refugee, labor, and travel regimes. Bhutan, a small nation between India and China, began commissioning craftsmen in 1620 from neighboring Nepal to build a *stupa* (place of meditation) and provide laborers for infrastructure projects. The migrants remained and settled in southern Bhutan, gaining the name Lhotshampa, which means people from the south (Shrestha, et al. 1998). Yet they lived in relative insecurity and only gained full citizenship under the 1958 Citizenship Act. Bhutan initiated planned development in the 1960s and joined the United Nations in 1971, increasing its development assistance and interaction with the global world. Also during this time, many Lhotshampas began occupying influential positions in the bureaucracy as a result of the government's efforts to incorporate them into mainstream society.

As these Bhutanese of Nepali origins grew in number and influence, they came to be seen as political, economic, and cultural threats. Consequently, Lhotshampas were systematically removed through a targeted census categorizing who is a “national” and through a “one nation, one people” policy mandating Bhutanese dress and language. The state justified its actions as a safeguard against a “demographic inundation.” Bhutan's era of economic growth occurred concurrently with the exile of 1/6 of its population. Most Lhotshampas fled to Nepal, where the UNHCR established refugee camps. In 2006 the US offered to resettle 60,000 Bhutanese refugees, who had by then been in camps for over 20 years (Neikirk and Nickson 2017).

The refugee camp was simultaneously a place of security and difficulty. Abhaya lived in one with her family for 18 years. Her marriage and her son's birth took place in the camp. Though she and her parents had initially tried living on their own in Nepal, they could not sustain a

livelihood and decided to enter the camp. Still, “the camp was really difficult,” she says. Dima, a fellow refugee who also married her husband in a Nepali camp, describes the conditions:

They provided us with oil and rice every fifteen days. Vegetables every seven days. And they provide oil, rice, lentils and sugar for fifteen days. And they gave us a little land to build a hut...And they provided kerosene gas for a month I think...In the hut there is no electricity.

This dependence on humanitarian aid and the difficult camp conditions were compounded by discrimination and exclusion from society. The refugees’ expulsion from Bhutan and marginalization within Nepali society also intersected with national economic interests, creating a stark contradiction of rejected bodies yet welcomed labor. Neten’s story exemplifies this discrepancy. He and his wife Abhaya were originally resettled to the Bronx. He currently works full-time for the Bhutanese Community Group (BCG) in Pittsburgh, managing citizenship classes in seven locations and leading community outreach. While in a Nepali refugee camp, he helped start a school in the camp. After volunteer teaching there for two years, he received a scholarship for two years of higher education in Kathmandu, located a 13-hour bus ride from the refugee camp. Upon completion, he was hired as a teacher in private boarding schools in Kathmandu. Yet his value as a working teacher was separated from his value as a culture-bearing individual. Neten described the discrimination he experienced due to his refugee status, yet a personal resolve to affirm his identity:

I know some tried [to hide their refugee status] because they wanted to avoid being looked down upon. But then I always found it very difficult to speak lies. So I dared to tell the truth rather than feel humiliated telling lies...Sometimes I felt that, if I had not revealed that I was a refugee, some colleagues would not behave in that way. But it was better than telling lies.... I didn’t look any different than the Nepalese. Except for a slightly different dialect, we spoke the same language. I had the same last name as many people in Nepal have. So it wouldn’t cause any problem. But I thought: I am ok with telling the truth of who I am.

Dima likewise affirmed the discrimination of Bhutanese refugees in Nepal and explained why she chose to remain discrete:

We lived as refugees in Nepal, and our country is Bhutan. And Nepal said, “They are refugees, they are homeless, they don’t have anything...they come into our land, are sitting here, they don’t have any legal right for anything.” We had to hide our identity when we were in Nepal because refugees don’t have legal documents, so we don’t get a government job or get into a nice private school because our identity is a refugee.... I worked there but hid my identity. I said I am a local of that country.

Dima’s husband, however, did not conceal his status because his expertise in math and science was needed. This again highlights the separation of labor from the body. If a refugee offers valuable labor, his otherwise despised status can be overlooked. Dima explains:

My husband never hid his identity. He would always say “I am a Bhutanese” and tell the truth. Because he is a student of math and science, they still hired him. Because it’s hard to find a math and science teacher, they provided a job.

Neten further describes the implications of borders on identity and mobility:

People say...borders are nothing, it is one country, the world is one country. But practically, it is not. You feel when you have to cross borders. And when people ask you “where are you from?” And when you cannot say you are from Bhutan although you came from there, you were born there, you lived there. It is painful. So becoming or belonging to a country is an accomplishment...I was stateless for twenty two years. That is adding seventeen years of my life in exile, and then five years here before I obtained my citizenship. I always used to think that I didn’t belong to any country, because Bhutan didn’t want us back, and Nepal was not in a position to give us citizenship.

Being resettled in the US gives hope of obtaining that which Bhutanese lacked in Nepal: self-sustained livelihood, affirmed identity, and freedom of movement. Rather than relying on humanitarian aid in a UNHCR-run camp, resettled refugees will provide for themselves. Instead of hiding their national identity or status, Bhutanese will be welcomed into the American melting pot as resettled refugees. No longer bound to a camp that can only be left with permission, resettled refugees will gain mobility. Yet as subsequent sections reveal, these hopes are not fully realized. Rather, actual conditions mirror the marginalization evidenced in Nepal. First, the expectations set

forth in the US national resettlement framework perpetuate the disembodied labor seen in Nepal. A self-sustained livelihood is expected yet difficult to achieve. Furthermore, Bhutanese are expected to dampen their cultural identity so as to be less conspicuous. These findings are described in greater detail in subsequent sections. Finally, mobility proved to be a continued challenge. As Neten describes:

I had the biggest pain when I had to travel.... We get travel documents as refugees and not passports. And I had lots of trouble in airports, many airports. Many people working in the airport don't know that refugees travel with travel documents. They kept saying "passport," and I kept saying, "I am a refugee and this is all the documentation we get to travel." At one time, I almost lost my flight because they didn't know what a travel document is... So that is one pain when you are not a national of any country—travel difficulties.

The following section traces the history of US asylum policies to its current formulation to provide context for an elaborated explanation of the conditions described above, particularly in light of local organizations' practices and refugee responses.

3.2 US Refugee Regime

As described in the previous chapter, codification of asylum policies emerged only in the 20th century as a result of the World Wars. Prior to 1945, individuals seeking resettlement to the US had to be sponsored by an individual who would ensure they did not become a public burden (Brown and Scribner 2014). President Truman's executive order in 1945 prioritized the resettlement of displaced persons and acknowledged voluntary organizations (called 'Volags') as sponsoring agencies. Refugee resettlement thus came almost exclusively under the jurisdiction of "nonprofit voluntary agencies [that] assumed primary responsibility for assisting refugees" (Moore 1980). The Displaced Persons Act of 1948 further distinguished refugees from immigrants to circumvent the stringent quota system. Yet the resettlement framework operated on an *ad hoc* basis, responding to specific refugee populations as they emerged. With the influx of Hungarian refugees in 1956, for example, the federal government began paying Volags approximately \$40

per refugee, with the caveat that this funding did not constitute a precedent for future migrations. The Cuban Refugee Program (1959) and Indochinese Refugee Assistance Program (1975) further illustrate the case-by-case framework. These provisional programs led to inconsistencies, for example with Volags receiving \$1,100 for resettling Soviet refugees and only \$500 for resettling Indochinese refugees. In 1979, former Senator Dick Clark as newly appointed United States Coordinator for Refugee Affairs called for a standardization of federal refugee policy.

The Refugee Act of 1980 was passed the following year to outline the objectives of the US resettlement program. A central objective was promoting refugee self-sufficiency, defined as financial independence. Elimination of the original 60-day work exemption in 1982 made economic self-sufficiency the singular primary objective, while other goals outlined in the Act such as employment training and language acquisition were disregarded.

The refugee resettlement program today continues under this framework. Federal support for Volags and the refugees they sponsor flows from two agencies: the State Department's Bureau of Populations, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) and the Department of Health & Human Services' Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) (Brown and Scribner 2014). The PRM's objective is resettling the most vulnerable populations. It provides Volags with \$2,075 per refugee (FY 2016), \$1,125 of which must be spent on direct support of refugees. This leaves \$950 for the operation of the Volag (Bruno and Library of Congress. Congressional Research 2017). Although the PRM states that this funding is meant to ensure basic needs and case management prior to and for the first 90 days after a refugee's arrival, a 2009 financial analysis concluded that the federal contribution covers only 39% of the total costs accumulated in this period (Kriehbiel 2009).

The ORR operates with the goal of promoting self-sufficiency through providing employment-related services as well as Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA) and Refugee Medical

Assistance (RMA). The RCA and RMA were originally available for 36 months, but that was quickly reduced to 18 months in 1982 and to eight months (its current standing) in 1991 with the argument that such welfare inhibited self-sufficiency (Brown and Scribner 2014). A Government Accountability Office report from 1990 concluded that ORR funding per refugee declined 45% between 1985 and 1989 (United States General Accounting 1990). This aligned with a general shift in US policy away from federal support systems. Benson argues that “market-based rationale and strategies became the basis for most social policy in the neoliberalizing policy environment of the early 1980s” (Benson 2016). The Omnibus Reconciliation Act of 1981, for example, introduced the largest peacetime cuts to federal domestic discretionary spending up until that point (Ellwood 1982). This restricted funding continued through the decades; the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations stated in a report entitled *Abandoned Upon Arrival* that “resettlement efforts in many US cities are underfunded, overstretched, and failing to meet the basic needs of the refugee populations” (Congress Senate Committee on Foreign Relations 2010).

The US refugee regime’s current framework reveals that its inception was contemporaneous with an era of privatization and marketization. Today, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the era of globalization and transnationalism has created fear surrounding the loss of geographic sovereignty and the culture contained within it. The shift towards nationalism and securitization is reshaping refugee figures from a “dependent or docile worker” (Benson 2016:542) to that of a threatening, radical other. This fear is exploited in political far-right arguments that immigrants are to blame for unemployment, social fragmentation, and failed migration and integration policies themselves (Flint and Robinson 2008). This trend has become increasingly evident in the United States. According to the PRM, in 2015, “the U.S. refugee resettlement program reflects the core values of the United States and our strong tradition of

providing a safe haven for the oppressed.” In 2017, Secretary of State Pompeo updated this sentiment: “This year’s refugee ceiling also reflects our commitment, our commitment to protect the most vulnerable around the world while prioritizing the safety and well-being of the American people...We will continue to assist the world’s most vulnerable while never losing sight of our first duty, serving the American people.” As this thesis will illustrate, the US refugee regime today is at the juncture of reconciling the ideals of a self-sufficient laborer with that of a compliant citizen and assimilating, nonthreatening neighbor.

3.2.1 Laborer

The national shift towards marketization and privatization, concurrent with the emergence of the Refugee Act of 1980, established the refugee subjectification of a hardworking and rapidly self-sufficient laborer that dominates today. All refugees are authorized to work upon arrival in the US and acquisition of a social security number. Such permission is vital because refugees do, indeed, need to begin working within a few weeks of arrival to sustain themselves. The Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of State provides a one-time sum of \$1,125 per refugee to pay for direct refugee services and essentials such as housing, clothing, and food. This amount is meant to pay for approximately the first three months in the US. However, the Refugee Act outlines that federal cash assistance is conditioned upon quick employment: “Cash assistance provided...to an employable refugee is conditioned, except for good cause shown, on the refugees’ registration with an appropriate agency providing employment services...and on the refugee’s acceptance of appropriate offers of employment” effective two months after a refugee’s arrival (Benson 2016:539).

Emerging alongside the role of a self-sufficient laborer today is that of a compliant citizen and assimilating neighbor. Though often framed with the rhetoric of combatting the threatening,

culturally other, assimilation is also an economic calculation. As Kearney (1991:53) argues, “Modern capitalism necessarily entailed formation of nation-state as a cultural revolution.” Consolidating internal cultural differentiation strengthens laborer motivation by promoting national unity and hope for a better life. Incentivized workers, in turn, foster national fitness for global competition. Kearney (1991) describes the US as an embodiment of this ideal, with its “power to dissolve the ethnicity of its huddled immigrant masses and to reconstruct it as ‘American’” (55).

Foundational to the American narrative is “social mobility and economic independence” (Dykstra-DeVette 2018), the crux of the American Dream. Yet the rhetoric of unity and prosperity remains a façade to exhibit to the rest of the world because, at the same time, the state must ensure “the reproduction of difference as social inequality” (Kearney 1991:180). A capitalist state requires compliant, subordinated low-wage workers, and refugees often fulfill these roles. As such, an effort to consolidate cultural differentiation is evident in refugees’ expected repatriation as an American in speech, culture, and thought. Yet the perpetuation of social inequality is evidenced in their inferior position within the market. In other words, a nation-state must simultaneously elaborate and resolve the contradiction of differentiation in the market and unity in the community (Kearney 1991). One binary will invariably outweigh the other. Robert Ware warns of market differentiation dominating and thereby permeating community:

Communities are the place for public moral activity, while markets are the place for private economic activity. Communities, at their best, foster recognition, care and co-operation. Markets foster anonymity, independence and competition. Communities are considered the place for openness, security and trust. Markets are the place for secrecy, insecurity and distrust.... Communities look for dignity and equality. Markets look for fitness and success...The problem is that our society is awash with market but in need of substantive community with public values (Ware 1999:307).

Comparing the ethnographic data of this study against Ware's description, it becomes evident that the market is winning this tug-of-war. Evans et al. (2005) describe this shift as one "from a 'public service orientation to a 'new market-based managerialism'" (93) among non-profits. When the market paradigm is deemed the only model capable of producing "effectiveness, efficiency, and economy," the business model is applied to non-profit service organizations (Evans, et al. 2005:79).

3.2.2 Citizen

In this thesis, the term 'citizen' refers to a refugee's expected relation to the government. It entails legal status (refugee, permanent resident, or citizen), as well as the training of prospective citizens. Ong and Ebrary (2003) describe this as cultural reconstruction, or the "sociocultural process of subjectification" (28) through which refugees are crafted into "New Americans."

Bhutanese refugees who are resettled to the United State via applying for asylum with the UNHCR while in a refugee camp begin their relation to the US government long before arrival. While in a Nepali refugee camp, individuals must complete registration and an interview with the UNHCR to be granted refugee status. If their application is approved, the UNHCR may refer them to nations such as the US or Canada for third country resettlement. If the US accepts the referral, a rigorous vetting process, including multiple background checks, screenings, and interviews, is conducted by the Departments of State and Homeland Security. The entire procedure can take 18-24 months. Sangay is a Bhutanese refugee working at the BCG. Having lived in a Nepali refugee camp for 17 years before arriving in Pittsburgh in 2008, he described the challenge of the asylum and vetting process, contrasting it to the narrative that refugees can easily slip into the country:

We are given two or three days of orientation in the refugee camp before everything is processed. After all the documents are cleared, the orientation is the last step. So it takes a long time. So there is a lot of noise right now during the election that refugees can come here easily. It is not easy. It took us one year, some people it takes two years. That waiting

process is very long. Case-working, making an individual history of each and every family member, background check, back and forth with the Nepali government where we live. So they do background checks with the local Nepali criminal system. Then they do the US system. It takes such a long time. Then health screening, if you have any infectious diseases that you carry over to America. So many things that you undergo. So the waiting process is one of the toughest I know. I don't know, there is a lot of political rhetoric around it that anyone can slip in here easily. It is not so easy.

This elaborate process highlights again the distinction between asylum with settlement (integration) and *resettlement*. Third countries such as the US select which refugees will be accepted for resettlement. Yet despite this rigorous vetting, rhetoric surrounding the perceived danger of refugees who slip into the country unnoticed and pose a terrorist threat remains. This uninformed narrative caricatures refugees as cunning intruders and pre-positions them in opposition to the state.

Those refugees who are selected for resettlement are flown to the US with a pre-purchased plane ticket that they must eventually pay off. Refugees are received in the airport by staff from their Volag-assigned resettlement agency, such as the CSC. They are taken to a Department of Human Services office to apply for benefits, and to the Social Security Office to obtain a Social Security number. Refugees receive eight months of refugee healthcare, after which they can apply for Medicaid. After one year, they must apply for a Green Card to change their status to Legal Permanent Resident. After five years, refugees are eligible to apply for citizenship through a process that involves passing a civics exam and being interviewed.

3.2.3 Neighbor

Little to no federal oversight is involved in prescribing a refugee's relation to society. A brief orientation workshop may be conducted overseas while individuals are still in a refugee camp, but no federal mandate addresses language attainment or community integration. Refugees have freedom of movement; they do not need to remain in the community in which they were initially

resettled. The expectation of an assimilating, inconspicuous neighbor is more enforced at the local level, as described in the following section.

3.3 Localized Refugee Regime

Pittsburgh, a city known for being the original Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood, is home to around 5,000 Bhutanese residents. The children's show, created by Fred Rogers in 1962, provided thoughtful discussion on topics such as feelings, family, and differences. The program's theme song ends with the oft-repeated phrase: "Won't you please, won't you please—please, won't you be my neighbor?" While Pittsburgh prides itself in neighborliness, my ethnographic research at the CSC, a local resettlement agency for refugees, reveals the factors that complicate this idealistic vision and confine it to a world as fictional as Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood of Make-Believe. Driven by the ideals promoted by federal policy, the resettlement agency enforces subjectification that characterizes what type of neighbor, citizen and laborer refugees are expected to become.

To understand a local organization's relation to the refugee, it is important to first understand the federal government's efforts to shape the organization itself. This provides vital insight into how organizations may perpetuate this subjectification when interacting with refugees.

In the United States, privatization outsources refugee resettlement to a public-private partnership (Benson 2016). The International Organization for Migration assigns vetted refugees to one of nine national Volags, which allocate them to regional resettlement agencies. These agencies have signed a cooperative agreement with the State Department to provide essential services to refugees for the first 30-90 days after arrival. The CSC is one of three resettlement agencies in Pittsburgh.

Through the privatization of refugee resettlement, welfare provisions become "infused with a pro-business agenda and managerialism.... A new policy strategy adopting a business

model that redefines the policy goals and outcomes of the human services domain in predominantly economic terms” (Benson 2016:523). The work of the resettlement agency is thus itself framed within a competitive marketplace context. For example, staff must pitch their client to prospective landlords even before the refugee arrives in America. They must assure a landlord that the refugee will become quickly self-sufficient and support their argument with employment statistics and program descriptions. Jane is a CSC staff member who has experience in housing assistance. She describes the challenge of persuading landlords to accept refugees and the tactics she employs:

Landlords also are concerned about their ability to pay rent. Renting to a refugee from a financial standpoint can be risky. They have a guaranteed two or three months of rental assistance from the agency, but beyond that we can't guarantee. We talk to landlords about our employment programs and our success rates in finding jobs for clients; I tell them about our connections to employers and play up the fact that, even though they can't get help from us, we have great employment programs and professionals who are dedicated to finding work.

Jane also describes competition among resettlement agencies themselves as they fight for the same jobs and housing for their clients. Evans et al. (2005) affirm that the neoliberal market-based regulation of non-profits requires them to “engage in more competitive practices with negative consequences for nonprofit mission, culture and labour-management practices” (73).

Financial instability also undercuts long-term planning and contributes to a non-profit's precarity (Evans, et al. 2005). In the US, a resettlement agency receives funding for its operational services per capita—\$950 for each refugee they receive. Since the refugee acceptance ceiling is set by the president each year, an agency's funding changes annually based on the political climate. Given the numerous travel bans and anti-refugee sentiment of the current administration, refugee reception numbers have significantly dropped. One of the three resettlement agencies in Pittsburgh was forced to close its reception services in 2018 as a result. This aligns with the observation made

by Evans, Richmond and Shields (2005:92): “For the nonprofit sector, neoliberal restructuring is resulting in the commercialisation of nonprofit activities and the loss of autonomy as NPOs [non-profit organizations] become tied to government-controlled contracts” (Evans, et al. 2005). Furthermore, a significant portion of an organization’s resources is allotted to securing the funds vital to operation. A Canadian study estimated in 2002 that the cost of completing paperwork required by a funder “constitutes as much as 20% of the value of the contract – an amount rarely acknowledged in the funding award itself” (Evans, 2005:86).

Given their dependence on federal funding, resettlement agencies tend not to take explicit political stances. As such, non-profits can help legitimize the market-driven paradigm by depoliticizing human needs, thereby annulling the need for federal safety nets (Evans, et al. 2005). They can operate within the system to treat the symptoms of suffering rather than reshaping the framework to address causes. As mentioned, a fundamental aspect of the system is outsourcing public welfare to private or public-private partnership organizations. These entities, such as resettlement agencies, are thus a vital aspect of filling the gaps left by a privatized, marketized regime. Since the gaps *are* being addressed to a degree, the government can justify taking less responsibility. This humanitarianization of resettlement mirrors the humanitarianization of asylum that Fassin (2005) describes, whereby the nation-state similarly shifts its obligations to another entity. Such shifting leaves resettlement agencies to fend for themselves, as evidenced by CSC staff describing their reliance on charities. For example, they resort to temporary housing in a religious institution or with a community member when no apartment can be secured for an arriving family. They also seek additional money through agency-organized fundraisers, Sadaqah (voluntary charity) from a mosque, or an emergency fund at the resettlement agency.

This trend is echoed in Ann Porter's argument (2012) that the free market shrinks the social welfare state and places the responsibility of "social reproduction and basic caring needs" (27) on the nuclear, self-sufficient family. If the family support system fails, individuals should turn to the non-profit sector (Evans, et al. 2005). The organizations within this sector are themselves precarious and dependent on competing for grants and funding. Ideas of self-sufficiency are thus not only promoted, but essentially demanded due to the continued curtailment of social safety nets (Arat-Koc 1999). Poppendieck (1999) argues that this makes it "easier for the government to shed its responsibility for the poor.... It is not an accident that poverty grows deeper as our charitable responses to it multiply" (5-6).

The federal government can avoid responsibility by subjecting non-profits to narrow bureaucratic accountability (Evans, et al. 2005), creating a significant power dynamic. According to the Refugee Act, states must "meet standards, goals, and priorities, developed by the ORR director" and submit an annual report "on the uses of funds" to receive federal funding (Benson 2016:533). It must furthermore "submit to the (ORR) Director a plan which provides a description of how the State intends to encourage effective resettlement and to promote economic self-sufficiency as quickly as possible" (Benson 2016:536). Evans et al. (2005) conclude that "the result is centralised decentralisation; the state is able to control outcomes through market-based contracts and managerialist accountability structures. This is a conscious consequence of neoliberal governance restructuring" (88). As such, the US resettlement model involves significant state regulation. Yet it is manifest in a more subversive manner so the state cannot be held accountable when resettlement is unsuccessful. In placing the blame for insufficient services on non-profits, the state can avoid sustainable infrastructure and long-term funding. Understanding a local

organization's subordination to the government is important for analyzing how the nonprofit relates to the refugees under its own ordinance.

3.3.1 Laborer

Interviews with CSC staff indicate that their relation to refugees is influenced by the same market strategies to which they are subject under the federal government. Benson (2016) reports that the 1979 congressional hearings surrounding establishment of the Refugee Act emphasized managerialism, which “focuses on bottom-line results, accountability, and performance, thus reducing costs and making agencies more cost effective. Instead of outcomes such as refugee wellness, appropriate transition, and successful long-term integration, policy debates [are] centered on minimizing costs” (Benson 2016:533-534). As such, resettlement agencies have been subject to top-down monitoring since the inception of a federally standardized refugee policy. To comply with expectations outlined in the Act, staff at the CSO attempt to create a rapidly self-sufficient laborer.

The federal government provides the resettlement agency with a one-time sum of \$2,075 per refugee, \$950 of which may be used for the operation of the agency. During its three-month case management period, the agency uses the remaining \$1,125 to pay for a refugee's apartment and furnishings, an initial “culturally appropriate meal,” and fees for documentation such as a Social Security card. The federal money does not stretch far. Jane explains that the cheapest monthly rent is \$500, so it is impossible to pay three months of rent (let alone other basic necessities) for a single refugee. The cost of the plane ticket a refugee uses to arrive in the US must also be repaid. To prolong the amount of time funded, resettlement agencies try to settle their clients in low-income housing areas and register them for SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). In addition, the Allegheny County Department of Human Services funds a

six-agency partnership designed for service coordination and connecting all migrants to community resources. Yet the financial stability of refugees remains precarious. Consequently, the staff members emphasize financial self-sufficiency as the primary goal for refugees. This balance of providing humanitarian aid while ensuring self-sufficiency mirrors Sivanandan's sober analysis in *Refugees from Globalism*: "We judge our duties and responsibilities to others not by what is owed to them, but by what it costs us" (Sivanandan 2001:90).

The language used by agency staff and in CSC programming also offers key insight into dominant notions of refugee subjectification. As VanDijk (2001) explains, critical discourse analysis examines "the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (Schiffrin, et al. 2001:352). Indeed, the language used in the CSC emphasizes market-based strategies. The agency implicitly defines a consumer relationship between itself and the refugee by calling its programming 'services' and addressing refugees as 'clients'. Services the agency offers in addition to case management are aimed primarily at employment rather than language attainment or cultural orientation. In addition, refugees are not educated about workers' rights or labor unions, further highlighting that the market strategy promotes the figure of a compliant, hard-working refugee who quietly endures poor or rights-violating conditions.

Overemphasizing economic self-sufficiency can appropriate civic and community engagement towards the goal of financial self-sufficiency, rather than valuing them as activities that foster belonging and participation. It furthermore reduces refugees' full personhood to economic productivity. For example, resettlement agencies often encourage a refugee's social network for the purpose of being resourceful within the community and securing financial independence. This is evidenced in the agency's reliance on charity from often religious and ethnic

communities to supplement insufficient federal funds. Civic engagement can also be appropriated for the goal of self-sufficiency, as more fully described in the subsequent section (3.3.2). In short, refugees are encouraged to apply for citizenship to gain access to certain safety-net benefits.

These examples illustrate the primacy of the laborer figure in refugee subjectification. A study conducted at the US base of one of the world's largest international refugee resettlement agencies concluded that "resettlement organizations both enable better material realities for refugees, while also producing economic subjectivities and proliferating neoliberal values" (Dykstra-DeVette 2018:179). Systems focusing on financial independence often adopt the term "empowerment" to package economic self-sufficiency in a word suggesting strength, independence and self-determination. Yet this language itself is one of neoliberal and humanitarian agendas, and can carry the tension of paternalistically bestowed capacity. The fixation on economic self-sufficiency furthermore neglects other indicators of agency. This omission is intentionally employed to promote a particular refugee subject. Sharma (2008:20) explains: "under neoliberalism, empowerment has quickly become a preferred tool with which to produce self-governing and self-caring social actors, orient them towards the free market, direct their behaviors toward entrepreneurial ends, and attach them to the project of rule."

It is important to note, however, that this emphasis on the laborer figure is initiated on the federal level. Local organizations are compelled to enforce it due to their own instability and dependence on government funding and philanthropy. It is thus often the host community and local organizations that experience the greatest strain to accommodate new arrivals with scarce federal support. Besteman's (2016) ethnographic research of Somali Bantu refugees in Maine illustrates the response of civil servants and social workers who work in taxing environments and recognize the constraining structural conditions. Jane at the CSC, for example, acknowledges that the

expectations placed on refugees are impossible for some. She admits: “I talked about the three months—and yes I push it for every client. But do I personally think that it's too short? Yes. Can you accomplish what you need to accomplish in three months? No.” Yet this reality seems to be accepted with fatalistic resignation:

I think the challenge is also just wanting to do as much as you can and seeing clients still fail. Knowing that you're doing everything you can, but maybe that family is not ready. And maybe they won't be ready. Sometimes you do everything you can do and it's just not enough. And that's really hard to see. And it's hard to accept that it's not your fault, it's not the client's fault, it's just the circumstances around their situation.... We have clients where they will never be out of that crisis zone, ever.

The word “failure” indicates an inadequacy on the part of the actor—the refugee—despite Jane's statement that it is neither the client's nor the agency's fault. Jane shared the story of a particular client, a single mother with seven children. Her husband was killed shortly before the family's resettlement to the US:

And when she came here, she flatlined. She had no idea. She has lost all her ability to parent. She lost her ability to keep her house clean. She lost her ability to engage people. She was in the stupor the whole time.

After two years in the US, this single mother is still in the same condition. Despite her previous comment, Jane points out the mother's inadequacy:

She doesn't fully grasp of that she needs to contribute at least something. She thinks she can apply for disability and then everything will be fine, but it's not really working out for her. And she seems to blame the agencies and everyone else who's working with her.

Jane's frustration with the situation was palpable, and further evidenced in the frequent shifting of whose responsibility it is. A few moments later, for example, Jane candidly states the inadequacy of the resettlement framework to help the single mother:

We see that the system we've created for her is just not enough for her. And it will never be enough. And it is just hard to see that because a lot of our clients will never be safe until their children can be the ones who are providing for them. Their children are going to be the ones who are going to assimilate and learn the language and learn the financial system and learn the banking system, and that's when that family will be okay.... The systems are

against her. And until something either happens with her or her family can provide for her more, nothing can change.

This mix of helplessness in a cruel system, hopelessness for a “crisis zone” family, and criticism of a “failed” refugee illustrates the tug-of-war in which local agencies find themselves. Pressure from the federal government demands they enforce the self-sufficient laborer figure and blame those who fail. Yet the humanitarian bent to this line of work and personal interaction with clients seem to lend greater understanding and empathy for the complex factors preventing independence. Still, the staff’s awareness of the system breeds a degree of resignation and acquiescence, as evidenced by the appropriation of citizen and neighbor figures to promote self-sufficiency.

This somber acceptance is reflected in Malkki’s (1996) essay on refugees from Rwanda and Burundi living in Tanzania. De-politicizing and de-historicizing refugees into passive objects of aid can make humanitarian interventions seem an inevitable, natural response to refugees, who are often similarly characterized in nature-terms as an unescapable “miserable sea of humanity.” (377). Malkki (1996) describes the “almost laboratory-like, tragic clarity of view into the larger question of humanitarian intervention” (390) displayed in mass forced migration. Indeed, as the CSC workers describe, the system’s flaws are evident. Yet a restructuring of the process seems as impossible as reversing a current’s flow.

3.3.2 Citizen

Resettlement agency discourse and activities indicate that refugees should interact with the government by becoming compliant, non-demanding citizens. This is partially driven by the organization’s acknowledgement of citizenship as a goal of refugees. In this sense, an agency can adapt its goals not only towards federal priorities, but also towards refugee priorities. As Kate puts it:

In the time that I've been working here, three of my co-workers have become citizens who came here as refugees, and my boss became a citizen. He did not come here as a refugee, he came here on a student visa and stayed on a work visa, but seeing what it means to them I guess helps. Especially seeing how much it meant to my boss. You get the right to vote, something that we as Americans take for granted. How many Americans showed up to vote in the last election? Pathetic. But that is their pride and joy. Being able to vote for the first time in your life in the United States is really powerful for them. Because of their country, where they came from, they weren't able to vote. As refugees they weren't able to vote, and if they were, in Syria for example, the current leader's father was the leader, the president. They come from places that have no voting rights or so much corruption that it doesn't matter. Yes, absolutely, citizenship is goal number one.

Yet the citizen-figure remains deeply connected to the laborer figure. Kate describes how the CSC appropriates a refugee's goal of citizenship to promote the agency's primary goal of self-sufficiency:

Citizenship is a goal for everyone. And I think that's something we, the resettlement agencies, need to talk about sooner. But it just seems so far off. Refugees are able to apply for citizenship at year five. So we talk about that initially, and we talk about it from an employment standpoint and an ESL standpoint. We remind clients that, I know it's hard to think about now, but five years from now you need to take your citizenship class and your test, and you need to be ready for that. So we're constantly encouraging clients to think about that, especially because there are certain benefits that are dependent upon citizenship, Social Security being one of them. If you're a seventy-five-year-old refugee and you get SSI benefits through Social Security, if you don't naturalize by year seven, those benefits are cut off. If that is what provides for you and supports you, that is a lifeline for you to be able to sustain your life here. So we're really working with clients to keep that in the back of their minds.

This illustrates Ong's (2016) argument that the privatized and marketized context in which resettlement agencies such as the CSC operate “(dis)articulates citizenship,” by which “components formerly tied to citizenship—rights, entitlements—are becoming disarticulated from one another and rearticulated with governing strategies that promote an economic logic in defining, evaluating, and protecting certain categories of subjects and not others” (16). Benson (2016) furthermore argues that “as outsiders and as would-be citizens still in formation, refugees were perhaps taken for granted as not fully deserving, and their rights and entitlements were assumed

to be conditioned upon their obligations and duties to the state. Refugees' relation to the social state was thus contractualized in the first place, and vulnerable to commodification" (543).

3.3.3 Neighbor

Interviews with Jane and Kate indicate that a refugee is expected to interact with the host society by seeking assistance from a social network when needed (family, friends, and an ethnic or religious community) rather than expecting federal aid. Community engagement is thus encouraged for the purpose of ensuring a social-based rather than federal-based safety net.

Complementing their emphasis on a refugee's financial independence, agency staff frequently mentioned refugee characteristics (or deficiencies) that hinder resettlement by violating the expectation of an assimilating, inconspicuous neighbor. These barriers include lack of education, unrestrained cultural practices, and inappropriate expectations. Refugees should adapt to local customs to avoid drawing attention or causing disruption. Jane, for example, recounted stories of refugee families clogging sinks with fish scales and rice or slaughtering a chicken in their driveway. She also described needing to "explain everything" to refugees from low-educated backgrounds or under-developed regions. Tutorials include using appliances, adjusting the thermostat, housekeeping, and food storage. Jane additionally explains teaching "concepts that we help clients to wrap their mind around," such as paying rent or not sending a friend to work for you if you are sick.

The deficiency regarded as most severe, though, is that of inappropriate expectations. This includes requesting a TV or microwave and wanting employment as a lawyer or professor. The desire for unaffordable commodities or an esteemed profession does not fit into the worker ideal, which necessitates that the exploitable laborer work for survival, not comfort or status. This is not necessarily a personal opinion of the agency staff. Rather, they are compelled by the restrictive

federal system to ensure that refugees understand their place in society so they can subsist after the first three months of aid. Jane explains that this involves a reality check for the refugees:

It's been entertaining to say the least. We're trying, we're trying very hard. They're also trying us. And I love this job, I love working with the clients, but we spend a lot of time bringing the clients back down.

The attention to correcting deficiencies intensifies into an evaluation of refugees as either 'good' or 'difficult' clients. This frequently depends on their reflection of a hardworking laborer, non-demanding citizen, and inconspicuous neighbor. Jane described good clients as those who accept any job and housing. Difficult clients, in contrast, had higher expectations or goals that needed to be managed.

The Burmese and the Nepali overall have been tremendously easy to work with. They were willing to take any job. They were willing to live in most any place for at least a year.... When you're coming from a camp setting, if you're Somali and lived in a camp for twenty years, you know what a refugee camp is like, you're accustomed to cooking over a fire and maybe living in a hut. Housing is not your biggest concern. If the housing is not perfect, that's okay because it is a house. Same with the Bhutanese and Burmese. But the Iraqis were coming from a very westernized society where they had money, they had cars, they had apartments. And for them to come here and have to take the bus and consider a job as a housekeeper, there was a lot of blow back. That was a very challenging population to work with in that regard. We spend a lot of time explaining why you can't be a lawyer here yet. Or how we can help you with that, but that that is a dream goal and right now we're working on survival. And we had a lot of pushback about the lack of cars and TVs and microwaves and computers provided--and none of that is on the list of what we are obligated to provide, obviously.

This evaluation indicates that the US resettlement framework establishes livelihood standards in comparison to the poorest country of origin conditions. Unstable housing (Bhutanese refugees told me they rebuilt their huts every few years) is the standard, so any apartment in the US is considered better than that, and therefore sufficient. Unemployment is made the standard, so unskilled labor is sufficient. Refugees are expected to be thankful for work that offers little opportunity for upward mobility or professional growth. Flowing from this assumption is the

evaluation that refugees who accept these conditions as sufficient are considered good, and those who do not are difficult.

Expectations regarding comfort or social status are thus rejected by the US resettlement framework when they conflict with the primary laborer figure. This finding is echoed by Bridget Anderson's (2013) claim that state policy categorizes immigrants as 'good' or 'bad' based on their community value. The good migrant embraces the ideal of self-sufficiency, whereas the bad migrant is dependent on welfare. Similarly, in her study of Filipino migration to Canada, Pauline Barber (2008) found that the "ideal migrant" was one who adapted to the neoliberal regime, for example through sacrifice and willingness to work long hours without complaint about issues such as labor code violations (Gardiner Barber 2008). In another Canadian study, Shpaizman (2010) confirms that free market policies are designed to construct a self-reliant and self-sufficient immigrant. Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017) would likely describe the Iraqis' desire for employment commensurate with their skills as an everyday expression of resistance to productive power. Rather than accepting the ideal refugee laborer figure, they "contest the categorization of their identities as passive, victim-like, non-violent, and compliant" (Milner and Wojnarowicz 2017:12).

In summary, the local CSC defines resettlement primarily as an embodiment of the laborer figure, while that of a citizen or neighbor is secondary. When asked at which point a refugee can be considered 'resettled', Jane responds by saying that successful resettlement is evidenced when the refugee no longer needs the agency's help:

I think the point where a refugee reaches resettlement, is the point where they stop coming back to you. People always ask me, what's the best part about one of these jobs? And I always think, sad as it is, when I don't see clients anymore. Because they're not coming back to the office anymore because they don't need anymore. To me, that's when the client has reached a settlement. They could live the rest of their life even without citizenship, even if they never get the Green Card, because their initial visa that let them into the country

lets them stay forever. You don't have to get your Green Card or be naturalized, you just don't have the rights in there in terms of voting or whatever. To me, a client has reached resettlement when they are self-sufficient not to come back to you anymore. They're working, they are learning the language, they are providing for their family. That is the goal of resettlement. Naturalization is a secondary goal, and I would say that is more of a personal goal for a lot of our clients, and in a lot of cases it doesn't have that much to do with resettlement. It's such an afterthought.

From the CSC perspective, the primary aim of resettlement is economic self-sufficiency. Citizenship and its implications are discussed almost flippantly (“voting or whatever...such an afterthought”). Community integration, a social network, or sense of belonging are not mentioned at all. Within this framework, financial independence (fulfillment of the laborer figure) is the foundation for eventual civic and community engagement (fulfillment of the citizen and neighbor figures). This, in turn, devalues refugees’ goals of citizenship and community.

3.4 Bhutanese Refugees

Is the US refugee regime successful in imposing these citizen, laborer and neighbor figures to create its ideal refugee subjectivity? To evaluate this, it is important to understand the refugees’ self-subjectification. To what degree do they conform to, appropriate, or resist the ideals of a laborer, citizen, and neighbor established by the state and perpetuated by the local organization?

Interviews with Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh highlight how their experience with the US reception system has adjusted their expectations to incorporate the compliant, hardworking laborer mold into their subjectivity. They additionally conform to the non-demanding citizen ideal by seeking community rather than federal support. Subtle resistance is evident, though, in their acknowledgement of the laborer figure as imposed rather than self-evident. They have furthermore educated themselves about workers’ rights. Finally, they resist the assimilating, unassuming neighbor figure by isolating as an ethnic community to preserve their language and culture.

3.4.1 Laborer

A striking common feature in each interview with the Bhutanese refugees was repetition of the word “self-sufficiency.” Their discussion is a mirroring of what they believed was expected of them. The interviews, described below, indicate that this discourse is not an inherent aspect of resettlement; in fact, it contrasts with the informants’ initial expectations. The receiving nation’s reception framework may thus play a significant role in shaping a refugee’s actions, but not necessarily desires. The interviewed Bhutanese understand the American system and seem to accept it as their fate. This reflects the “pulling oneself up by the bootstraps” ideal to take responsibility for one’s own future rather than demand institutional change.

For example, Sangay, who works at the Bhutanese Community Group, describes the system’s expectation yet individual challenge of immediate employment:

Within two months, less than two months I think, I had to start going in to work...I think that was too fast...Even before I knew anything about America.... I would say at least for two years, that kind of support is needed.

Sangay further describes that he did not initially understand the rationale for immediate employment despite being compelled to abide by it. He explains his current understanding that the justification is based on stipulations of the state and federal grants. This top-down regulation gives him little hope for substantial changes unless it occurs at the federal level:

I guess I did not know that was a requirement of the mass grant. They have these different benefits for different categories of clients depending on whether they are employable or not. And based on one of the conditions of the mass grant, I think, I’m supposed to start working immediately, otherwise they would even reduce the benefits I was receiving.... I was compelled to go to work.... I will not say that they have to pay every bill, and I know that the resettlement agencies also have to work on the grants, right? The state or federal grants. And it is partly to do with federal laws or state laws. But, unless there is a change in the general policy, I don’t see that there is any hope of having that kind of support for the refugees for a long time.

Dorji, a fellow employee at the BCG, likewise reasons that the local resettlement agency is operating under the jurisdiction of the federal government:

The resettlement agencies definitely go with the job first. Because they have the budget for the new arriving families for two to three months, so they need to get a job within that month.... Maybe they have some kind of contract with the welfare department and all, so after a certain period, they have to find a job. There may be some kind of warning with the agencies, with the welfare department of the state, so they have to follow their own rules first.... I don't think they are wrong in doing that, because they are also bonded with some other agency, other government agencies, so they don't want to see the new people coming here just loitering around. They want to find some job for them.

Dorji's uncertainty in exactly why refugees are pressured to work soon after arrival again highlights the disconnect between institution and individual. His reasoning is rooted in an understanding of the system as hierarchical; he as a refugee is subordinated to the agency, and the agency in turn is subordinated to federal institutions. Given the federal governance of refugee resettlement, Sangay contrasts the condition of refugees under the US framework to that of refugees in countries functioning under different policies:

When you compare...the United States policy, we have to find a job quickly. We have to be independent very fast. We have to do a lot of things but our counterparts in Australia or Canada, they are depending on the government services, and we are pretty on our own in America.... It's because of the law, I guess. The system. The law that everyone is supposed to achieve independence quickly. But not everyone is able to be independent so fast—unless they learn the stuff properly.

Sangay's critical reflection and comparison to his counterparts in other countries indicates that the rapidly self-sufficient laborer figure is not an innate element of resettlement policy. Rather, the US framework is unique in this manner. More significant than its singularity, this focus is inadequate. As Sangay describes, not everyone can meet the expectation of swift self-sufficiency.

Despite pressure to find a satisfactory job—a job that satisfied the expectations of financial independence—the refugees I interviewed still strove to find a fulfilling job. Shields (2003) argues that the free market complicates the workforce integration of refugees, including for those with

high human capital assets, and leads to poorer economic outcomes. As such, refugees are often restricted to low-skilled labor. Sangay affirms:

The first job is a very unpleasant shock for everyone.... My first job was not my preferred job...that was my first ever experience of working in the United States with a lot of...traumatic experiences that I underwent.

Still, the refugees interviewed emphasized their desire to find a job they could enjoy and do well. Dorji, for example, moved to Pittsburgh in 2011 in search of job opportunities after having been resettled in Virginia two years prior. He has held five or six jobs, including as a caretaker and an employee of a global investment company. He describes his first job as a motel receptionist in Virginia as the hardest of his life:

Most of the time, it would be a call from the customer on their way—'where is the [motel]?' So I would give them the address. 'Ok, how do I get there?' And there was the problem. I don't know how to get there; I don't know that navigation. Most of what I said they didn't understand, and what they said I didn't understand. So, I left that job. I didn't like that. Where I don't feel comfortable, or when the client doesn't feel comfortable and has some problems, both sides don't feel comfortable.

Dorji's decision to leave the job indicates that work conditions play a role in fulfilling the self-sufficiency expectation. Resettlement agency staff had described "good" clients as those who accept any job, but refugees can resist this demand by not accepting distressing work conditions. Dorji next applied for a school janitor position. Among 15 applicants, he was chosen. That accomplishment gave him more fulfillment than his previous jobs:

I was so happy in that time. I was the happiest man that I got that job...I felt like I am independent—like I can do something here now.

Here, Dorji describes his satisfaction in being selected among other candidates to do work in which he felt confident. He enjoyed the physical labor and the fact that he did not have to converse with customers or explain a route. Confidence gave him independence, not a paycheck.

Not once did he compare the salary of these positions. He explains, “From my perspective, everyone who is satisfied with their job feels independent. They can do everything.”

Neten, the refugee who worked as a private school teacher in Nepal, similarly maintains that the most difficult part of resettlement was “finding a job that is of interest to you, or is related to what you had prepared for.”

Dima, a fellow Bhutanese refugee, likewise struggled through her first job. She arrived in Pittsburgh in 2009 with her husband and parents. She began working at a laundromat within the first month, a position that the resettlement agency had arranged for her. Consequently, Dima explains, she did not have time to take ESL classes. She describes:

When I got my first job, I was so frustrated. Honestly, I am telling I never did this job before..., I had never worked before like an entry-level job. I was very weak at that time, and my supervisor, every time he complained, “she didn’t work well.” And I was so frustrated, I didn’t have any options to do. Because English is our second language and I was very new.

Dima was frustrated with her first job because she felt she could not do the work well, and her supervisor was displeased. She later enrolled in three months of professional training and found a job as a nursing assistant, a position in which she feels stronger and more confident.

The interviewed Bhutanese refugees highlight further challenges they confront when compelled to fit the compliant, hardworking laborer figure. These included their own high expectations, unfamiliarity with concepts of financing yourself, and lack of knowledge about workers’ rights. Sangay describes:

Naturally, when we come over, before we fly over, expectations are very high about what America will be. But they don’t see the day-to-day issues and problems. That you have to get up every morning and support your family, pay your bills. Over there, we simply sat and ate like pigs. Even though we were not fed a nutritious or balanced diet, we didn’t do anything. Some of us had a background in education and volunteered in the camp, to teach our younger kids. But most of us didn’t have anything. We didn’t have legal authority to go out of the camp. So we depended on the food which was supplied by agencies. So we didn’t have to work for our own food. We didn’t have to pay for utility bills, pay for the

rent. So when you come here, you have to do all those things by yourself. Pay for your bills, for each and everything. So that is something that people never expect before they come here...the challenge is that the day to day challenges are not told to the people during the orientation. They just say: “this is the school system, this is the hospital system....”

Thus, a key factor complicating the adjustment of refugees was lack of education about what was expected of them. Practical training in terms of navigating the education, healthcare, and transportation systems was provided, but the expectation of refugees to be financially independent was not made clear. After 20 years of camp life, it was a shock to suddenly have bills to pay. Neglecting to teach refugees about workers’ rights did, however, implicitly teach the expectation of a compliant laborer. Sangay further explains:

There isn’t much help that you can get in terms of education. I know they provide orientation, but not to the degree I expect them to do. They just provide basic information about how to ride a bus, where are the bus stops, how to use the bus pass. Right? Those kinds of things, and how to use the gas stove at home and appliances. Those are not necessary I guess; I think people learn by themselves. But there are other things that people need to be told about. Around the workplace, employment. They need to make them aware about the rights of the employees. We had a lot of problems with people especially in the community. When they suffer, they don’t even report to the employers. When their rights are violated, they don’t report. They are afraid. Now those kinds of things are not done properly by the resettlement agency I would say—the education part.

Sangay further explains the challenging work environment he personally experienced due to a lack of training regarding expectations and protections in the workplace:

The job itself was not a bad thing for me. But I had other problems at the job site—like not enough knowledge about American workplace, laws, regulations, the rights of employees. Those kinds of things affected in the beginning. And it was a shock because of that. So I had a hard time coping because of that. Because I was not aware about the rights and responsibilities. What I should do, certain situations, those kinds of things.... This country is based on a lot of rules and regulations, which we were not aware of or familiar with outside of America. We never lived in such an environment. We lived in the refugee camps for a long time, and we worked as volunteers. So there was no conception of OSHA [Occupational Safety and Health Administration] or those kinds of state laws or federal laws that protect employees.... And even after arriving here as a refugee, to start a new life, none of us were aware about what are the rights of the employees. And what we should do in case of problems and issues with the employer or coworker. Even after one year when I was in that job, I wasn’t aware yet. So that transition was very difficult in that first year

into that job, very difficult.... [The resettlement agency] did not explain any details about rules, workplace, protection for the rights, union thing, what a union means...so later on I came to know there are different ways that unions work in different workplaces. And there are some workplaces that have mandatory overtime, like where I worked in the first place. There are some places where the union does not allow that. And I was not aware of that.

The fact that the interviewed refugees were taught to work without being educated about their rights highlights the disembodiment of labor. Workers are valued for their contribution to self-sufficiency, but their value as rights-bearing human beings is disregarded. This negligence made Sangay's inaugural year and job in the US particularly challenging.

Abhaya, who is married to Neten, likewise affirmed the lack of education about workers' rights:

People don't speak up. Some people get hurt at work, they think it's their mistake and take it. But it's not their mistake. Sometimes they get hurt at work and need to report it. So what we teach our youth, for example—even if they get a slight thing, if there is blood, they need to tell the supervisor so that some first aid is applied. But the adults who just get the first job, they don't have that knowledge, so they don't report. After, when the complication arises, for example when you sprain your finger and you don't report, but then after a few weeks your finger is swollen and you see some signs, and then you report, then the employer will not believe you, or it is too late. So adult workers need to be educated in all that.

Abhaya's explanation illustrates the implications of deficient workers' rights education. Health complications arising from an unreported injury can, for example, ultimately hinder self-sufficiency when an unattended injury worsens and impairs work. The long-term effects of neglecting labor rights are thus secondary to the immediate goal of ensuring financial independence.

Dawa, the most recent arrival of those interviewed, came to Pittsburgh in 2014 and does not have citizenship. When asked if the CSC educated him on workplace expectations and worker rights, he replied: "Yeah, they taught us everything...how can we get a job, how we have to *struggle* for that job. They taught us everything before" (italics added). Dawa contrasted the

American workplace with that in Bhutan, saying that attendance is the most important factor here. To explain how he discovered this information, he says, “I found that out by myself. I saw that many friends, when they don’t come to the job, they get fired. Attendance is essential. Then the boss will do the best for us, they will do good.” He further explains that, unlike in Bhutan, he cannot send a friend in to work for him if he is sick. Dawa’s perspective confirms that he was taught to work hard—struggle, even—in order to find and maintain a job. Yet he does not mention information on labor rights.

Dima similarly explains the training she received for her first job at the laundromat, which starkly evidences a focus on efficient labor rather than worker wellbeing:

Only the lady from [a resettlement agency], the job provider, took me there and filled out all the forms. At that time, I spoke a little English, and she didn’t find a translator there. So she took me down there to show me the laundry, to wash clothes like this and fold like this, and put the washcloth in the machine and that will fold automatically.... She showed me that job in half an hour and after that she left me, and I started working there.... It was a very hard time...in one hour, we have to put nine hundred towels in. But I was so skinny, I was only ninety-four pounds at that time, and I only put in six hundred to six hundred fifty in one hour. And my boss every time complained to me: “you didn’t work well, you didn’t work well.” And I was so, when I came home, I was so stressed because I had never had that job before in my country. And after that my boss is not satisfied with me. And the place was new and all the people were new and I was so frustrated. I think that was my worst job.

The type of training provided by resettlement agencies highlights their priority. Dawa was taught to struggle to obtain and hold a job. Dima was taught the duties of her job in half an hour without an interpreter. Her physical ability to complete the task was not considered. She, like Dawa, was expected to struggle without complaint. Indeed, the refugees interviewed were not informed of how to address workplace issues, thereby delegitimizing their right to do so.

These stories support the conclusions of a study conducted in another US-based resettlement agency. Researchers found that “during job club, training and orientation, little time is spent acknowledging the ways that refugees are constrained by racism, sexism and classism”

(Dykstra-DeVette 2018:189). In addition, while it is made clear that a refugee laborer must become rapidly self-sufficient, little training was provided regarding expectations in the actual workplace. This neglect separates the laborer from their labor. A refugee should work to earn money for their labor, but their experience as an individual, human worker is devalued. Kearney (1991) describes it as such: “Migration policy/policing and resistance to it is thus a struggle for the value contained within the personal and social body of the migrant” (63). Indeed, the US resettlement framework evaluates refugees based on their economic contribution rather than the civic and social aspects of their personhood, or even simply by their innate value as human beings.

The pressure to begin working within a few weeks of arrival also prevents refugees from enrolling in English courses. Sangay expressed his frustration with the dual expectation of becoming both financially self-sufficient and proficient in English, and the inability to fulfill both. When compelled to choose, refugees must comply with what the resettlement agency requires of them. Sangay explains:

That’s the problem. They give priority to the work, employment—not to those classes. So they say this is important for us to learn—but at the same time they would say going to work is more important.... And then we have to manage those classes on our own, and it doesn’t work. So, I wake up in order to go to that job. I use the public transit so I have to wake up in the morning at about five o’clock to get to the job at seven o’clock, right? So, when I return home, it will already be dark. Where is the time to go to those classes?

This evidences that priority is given to labor rather than language acquisition. Still, Sangay feels pressure to meet unmanageable demands. He initially attributed this unrealistic expectation to the resettlement agency. Later, he again acknowledges the top-down factors regulating the agency, saying “It’s because of the law, I guess. The system. The law that everyone is supposed to achieve independence quickly.”

Abhaya remarks that another challenge to fulfilling the self-sufficient laborer ideal is lack of experience. Even if you have skills, she explains, you lack credentials. Abhaya describes, for example, what happened when a resettlement agency asked her to volunteer with them:

I went to volunteer, and some people were interested in me to give a job, but then they would never give me a job because I had no job experience here. Everywhere I went, they would say “oh, you have good English, bla, bla” but they would not give me the job. And eventually I found a job at one of the departmental stores where prepared food is also available—like Giant Eagle. So my first job was in the prepared food section.... Not having an employment history here...that was the biggest barrier; nobody wanted to give me a job.... After my first job, I had no problem finding other jobs.

Similar to the incompatibility of becoming financially self-sufficient while also pursuing proficiency in English, Abhaya is describing the conflict of obtaining a job without an employment history. Although she had the skills to volunteer with the agency and proved her value to the organization, a lack of formal credentials forced her to take a lower-skilled position that did not match her proficiencies.

3.4.2 Citizen

The hardworking laborer figure who does not demand rights is complemented by that of a non-demanding citizen with limited relation to the government. The Bhutanese refugees’ interaction with the government in daily life is limited; little direct federal oversight exists over their individual case. Rather, federal regulation is mediated through the resettlement agency. Despite its circuitous supervision, the interviewed refugees were very aware of the government’s role in shaping the agency’s practices and thereby their own lives. Sangay compares his own condition as a refugee in the US to that of his counterparts in other countries, ascribing their differences to distinct federal policies:

Unless there is a change in the general policy, I don’t see that there is any hope of having that kind of support for the refugees for a long time. For instance, there is a difference in terms of resettlement policies in Australia or Canada compared to the United States. So the refugees who go there get support for a long time. Like, they have a lot of language, they

learn their English or whatever language proficiency they have, and then skills, training skills, employment skills, before they can be employed. The government does not push them to work unless they learn so many skills pretty well. Until then, they get really good support—financial support to pay their bills, their medical care is taken care of, everything is taken care of. Their food, their housing. And then they become comfortable with the language, comfortable with the environment, and then they have some kind of training for any kind of jobs, and then naturally they are better in that way. We see it.

Neten confirms the limited support he experienced with the resettlement agency:

I think their goal is limited to finding an apartment and finding a job. I think seriously they wouldn't think more than that.

His wife Abhaya similarly says:

I think resettlement agencies have certain things to do. Within that three-month period of time they have to do limited things and then leave people—throw people out into the ocean. Swim or do whatever you want to do.

The refugees I interviewed reason that resettlement agencies have strict goals and are held accountable to the government to abide by them. In a sense, this logic prevents refugees from critiquing the CSC directly. The resettlement agency is stuck in the system, as they themselves are, so it cannot be blamed. Perceiving the federal government, then, as the primary actor can manifest as a misunderstanding of the refugees' expected relationship to the government. Neten explains:

I had understood, but I will not say that all people understood that they will have to pay rent. For many refugees that did not go to school, they may have felt that "OK, the US government is going to take us and we are going to get everything for free." And that turns out to be not true.

Abhaya explains a similar misunderstanding regarding the healthcare system:

[For] the first eight months we were here, we were given the medical insurance assistance. And then we felt like "Oh, every time we go to the hospital, we don't have to pay bills." But slowly it was phasing out and we had to figure out what to do next. And I think for even Americans it is hard to figure out what insurance to pay and where to go, to understand the copays and deductibles and all that. So it was difficult.

Neten's last sentence reveals that, although refugee regimes tend to exceptionalize the experiences of refugees, non-refugees struggle with the some of the same challenges. The US in particular presents a difficult context of limited social support that can stigmatize welfare and other safety nets.

Dorji, who works at the BCG, is one informant who refers to rights and laws throughout the interview. He gained this information through his own initiative, for example by attending college to gain bookkeeping and accounting skills. His story emphasizes that refugees must investigate legal information on their own rather than being provided with the information from the agency:

If you want to learn about the tax laws, to IRS website, learn about the laws there. You can call them. You can call you municipal authority. Always go to the place if your borough office is nearby and see the brochures they have. So you can grab one and see. This is how we learn. But you should have that interest to learn.... [In America] everyone is treated equally by laws. Of course we have different positions in the employment, but everyone is treated equally here. There is no small job, there is no big job. They vary by their wage rate and salaries, but everyone is respected here. There are so many rights...Whether naturalized or by birth, I don't think there is any difference in having the rights with these two.... Among that, freedom of speech and freedom to appeal. We can always express our feelings if we are not satisfied with something.

Dorji's understanding is unique because he sought it out himself. This highlights the US resettlement framework's emphasis on a non-demanding citizen figure, complementing that of a compliant laborer. A refugee trained in civic engagement would be incompatible with one who simultaneously accepts poor working conditions.

Still, the Bhutanese refugees continually emphasize the importance of citizenship for belonging, integration, and resettlement. Sangay relates this strong desire to the fact that they had been stripped of citizenship in Bhutan:

All Bhutanese refugees have a dream of becoming a citizen. The reason is we were forcefully...our citizenship was taken away by the government of Bhutan. Even though we are citizens. We are legal residents, we are citizens, our forefathers were there. It was for

political reasons they victimized us and took our citizenship. And we lived in the refugee camps stateless. And we were not accepted back into the country. So we were thrown out by the government's policy.... We had that bitter experience of losing our statehood, our citizenship rights. So for that reason, everyone—especially the Bhutanese refugees—you will not find anyone who does not want to be a citizen.... They feel proud to be a citizen.

Neten likewise highlights the weight of citizenship:

When the [naturalization] ceremony was going on, the officer from the USCIS led the oath. And my mind flashed back and forth. Bhutan, Nepal, Bhutan, and then the US. I didn't belong to any country until this moment. And now I do...I was very emotional.

Kanshin shares similar sentiments. A college student, he is the youngest Bhutanese refugee interviewed. His father was a foreign service officer for Bhutan and his mother worked in the public works department. The government allowed his parents to continue working, but cut the mother's job to part-time position and prohibited his father from being promoted. After seeing the father's juniors rise in rank despite having worked as a public servant for 17 years himself, the family decided to leave for Nepal. Now in America, citizenship is paramount for them. Kanshin explains:

Having citizenship secures you...it protects your identity and who you are. It just shows you who you are. That's the main thing. Settling here, having an identity, being a citizen, you can enjoy the benefits of peace of mind like other United States citizens are enjoying. It's not that if you are a citizen you get extra prize money that a GreenCard holder doesn't, but it just proves identity. And losing identity for eighteen to twenty years, from my grandparents to my parents, has definitely affected me, that I have to get citizenship.

Citizenship is thus important for identity and security, which is particularly meaningful for the Bhutanese refugees because the loss of these factors contributed to their displacement. Another valuable aspect of citizenship is the right to vote. Sangay describes the lack of freedom and rights in Bhutan. Experiencing democracy for the first time as a voting citizen in America was an incredibly powerful experience:

During the last elections, we asked people to vote. And many people voted. Not because they had a particular preference for the candidates, but because we pushed them to vote, because that was the first voting experience of our life in a democracy.

3.4.3 Neighbor

In addition to finding a fulfilling job and becoming a citizen, the Bhutanese refugees I interviewed value community integration. Yet not many have contact with their neighbors or the American community outside of greeting each other or business relations. Rather, they value being a contributing member of their ethnic community. This reflects the corollary of the self-sufficient laborer ideal: the inconspicuous, yet resourceful neighbor. This partnership encourages individuals to rely on their social network for support if they fail at self-sufficiency. Such a pipeline eliminates the need for a federal safety net. The Bhutanese reflect this ideal by turning to their ethnic community for support. The resettlement agency reinforces this, for example by contacting refugees who had been resettled a few years ago to help translate for a new arrival. Sangay describes that he had to discover many things on his own, for example how to obtain a driver's license. Now, he uses that knowledge to help other community members:

The resettlement agency would not help you with the driver's license thing.... They used to say it's not necessary; it's not important for you right now. That it's not a priority. So, it took us one year to discover the permit office, that you have to pass the test, discover that you have to do a road test. It took us one year. But for anyone who comes now, they will discover it in one month because I will tell him.... It is a lot easier for recent immigrants, because the previous ones are always helping them set up things quickly. The first arrivals, they have a lot of struggles. Always a lot of struggles. They have to navigate a lot of things by themselves. And you get only limited help from the resettlement agencies.

This form of helping subsequently arriving refugees was formalized in 2012, when the Bhutanese community established its own ethnic-based community association: the Bhutanese Community Group. On its website, the BCG explains that the suicide of a Bhutanese refugee less than a month after arrival was a major stimulus for the Bhutanese community to organize and begin offering services and activities. A number of the refugees interviewed worked at this association at the time of the interview. The organization's activities include bilingual English

Language & Civic Education courses, Cultural Preservation efforts through a Parent-Child Cultural Club and by hosting ethnic celebrations, Senior Programming for those over the age of 50, Career Workshops, Community Gardening, Leadership Training & Empowerment sessions, and Counseling Services.

The impetus for creating this community organization and the services they chose to offer illustrate the gaps of the national and local resettlement framework. For example, there appears to be a disconnect between refugee and agency priorities regarding mental health. The Bhutanese were consistently praised by the agency staff as a model population for their willingness to work hard and not make inappropriate demands. At the same time, this community has some of the highest rates of mental illness and has suffered multiple suicides. Dima explains that language difficulties are one source of stress that she combats with meditation:

One thing that is very difficult in America is stress. [My husband and I] had a lot of stress in two thousand thirteen and two thousand twelve. We went to a three days course for a kind of meditation mindfulness program.... And since then, we are applying it every day. It's a meditation twenty minutes in the morning and twenty minutes in the evening, and that helps a lot to calm our stress...The main thing that causes stress is English. Stress comes when you don't understand English. If they are in the workplace and don't understand English, that makes people worry that if they speak, they might speak a mistake, and that makes people stressed.

Her husband is a Bilingual Mental Health First Aid Trainer who has trained over 500 refugee leaders, volunteers, and resettled Bhutanese across many states. This link of embracing the compliant, hardworking laborer model at the cost of mental health must be further explored and addressed.

Abhaya also affirms that the expectations placed on them are unrealistic. She explains that this is due, in part, to the host country's lack of understanding regarding a refugee's history:

Sometimes resettlement agencies sometimes don't understand what these refugees have come with. We were asked by our employment specialist if we could work at the laundry in the beginning. But [my husband and I] both denied—we said we will find our own job.

I know it's hard to find without having a first job. But there needs to be some sort of match with what people have come with—what kind of education they have. If they know how to match that, I think the refugee people coming in—their self-esteem will be higher and they will be better.

Dorji likewise expresses disappointment in the lack of knowledge a resettlement agency has about specific populations:

[The resettlement agency] never knew our background. So, it took like five to six months to understand us, to study us, to know our background. By that time, it was too late. So, yes, they could have done more, but it's not their fault also. They never study our people, where we are from, how much education we have, what we know.

These narratives illustrate that the resettlement agency's primary objective is securing financial independence. The organization does not invest in understanding a particular population's or individual's history, whether due to insufficient capacity, lack of awareness, or other factors. Collateral damage to mental health is also not addressed. The ethnic community is thus important for supporting refugees not only as a financial safety net, but an empathetic, understanding resource.

The Bhutanese emphasis on their ethnic community is also rooted in passion for ensuring cultural preservation. Kanshin, the youngest informant explains:

Many of the people have been through lots of humiliation. They have been forced to give up their culture, speak different languages, get discriminated in the country where they speak the same language—Nepal. [The Nepali] say that they are the refugee and poor people, and we are the upper-class people, but they don't realize that they are the same people whose grandparents had to move because of farming land opportunities in Bhutan. They were forced to give up their identity. So as they were taught before they moved to the United States, you can celebrate freedom of rights, freedom of speech, freedom of culture. So they have that thing in mind and know they can now celebrate their culture, religion and gender freely now.

This community orientation is manifest in the Bhutanese refugees' emphasis on self-sufficiency as a community, rather than as individuals. Neten, who is employed at the BCG, explains:

Success only comes when you move in parallel with others. You move up, and if you see others down there, it is not success. Success is actually when you are able to move along with others. That is what my culture says.... Whatever I can do is not just because of my own effort. We have a team, and it is that team that has been able to do whatever we are able to do in the community.

Neten says he tells the Bhutanese students in the citizenship class, who are around 55-70 years old, “I have not gone to college in America. I have to, I am planning to, but I am only going after I have seen all of you becoming citizens.”

Abhaya likewise talks about achieving success in healthy way, explaining:

Not in a greedy way. Money is not everything...[The] healthy way is your own mindset. If you take your job very positively, it's good. But not in unhealthy competition—like some people trying to push you down and then move forward.

At the same time, this ethnic community focus and the challenge of English can cause isolation. Neten reasons that his focus is on the Bhutanese first. As such, his interactions with Americans are in the context of his community outreach with the BCG:

My task was to find space for events.... So I started approaching libraries, the school districts, all those. And then as the local communities started knowing about our presence in the region, they started reaching out to us—asking us to get involved in their local community days. So that also involved us in many ways.... I didn't do at a personal level. Whenever I did it, it was for [BCG]. Even though people know me personally that way, the relationship is with the organization...there was nothing that would relate to my establishing friendships with the locals at the personal level. It was only our organization's needs that brought me to them, but not for personal reasons.

Interacting with Americans for business reflects the first relationships Bhutanese refugees had with Americans: the resettlement agency staff (who refer to refugees as “clients”) and their employer. Subsequent interactions thus seem to be modeled on this dynamic. Abhaya further explains that if they want interaction with the American community, it will have to be through the Bhutanese community's initiative due to the hostility or indifference she experiences from the native population:

We took our own initiative. And we are still pushing that...I think Pittsburgh is not very

welcoming right now, but we are pushing that. We are doing a lot of intercommunity events where we invite American people and we go to them...but it's a small thing. There are still so many people who need to know about us, and we need to know about them. We didn't know much of the neighborhood, but if we were walking, people would stare and kind of look in a different way...And even in the bus, I feel like people would look at you with different eyes. I think that is common for everyone right now; I think people look at people wearing hijab in a different way, so it's the dress, the way you look. We—not my family, but as a community—try to be as good as possible with the neighborhood and where we live. So we started participating in different neighborhood events.... Wherever the community events happen, we go there and take our kids.

In addition to community separation, whether intentional or not, Neten explains the isolating effect of language:

Language is still [a challenge]. Sometimes I don't get the Americans, and sometimes I confuse them. One thing that I confused—just as an example to let you know. Someone said, "Where do you want to go if not Pittsburgh?" and I said "VERmont." And he said "Oh, VermOnt?" So...I didn't know how we read out names, where we put the stress in a word. So that is a silly one, there are a lot of others where I put people into embarrassment, or I get embarrassed.

The language barrier can create an uncomfortable situation, such that refugees do not feel confident in engaging in conversation with Americans. This contributes to the isolation of ethnic communities as well.

In summary, the Bhutanese refugees I interviewed accept the self-sufficient laborer ideal expected of them, yet demonstrate resistance through learning about workers' rights or quitting stressful jobs to search for employment in which they feel confident. They reproduce the non-demanding, compliant citizen ideal by turning to their ethnic community rather than the government for assistance, yet resist by valuing citizenship. Finally, they reproduce the inconspicuous neighbor ideal. Yet instead of rejecting their heritage to assimilate to American culture, they largely remain isolated as a community to satisfy the inconspicuous figure while preserving their identity.

4.0 Syrian Refugees in Berlin

4.1 Historical Context

Rasha is a mother of three from Damascus who lived in war for six years. Planes flew overhead every day. Her friend says looking up at the bombs falling from the sky was like watching a carnival. Rasha adds you could go out in the streets and see dead bodies or people with missing limbs. To calm her terrified children, Rasha would tell them the planes cannot do anything. But inside, she admits, she was scared, too. Rasha finally told her husband they have to leave because she did not want her son to be drafted into the army to kill people. Their children did not have school or a future in Syria anymore, she says.

Burhan fled Syria after being held in a federal prison for two months under mistaken identity. His father paid a 20,000 Euro ransom to the government to free him:

After that [the police] did an interview with me and the man from police said: “Yes, you can go out, because we are looking for another man.” What happened? He has the same last name and the same name as me... But he is eighteen years older than me.

The prison conditions, Burhan describes, were horrific:

In one room, five or four square meters, stand forty people or more. When I want to sleep, one of them gets up and I sleep. Then every hour he sits and I get up. And in the corner, there is also a toilet and everyone can see that. And a water bottle once a day for the forty persons, so it is just drops.

After living for a short time in Lebanon and Turkey, he resolved to continue journeying to Greece via a dinghy, regardless of how many times he fell into the sea:

From Turkey to Greece I fell from the boat. And forty persons were in the sea. That did not work... [we tried] five times, and I fell into the sea twice. The boat is lost and I am in the sea.

After the fourth attempt, Burhan told the smuggler he wanted his money back. In response, the smuggler struck a deal with him:

The man said “Ok, do you want to go to Greece without money?” And I asked how? And

he said, “Drive the boat.” I said yes.... And then I learned everything. For six hours, from twelve to six o'clock in the morning.

Burhan continued his journey with a group of 50 others, from Greece to Macedonia, Serbia, Bulgaria, and Hungary by walking, swimming through rivers, and hiring drivers. The temperatures were so frigid that “I feel my heart is stopped. Frozen by the cold.” When officers began taking fingerprints in Budapest, he evaded them and took a bus to Vienna. Upon arrival, refugees were told they have a free train ticket to Munich. From there he traveled to the city of Bremen, then to France with the intent of reaching England, and finally through Denmark and Sweden to arrive in Norway. He lived in a small village outside of Oslo for six months before returning to Germany, where his asylum application had originally been filed.

Sayid is a law-educated former businessman and factory owner from Syria. He had not planned on leaving the country in which he built his life. Sayid stayed for five years after the civil war had erupted, “until I had absolutely nothing left.” When he did flee, it was sudden:

I managed a factory in the war for five years, and we didn't stop producing. I was good at my job; I am good at managing. But I couldn't manage fleeing. There was no time for big planning or thinking.

The journey with his wife and brother-in-law lasted 30 days. Their rubber boat from Turkey to Greece was designed for 20 people but the smuggler packed in 47, including women and children. Sayid says the smuggler only wanted money; he put them in the dinghy and said, “go alone.” After one hour, they were in the middle of the sea and could see only water:

We asked ourselves one question: What are we doing here? We fled death, but now we are in the jaws of death.

How did the circumstances compelling Rasha, Burhan and Sayid to flee evolve? During Ottoman rule, “Syria” was not a nation-state, but rather a collection of provinces centered around ancient cities such as Damascus and Aleppo and existing within a diverse and tolerant social

tradition. With the imminent fall of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, the French and British signed the Sykes-Picot Agreement delegating to themselves spheres of influence in Middle East. After overthrowing a kingdom that had been established by Arab leaders of the revolt against the Ottoman empire rather than recognizing their independence request at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, France made the Syria region its legal mandate and de facto colony. In 1946, Syria celebrated the dismissal of the last French troops.

Yet Western involvement and the impositions of states with no regard for existing organization had an undeniable legacy. Politics of the newly independent, united Syria were characterized by unrest and disunity until the late 1960s. Hafez al-Assad of the secular, nationalist Baath Party established his regime in 1970 to tackle the weakness and disunity of Syrian statehood. He gradually shifted from a socialist and redistributive state to a patronage-based system and initiated free-market policies. His son, Bashar al Assad, continued neoliberalizing policies with the aspiration of emulating Western wealth accumulation and being accepted into the World Trade Organization. Yet these measures significantly increased socioeconomic inequality. In 2010, Syria's per capita GDP of \$2,834 was comparable to that of Sub-Saharan African countries, and its annual growth rate of 3.39% below that of most other developing countries. From 2006 to 2011, the country experienced an intense drought linked to human-caused global warming and exacerbated by years of centralized water mismanagement. Up to 1.5 million people participated in urban migration as a result, aggravating poverty and social unrest through increased food insecurity and malnutrition, internal displacement, and the creation of shantytowns. This evidences how regime choices impact the environment. In the Syrian case, neglect of rural populations and poor agricultural policies magnified the drought's impact. The economic liberalization

unaccompanied by parallel political freedoms furthermore instigated peaceful protests and the subsequent civil war in 2011.

The UNHCR reports that 5.6 million Syrians have fled the country since 2011, with another 6.6 million internally displaced (UNHCR 2018a). Nearly 700,000 Syrians lived in Germany in 2017, according to the German Federal Statistical Office (Bundesamt 2017). The Pew Research Center states that this is the fifth largest displaced Syrian population following Syria itself, Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan (Connor 2018).

4.2 German Refugee Regime

The German refugee settlement model is largely driven by ordoliberalism, an ideology that developed in 1930-1950s Germany and became the foundation of the nation's post-World War II social market economy. A central tenet authorizes state power to maintain healthy competition and prevent unchecked freedoms leading to monopolies. It maintains strong regulation of the labor market. In this light, Germany has been criticized for opening its borders not out of humanitarianism or goodwill, but rather as an economic calculation in light of its aging population. President of the Bundesbank Jens Weidmann explained that Germany needs the labor force provided by refugees to counteract changing demographics and to uphold its current welfare level. Others further argue that Germany accepted the asylum of only highly educated refugees while rejecting less educated migrants, allowing them to place skilled individuals (such as doctors) in positions for which they are over-qualified (such as that of a nurse or orderly).

Despite criticisms of this form of governance regarding asylum decisions, it is important to consider how this state-regulated neoliberalism continues to impact asylum seekers after their application has been approved. This chapter analyzes how German federal settlement policies define expectations for a refugee's relation to the economy, state, and society. I argue that the

German refugee regime prioritizes the dependent citizen, complemented by the skilled laborer and multicultural neighbor figures.

4.2.1 Laborer

The laborer ideal promoted by the federal government for refugees is one of a skilled contributor. The labor market in Germany is highly regulated and difficult to enter, especially for refugees. To begin, asylum seekers are not allowed to work within the first three months after arrival. After that initial time period, they must wait until they have received a residence permit. This could involve months, even over a year, of waiting in a refugee camp. Once approved, refugees must complete a 600-hour language course. They are required to pass the B1 language level, also called the ‘threshold’ level. It is defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages as “the ability to express oneself in a limited way in familiar situations and to deal in a general way with nonroutine information. Example: *Can ask to open an account at a bank, provided that the procedure is straightforward.*” The federal government pays for the refugee’s fees, rent, and basic necessities for the duration of the course, which is usually about eight months. This is followed by an orientation course geared towards civic education. Refugees completing these requirements are not classified as “unemployed,” but rather as “job-seeking.” This indicates that these courses are considered vital for integration into the labor market. Those who were academics in their home country can have the B2 language course paid for as well. The government thus prioritizes investment in creating a skilled laborer figure.

Unlike the US mandate that refugees should be self-sufficient within three months, there is no such timeline in Germany. Refugees continue receiving financial assistance from the Jobcenter as long as they have a residence permit and they do not have a job. The Jobcenter is a merger of employment agencies and social services to provide care for beneficiaries of

unemployment benefits, including German citizens. Any work a refugee does obtain must be reported to the Jobcenter, which will subtract most of their salary from their aid package. The aid a refugee receives includes funds for living expenses, fees for the required education, and an allocation for furniture and houseware.

This framework indicates that refugees are not expected to become rapidly self-sufficient. Rather, they are expected to invest in education to eventually become a skilled laborer. In the meantime, refugees are significantly dependent on the government. Such federal oversight establishes the precarity of conditional refuge, in which recipients must comply with state expectations to secure renewal of protection, as described below.

4.2.2 Citizen

In contrast to the US refugee regime's local initiatives, the German refugee regime includes more direct federal oversight. Reitz (2018) argues that a federal support system helps refugees feel they are welcome and wanted, which he claims is crucial for integration. Pairing state funding with local implementation fosters community involvement, which further promotes integration (Richmond and Shields 2005). Dobrowolsky (2013) adds that federal welfare support and local settlement services are also important in motivating a refugee to remain where they were settled rather than relocating. Beyond feelings of belonging, government regulation of refugees in Germany also impacts their precarity, education, financial aid, mobility, and workforce integration.

To begin, a refugee's asylum approval does not ensure permanent residence. The initial residence permit that an individual receives indicates for how long they may stay. Individuals granted refugee status receive a three-year residence permit. Those granted subsidiary protection have a one-year residence permit that is renewable for another two years, and those given

humanitarian protection are also granted a one-year residence permit. Permit renewal depends on the situation of the country of origin. If the conditions that justified initial issuance of the permit still exist, the individual retains their “prohibition of deportation” (*Abschiebungsverbot*) and the permit is renewed. After three years, individuals who are “outstandingly integrated” into society are granted a permanent residence permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*). Requirements for “outstanding integration” include achieving the C1 language level (one level below native speaker) and having the means to cover the “overwhelming part” of living costs for themselves and their family. If an individual does not meet these requirements after three years, they can obtain a permanent residence permit after five years under fewer requirements, such as achieving the A2 language level and having the ability cover the “better part” of living costs.

In both cases, the home country condition is still evaluated to justify national protection. Refugees can apply for German citizenship after living in the country for eight years without interruption. This can be reduced to seven years upon completion of the integration course, and to six years if individuals have integrated “particularly well into society.” Individuals must also financially sustain themselves and their family, pass the B1 language and naturalization exams, and have no serious criminal offenses (Kalkmann, 2017).

The seemingly subjective conditions of “outstanding” or “particularly well” integration, in addition to constant re-evaluation of host country conditions, causes great anxiety for both refugees and non-profit staff for the future. Furthermore, the Asylum Information Database reports that, upon naturalization, “in contrast to other foreign nationals, refugees are not required to give up their former nationality” (Kalkmann 2017:94). This magnifies the uncertainty that, even with German citizenship, refugees can be encouraged or compelled to return to their home country when certain conditions exist.

Antje, a staff member at the Refugee Welcome Office, fears for the refugees' future due to these seemingly subjective criteria. She calls German bureaucracy a "jungle" that she does not fully understand, and worries that the refugees coming today have no security in their residence. She bases her concern in past experiences:

After the war in Yugoslavia, it was said after ten or twelve years, "So everything is fine at home now, now you can go back." Yes, my daughter had a girl in her class from Yugoslavia, she went to high school, she was intelligent, the family was nice, that was not a problem family at all, and they were sent back. You have to imagine this. I recently heard such a documentary on the radio. They will then be sent back to Serbia or something, and there will only be misery. She wanted to study here...and now there is only misery. Really bad...it'll make you feel a bit dizzy. So again, if there was an immigration law, if the family is self-sufficient, they must then be allowed to stay here! You must be able to get out of this refugee status. Whoever only looks at what is going on in the homeland, that is not right.

Her conviction that there is no way to escape refugee is not quite correct, as it is possible to obtain a permanent residence permit and eventual citizenship. The case of the family from Yugoslavia must thus be further investigated to understand how their deportation could be justified. Yet Antje's panic regarding seemingly arbitrary return to country of origin is common.

This fear, alongside abstract requirements and elaborate bureaucracy, highlights the conditionality of asylum in Germany. Once an asylum plea is initially accepted, refugees must complete education requirements. The integration course, which combines 600 hours of language and 100 hours of civics education, is state-mandated and run. Refugees are required to document their attendance at these courses by mailing a letter signed by their teacher to the Jobcenter. If they do not demonstrate their attendance, their aid will be reduced.

Furthermore, refugee mobility is regulated by the government. The German and European Union refugee regimes not only encourage geographic permanence, but *mandate* it. At the EU level, the Dublin Regulation mandates that the Member State through which an individual entered the EU is responsible for that individual's asylum claim. In Germany, federal law requires refugees

to stay in the city in which they were settled, though they may travel. Federal oversight also impacts their workforce integration via stringent prerequisites, as described above. Together, these regulations comprise a relationship between refugees and the government rooted in dependence and management. The majority of a refugee's livelihood is contingent on the government, including finances, education, employment, mobility, and assurance of continued refuge. This dependent relationship gives the state significant leverage to enforce a particular refugee subjectivity, since the individual's fulfillment of it can determine their residence security.

4.2.3 Neighbor

The neighbor figure promoted by the state settlement framework is rooted in multiculturalism. On the one hand, this may indicate a degree of tolerance and acceptance of migrants' heritage. For example, German language attainment through the 600-hour course is not accompanied by a requirement of strict cultural assimilation. Instead, the federal government emphasizes bilateral interactions with the native population to share cultures. This idea of reciprocity to understand and share with "the other" is mirrored by a form of multiculturalism the RCIS describes as rooted in social liberalism and an activist state. This state, in contrast to the neoliberal state, "willingly invests public resources in nonprofit organizations that engage in immigrant settlement service and cultural heritage expression, which give voice to underrepresented groups" (Root, et al. 2014:6). The goal of this multiculturalism is to create "a tolerant national citizen who is concerned for the disadvantaged in her own society" (Kymlicka 2013:111). This stands in contrast to the neoliberal multiculturalism described in the US Refugee Regime chapter (3.2), which emphasizes the migrant's embrace of host country values—or at least concealment of their own culture (Root, et al. 2014). Within the US framework, the resilient, entrepreneurial, economically beneficial newcomer is valued. As Kymlicka (2013) explains: "Neoliberal multiculturalism for immigrants

affirms—even valorizes—ethnic immigrant entrepreneurship, strategic cosmopolitanism, and transnational commercial linkages and remittances but silences debates on economic redistribution, racial inequality, unemployment, economic restructuring, and labor rights” (112).

Still, it is important to acknowledge that cultural preservation and continued ties to the homeland can facilitate a sudden return to the refugee’s country of origin. This may be a recourse if a refugee’s residence is not renewed, for example when their home country is evaluated as safe for return. The fear and anxiety this possibility incites in refugees and local non-profit staff is described more in subsequent sections.

In sum, the German federal government is directly involved in regulating refugee settlement. Refugees are expected to be invested citizens who comply with federal language and civic education requirements, but lack long-term assurance of their status. They are also encouraged to be multicultural neighbors and engage in reciprocal relations with the native population. The tightly regulated job market limits a self-sufficient laborer figure and instead strengthens refugee dependence on and thereby compliance with the government.

4.3 Localized Refugee Regime

Although the German government exercises significant oversight in refugee settlement, staff of the local Berlin organization seemed more willing to offer criticism of the national refugee regime than the local Pittsburgh staff. Perhaps I had established more rapport with them due to internships over two consecutive summers with the organization. This may also be due to the fact that the organization is not as dependent on precarious government aid and thus has more liberty to scrutinize the process.

The local organization is called the Refugee Welcome Office (RWO). It is the project of a Berlin real estate company with the mandate of overseeing the settlement of refugees in two

apartment buildings while fostering relationships among the newcomers and the German neighbors. From its inception, it was a time-limited initiative. The RWO staff successfully appealed for more funding at least twice to extend the project, but it officially closed in February 2019 after three years in existence. The team was small, with two hired staff members in 2017 and three in 2018, supplemented by volunteers and interns. The office experienced a full staff turnover between 2017 and 2018.

4.3.1 Laborer

The Refugee Welcome Office staff generally supported the government's investment in language acquisition prior to employment, thereby promoting the skilled laborer figure. Since refugees enrolled in language courses are listed as "job-seeking" or "completing requirements" rather than "unemployed," and since successful completion is a requirement for employment, I address the language courses as part of the laborer figure.

Antje mentions that she has not experienced a refugee obtaining work sooner than one or one and a half years. This was not a concerning amount of time for her; rather, she found any sooner than that too fast if the refugee does not yet know sufficient German. The types of jobs refugees obtain, she says, are unskilled labor positions, for example at the post office. Students may stock grocery shelves. Academics or those with a higher degree may find work as an engineer, for example.

Staff did express criticism, though, of the uniform application of strict requirements without regard for the individual case. Antje describes this frustration from her perspective:

I think, actually, it is right with the language requirement. But I also see that it sometimes fails in reality. I experience that asylum seekers, depending on the situation of an asylum seeker's home country, their experiences on the journey, and the conditions at home, are unable to learn language. If the head is occupied, then there is no room. You can send them for six hundred or nine hundred or one thousand hours to language courses, but that is then thrown-out money. And for all who want to learn, the gap in ability in the course is so great

that it does move not forward.... And of course there are the people who come from the village and are illiterate and have no intellect to ever learn a language. A few basics would be good, there should be a community so they can go out and go shopping, because there you speak Turkish or Arabic.

There were, indeed, several refugees in the neighborhood who struggled with learning the language. Some had stopped attending the courses all together. These individuals in particular were experiencing significant domestic conflicts, challenges with family reunification, and trauma from the brutal death of family members.

Susanne likewise expresses frustration with the course requirements. She finds them too overwhelming for refugees who have fled their home country, made the journey to Germany, and now must become accustomed to a new country, people, language, and culture. The stipulations, she describes, are particularly unhelpful for refugees dealing with trauma and grief. These individuals, she suggest, should instead learn German through working and getting help from co-workers. Holding a job and paying for their own expenses would also eliminate their bureaucratic struggle with the Jobcenter. A middle ground, she says, could be a three-month familiarization period, followed by either three months of a language course or three months of intense job seeking:

From America as well as from Germany the decision is prescribed to the people; you have to do that and that. Why don't you leave refugees the freedom to decide for themselves? To say, "now I want language lessons," or "I would rather work." And after half a year everybody has become acclimated to his life—but not like it is now in America or Germany, like a pressed sausage.

A method of accommodating to the unique context and ability of each refugee would thus be to give them more flexibility. Rather than primarily emphasizing either employment (as in the US) or language attainment (as in Germany) only, refugees should be allowed to choose—and be supported in their decisions.

Gender roles play an additional discriminating role, Susanne explains, when it comes to capacity for learning a language:

I do not want to protect the men now – don't misunderstand. But they have their heads full because they think "we have to be able to do everything—Jobcenter, electricity...." And then they have no more free thoughts to learn German. The men make it hard for themselves but they want the women—let's say blatantly—to keep them a little bit small. Compared to the German women, they only need to cook, wash, iron and take care of children. The German woman still has to go shopping and think about what she wants to cook and what is needed for shopping materials, what do I want to cook tomorrow? The men do all that. None of the wives of the refugees has their own checking account. The man is responsible for the family for pretty much all aspects of life.

In sum, despite a universal expectation to learn German, refugees do face challenges to acquiring language proficiency, whether related to gender, literacy level, or difficult life circumstances. Since language is seen as preparation for workforce integration, acquisition is tied to fulfillment of the laborer figure enforced in Berlin.

Self-sufficiency was the primary component of the US laborer figure. In Berlin, Antje likewise defined self-sufficiency in terms of financial independence—when the refugees are not dependent on state aid anymore. When asked if she agrees with the undefined timeline for self-sufficiency, she confirmed:

Yes, how should one set time requirements if the external circumstances are not right? No. I agree on that.

Susanne, in contrast, criticized how this system could be taken advantage of. She clarified, though, that the aid does come with conditions:

Say you have a refugee who does not want to work. The prerequisite is that you have at least A-two. But if the refugee does not have an A-two level, he does not need to work. Ok. So, such a refugee will not learn and the time is totally in the bucket.... But they do have many stipulations, like writing ten job applications a month. If they do not meet this requirement—and the Jobcenter does random checks to see if the applications have actually gone out—then benefits will be canceled, canceled, canceled.

Susanne's comments indicate the conditionality of German settlement. The state monitors a refugee's attendance in language courses and completion of job applications in order to approve continued financial aid. This federal involvement in a refugee's finances is only part of the comprehensive state oversight, which is further described below.

4.3.2 Citizen

The RWO is involved in the refugees' relationship to the political sphere in the sense that it provides consultation and accompaniment to bureaucratic offices. Yet the local organization offers no supplementary courses or workshops geared towards civic engagement. Instead, refugees gain this education through the state-run orientation course. This reinforces the refugee figure of a knowledgeable yet dependent citizen.

Staff did criticize aspects of the government's policies. For example, Antje says the recertification process, such as for a Syrian dentist to work as a dentist in Germany, could be improved. Susanne argues that the orientation course, designed to teach about civics and the German government, is not effective. Instead, she maintains, refugees need at least a six-month course dedicated just to teaching German bureaucracy. She says: "Many Germans do not know these laws; how should these poor people know the laws?" Finally, the precarity of residence permits gives refugees "a very insecure attitude towards life," as Antje says. She further explains:

Three years sounds long, but if you now see the school education of your children or you learn the language for one and a half years and then you start taking the next steps, then three years go by very quickly. And you do not know—will you get [your residence] extended or not?

A sense of uncertainty is mirrored in the language used to describe refugees. The German language has two words for "refugee," each with a different connotation. The first, *Fluechtling*, is a noun employing the diminutive *-ling* ending. The same ending is used in words such as darling, weakling, coward, and nerd (*Liebling*, *Schwaechling*, *Feigling*, *Sonderling*). Yet some maintain

that this term stands on a foundation that defies attempts at appropriation. It is the designation by which the Geneva Refugee Convention guarantees asylum and aid. It carries historical and legislative weight. The second term, *Geflüchtete*, is a past participle used to describe a situational, temporary change of location. A comparative English phrase is “the fled.” As such, it is a transitory descriptor rather than permanent label. Some, though, argue that it represents the banalization of a circumstance so terrible that it forbids such trivialization. Journalist Fabian Goldmann declares: “We’ve all ‘fled’ before: from a dull family celebration, from jail or into hallucinogenic dream worlds. It does not make us refugees” (Goldmann 2018:x). Perhaps in light of this ambiguity, Berlin staff mostly refrained from using a label whatsoever, instead using the words “they” and “them.” When they did use a term, Susanne used *Flüchtling*, and the Antje used the term *Geflüchtete*.

4.3.3 Neighbor

Local initiatives supporting refugees emphasize the refugee figure of a multicultural neighbor. As mentioned, the purpose of the Refugee Welcome Office is to oversee the settlement of refugees in two apartment buildings while fostering relationships among the newcomers and the German neighbors. Regarding the former, the RWO provides accompaniment to appointments with government offices or physicians. It also assists in lengthy bureaucratic processes for topics ranging from residence renewal and family reunification to school enrollment. Community mediation initiatives include a weekly women’s café, men’s café, and neighborhood café.

Acknowledging the bilateral nature of these integration efforts, staff mention challenges that both refugees and Germans face when relating to another. Antje explains:

German individualism opposes Arab family culture. Arab families above all love to be with another and spend time with another.... But in this area live mostly seniors, so going out and meeting another is not a central part of life anymore and we Germans tend to close the front door and stay home alone. It is difficult to lure out the Germans so that they engage

in encounters.... On the other hand, the Arab families are very conservative in their own way, because they meet with people in their environment where they understand how it works. It's conservative, and of course it's a bit of shyness because it's not easy.... As for conversations with one another, I have discovered that it takes a certain amount of...how should I say...I do not mean intellect—but a certain flexibility, maneuvering. You cannot expect the refugees to approach the Germans and start a conversation. But that's not so bad. If you do something together, with each other, then that still creates a feeling. And that's enough.

In her analysis, Antje addresses the reciprocity required in creating a cohesive society. She acknowledges the potential incompatibilities of German and Arab culture equally, thereby encouraging both parties to approach another with grace and flexibility.

Antje adds that the problem is not necessarily that the communities do not accept another, but rather that no one initiates contact. This is why, staff explains, the RWO strives to offer the space and events that facilitate such interactions. These plans are geared towards activities that foster community through mutual support. Antje reasons:

Relationships always work well if you do something together or do something for each other. So help another with the budget resolution, take out the trash, treat the sick child, knit as an apartment community Christmas stockings for all children in the building. That always works well. And eating together. That is a very important factor.

Susanne offers another explanation for refugees' hesitation to interact with Germans or ask them for help:

Refugees see it this way: *all* Germans have helped and given them so much. They then do not want to ask the individual German for even more help because in their eyes this Germany, which belongs to all Germans, has already given so much.

Antje furthermore acknowledges the fears that parents in particular may have of losing their values, and affirms the validity of cultural preservation:

For the families and for the parents, I believe that a very, very difficult point is permissiveness in Germany. And I see a fear that the children will lose themselves in this permissiveness and that the families will lose their culture...I believe that in society integration is often confused with assimilation. That's not good, because I believe that no matter to which country you emigrate, you will always carry a piece of your own culture and mentality with you and you cannot shed it, and I do not think doing so is even desirable.

Antje's belief that one should not mandate refugees to become inconspicuous, assimilating neighbors is important, and in contrast to the US framework. Towards this end, the RWO organized both an Eid al-Fitr celebrating the end of Ramadan and a traditional German Summer Fest, which both refugees and German neighbors attended. In 2018, the second summer of my research, the RWO established monthly neighborhood culture nights that would alternately share elements from the refugees' country of origin and German traditions. The inaugural event, Syrian Culture Night, began with a collaborative cooking session in which Syrian women taught their German neighbors how to make hummus, falafel, za'atar, and baklava. Cooking was followed by a shared meal and PowerPoint presentation prepared by two Syrian men on the country's history and culture. Politics were intentionally avoided.

As such, the RWO acknowledges both the refugee and German communities as part of society. Neglecting either one is dangerous, Antje says. Mandating that refugees act like they are not Arab anymore is impossible. Claiming that we must be tolerant and cannot criticize anything delegitimizes rules. A middle-ground mentality, she believes, is vital to the functioning of this multicultural society. A guiding phrase, she says, is, "Welcome, dear ones, we want to have you here, we want to help you as much as we can, but there are also certain laws here and you have to live with that."

Like the US resettlement agency, the RWO hopes to empower refugees to the point that its services are superfluous. This project was time-restricted from its inception, designed to support refugees during the initial settlement period. Its original timeline was already renewed at least twice, but after three years of operation the office closed in February 2019. The fact that an "initial reception period" extends to three years is significant, and starkly in contrast to the three-month period in the US. Furthermore, rather than considering empowerment as financial self-sufficiency,

independence was regarded more as knowledge. Towards this end, preparations for the office's closure have been long in the making. Antje laid out the new Master Plan, which coordinates services across a larger area rather than just an apartment complex. She explained the rationale for this:

So that when we go away, it's not just about the immediate neighbors, but it's about the refugees finding their bearings, knowing where to go with their problems, and finding leisure time activities in the area so that they can get along without us. That's why it makes a lot of sense for us not to just refer to the two rows of houses.

This demonstrates a long-term plan for self-sufficiency far outliving the three months of casework offered in the US. The nature of self-sufficiency is not diluted; the aim is still to become independent and resourceful. The timeline, however, is extended in Germany. Susanne described self-sufficiency in a similar manner: “In Germany you simply have to be self-reliant and know how to help yourself.” She gave the example of a refugee wanting to start a business. To do so, they need a German friend who knows the system and willingly takes time to wade through the bureaucracy and help them. In another example, a refugee who applied for allocations to furnish their apartment can help another refugee understand the process. The goal is to have such relationships already established through the efforts of organizations like the RWO. On the one hand, this conception of self-sufficiency as knowledge to self-help correlates to the US focus of entrepreneurialism to seek support. Yet it also contrasts with the *method* of self-help. In Pittsburgh, the Bhutanese refugees created their own ethnic organization and relied on social networks and charities for support. In Berlin, Syrian refugees are trained to navigate various support systems—whether governmental safety nets or social relationships with fellow refugees or local citizens—to thrive. Susanne, for example, describes self-sufficiency not only in terms of finances, but with regard to holistic well-being:

They have to be introduced to the city. And if they have seen six beautiful places then they can tell other refugees about it. That way they can switch off for once, and just be amazed and wonder and rejoice.

In sum, the German federal government exerts direct oversight regarding refugee settlement. The local organization staff, in turn, exhibits more varied opinions and criticisms of the framework. In general, they affirm the importance of language investment and federal checks that allow refugees to pursue settlement at their own pace without taking advantage of aid. Integration, they maintain, must be rooted in reciprocal relationships between Germans and refugees. Towards this end, the RWO facilitated interactions aimed at conversation and culture-sharing. Together, these efforts emphasize training knowledgeable yet dependent citizens, skilled laborers, and multicultural neighbors.

4.4 Syrian Refugees

The Syrian refugees I interviewed in Berlin reflect aspects of the ideals promoted by the system into which they are resettled. They frequently use the term “integration” and describe the reciprocal nature of settlement, for example by suggesting cultural trainings for non-profits or businesses hiring refugees. They reproduce the multicultural neighbor figure by desiring language proficiency and interactions with German neighbors but not emphasizing citizenship. Maintaining ties to their country of origin can, in turn, facilitate swift forced return. Informants complied with the skilled laborer and dependent citizen figures, yet exerted resistance by vocalizing criticism of the system, suggesting improvements, and rejecting paternalism.

4.4.1 Laborer

The interviewed Syrian refugees in Berlin value workforce integration. Most prefer the German state’s investment model as opposed to immediate employment. However, they argue for more

flexibility regarding work authorization, particularly regarding language requirements and recertification.

Rasha, the Syrian mother of three, arrived in Berlin with her parents, siblings, husband, and children and lived in a gymnasium for 14 months. Her father died of illness shortly after they moved into an apartment under the RWO's jurisdiction. Rasha was studying for her A2 language exam in 2017 and began the Orientation course after passing the language exam. She additionally volunteered her time at the RWO to translate. During quieter hours, staff allowed her to practice typing on the computer. When Rasha learned about the American resettlement system, which funds refugees for only three months, she vocalized her belief that language is important for an employee to understand their task and complete it well:

That is bad. I think that's bad, so bad. Everything is alien to these people. And if, for example, someone understands English and speaks it, then it does not matter, everything is fine. But I do not understand English, only Arabic. And then working after three months, I will not understand everything. And then maybe the boss is not so good, and he will make it harder and scold. And these people cannot speak their opinion. They will just hit or cry or say, "what should I do?" and so. I think that's not possible. That is not freedom and also not living in safety...I believe asylum is first arriving, and then it is ok to work or something. Because we all want to work, not just sit.

Rasha is attesting that individuals do want to work and not merely passively accept federal aid. However, she maintains the importance of language acquisition to understand one's task and express oneself. This desire to do one's work well was echoed by the Bhutanese refugees I interviewed as well.

Other Syrian informants additionally affirm the importance of entering the workforce not solely for the sake of financial self-sufficiency, but to show Germans that refugees contribute to the country rather than solely take from it. Sayid, the former factory owner, describes that he felt good once he began working because he was not just accepting state money. He was "doing something useful." This word choice is significant given an earlier story he had told: while still in

the Tempelhof refugee camp, where asylum seekers are housed in the airplane hangars of a former airport, his meal schedule was regulated by the kitchen staff. One evening, he missed dinner because he had gone out to, in his words, “do something useful.” He asked the cook for his dinner upon returning, explaining he had gone out to do something useful. The cook replied, “Who told you to do something useful?” Sayid thought: “Oh, so you want me to stay here like a dog and wait for my food?”

The legitimacy of work was meaningful for Sayid. He felt at home once he started working. It allowed him to be a contributing rather than dependent member of society. While the US agency staff mentioned that the Iraqi population is difficult to work with because they possessed assets in their home country and thus expect too much from the host country, Sayid explained that his experience managing a factory and owning a business facilitated his transition to Germany. He felt he did not have to integrate because his lifestyle has not changed much. He cannot stop thinking like a businessman, which led him to join a startup in Berlin. This organization offers refugee-led tours of the city. “If you let someone stand up again, they can become part of the city,” he explained. Reciprocating the support Sayid had received from Germany fostered his stake in the community:

I want to say thank you to Germany by doing something useful. We cannot thank Germany if we don't do anything for this lovely city.

To Sayid, working and contributing to society legitimized his stay.

The refugees I interviewed also offer suggestions for improving the system. Where Susanne mentioned that gender roles impact capacity to learn a language, Rasha highlights disparities in age:

We have to understand everything, ask all questions, and so on. But step by step. Not everything in a minute. And that's so difficult, too difficult, for old people. The Germans do not understand that. For example, my mother has to do the same as I do. I understand a

little German and speak, but not my mother. And that causes such pain and the feeling “I am a stranger, I cannot live in Germany” and so on. I think if old people have freedom, it is better. Only for the young it is ok... [They should take the integration course] only if they want. Not so under pressure. Because everyone has long stories and sad stories. It is not only “I want to learn.” No. Everyone has a long history and such a hard history.

As the Bhutanese refugees interviewed expressed the need for organizations to understand a specific population’s or individual’s context, Rasha likewise argues that expectations cannot be universally applied. She, in particular, addresses the difficulty older refugees have in learning a new language. The Bhutanese in Pittsburgh similarly acknowledge the special needs of elderly populations and include Senior Programming as a primary focus of the BCG.

Other Syrians I interviewed urge Germany to dismantle some of its barriers to self-reliance. Of the 830,000 asylum applicants Germany has approved, the vast majority depend on government welfare benefits and a few more than 100,000 are in full- or part-time employment (Ekren, 2018). One challenge is a tightly regulated labor market. Furthermore, the Jobcenter appears to have restrictions on the type of work in which a refugee can engage to ensure financial independence. Rasha expressed her desire to work as an interpreter, but the Jobcenter said she could not because that position pays too little. She must find another job in which she will earn more and not need additional aid.

Another challenge is certification to prove competence for a job. Tarek is a student in his mid-20s who earned a scholarship to attend a university in Berlin for a BA focused in politics, economics and social thought. In addition to his coursework, he is part of a second refugee tour-guides startup. He furthermore helped acquire and renovate a building into a community center, and built a café on wheels to serve coffee and sweets in front of it. He has also volunteered as an interpreter for a Berlin non-profit. Tarek claims the biggest issue in Germany is workforce integration:

Because everything in Germany is very bureaucratic. If you want to change a plug, you need a specialist in it, and you need a certificate saying that you know how to do it... Even if you've done that for all of your life—thirty, forty years—you need to go back and study it from scratch because that is how the system is. And that would be very frustrating and discourage a lot of people from going to the integration courses or integrating their expertise with the job market. That's one of the main issues after, you can say, being here for a while and learning some of the language.

As Tarek touched upon, the complicated bureaucracy and long wait times can demotivate individuals. Refugee informants expressed a desire to show gratitude for Germany through working and contributing to society. Yet waiting on their asylum decision for months in makeshift refugee camps for a year or more made individuals physically and mentally ill. Sayid describes refugees in camps as “wasting away.” Rasha admits that “even now, I am sick from this time. I do physiotherapy because I have a lot of stress. And lots of pain.” When an asylum application is finally approved, refugees face another year or more of language study, a rigid employment training system, and restrictions on changing residence. These regulations can be discouraging and make employment seem unattainable. Burhan suggests combining work with language instruction in a co-op style system to accelerate workforce integration. Three days of classroom education paired with two days of a practicum would allow individuals to formally learn the language in addition to practicing conversation with colleagues at work.

A further barrier to self-sufficiency is lack of economic incentive. Burhan expresses his concern regarding German rules that inadvertently demotivate refugees from becoming employed. For one, the taxes an individual must pay depends partially on family size. A single man like himself, Burhan describes, pays 50% of his salary towards taxes. A married man pays 45%, and a family with children may pay 35%. I do not know if the figures Burhan lists are accurate, but they illustrate his concern that a single man may receive as much money from the Jobcenter while unemployed as he would with his net salary.

Furthermore, if a refugee living in a community residence, an accommodation slightly more stable than an emergency shelter, finds work, he must begin paying rent for his housing. Burhan says he pays a 400 Euro monthly rent for his apartment, but his friend in a community residence has to pay 700 Euro for a “single room in a container.” Therefore, refugees typically do not begin looking for work until they have moved into their own, more affordable, apartment.

A similar economic calculation underpins the decision to pursue recertification or practicums. As Tarek explains, individuals in a practicum receive poor pay, but their government support is still reduced because they are working. Uncoordinated bureaucracy during the transition from unemployed to employed status can leave individuals without pay for two to three months. If one has a family, Tarek says, that cannot be an option.

Although the German model appears to invest in education, it can be argued that this system is not merely a plan for empowerment. Instead, this model ensures significant government regulation. This is evident in the fact that refugees are punished for expressing too much initiative or a lack of compliance. For example, refugees must report all money they receive outside of the Jobcenter. Consequently, when they inform that they have found a job, their aid decreases. The Jobcenter monitors a refugee’s bank and will confront individuals with mysterious deposits. They are primarily concerned with refugees working without authorization and thereby pocketing Jobcenter money in addition to a black-market salary. Yet for refugees who struggle to learn the language and thus cannot earn language certificates or recertify their qualifications, receiving a work permit is incredibly difficult. Burhan describes a 60-year-old neighbor and fellow Syrian who has 40 years of work experience as an electrical engineer. He has completed 900 hours of the language course (the prescribed 600 + an additional 300), and is still at A1, the lowest level. He is thus not authorized to work. Working on the black market, for example in an Arab store or

restaurant, may be his only labor option. Yet he would be penalized if he did so, and thus stays home and accepts Jobcenter aid.

Individuals who express other forms of non-compliance can also be penalized. Burhan, for example, did not like the language school in which he was enrolled. He stopped attending, and instead enrolled in another school. For this, he was docked 200 of his 600 course hours. Burhan thus received formal education only up to level A2. He learned for the final required level, B1, on his own at home.

This government regulation regarding education and labor is also reflected in a refugee's legal status and expected citizenship.

4.4.2 Citizen

The Syrian refugees' relation to the German government is marked by a precarious status and tight regulation. Nearly all Syrian refugees in Berlin have lived in a German refugee camp. These emergency shelters were established in any available building, including gymnasiums, airport hangers, and conference centers. Sayid says he waited on his residence permit for 10 months and did not think he would make it. When a residence permit is granted, it is valid for only one or three years. After it expires, the home country situation is reevaluated to determine if the permit should be renewed. The permit duration may not be same even within a family, compelling Rasha to urge for the standardization of permits:

I think it is very important for all people get the same residence. Not one family 1 year, another family three years. Why so? That's not right. And we are all Arab and come from Syria. For example, my mother gets three years and I get one year. Same family, mother and daughter.... That's a little scary for me.

Furthermore, this uncertainty can demotivate individuals from engaging in German society during the period for which their residence is approved since they may have to pack up and leave again. Sayid remarks that his only worry is this three-year period before permanent residence

because he is afraid of a closed community. He wants to build one society. When he encounters refugees who plan to return to Syria one day, he tells them “not now.” Those who are strong, he says, know that no one knows when the war will be over. They will work hard, be useful, and think about their future. If they return to Syria one day, they will have to start from zero again.

A refugee’s relation to the government is also shaped by the federally-mandated 100-hour orientation course about German politics, history, and society. It follows completion of the 600-hour language course. The orientation course duration is three to four weeks, which some refugees found rushed. Within this timeframe, they must learn the answers to 310 civics questions, about 100 a week. Rasha was enrolled in the course in 2017 and describes it as such:

Yes, it is good. Learning is good. But the orientation course I think is stupid. Too much. Only three weeks with three hundred and ten questions, and everything under pressure. This is too much. Why? I believe this course should be when someone has lived in Germany for four or five years, when they understand everything. And then do this course. Not faster, not after just one year or one and a half years.

This flood of courses soon after arrival in Germany seems to have a similar overwhelming effect as the early push for employment in the US. Rasha’s suggestion aligns more with the US refugee regime, in which refugees with a Green Card can take the citizenship test (100 possible civics questions) after five years of residence. A key distinction is that this exam is optional in the US—it is only for those who want citizenship. In Germany, completing the orientation course and passing the exam are mandated but do not bestow citizenship.

Citizenship was stated as a goal in only one interview, again highlighting the precarity of a refugee’s status and the inability to think as far ahead as naturalization. Sayid, the only refugee who did mention it, relates its importance to his experience and the value of voting:

When you have residence, you can do everything except vote. That is why citizenship is important to me. Democracy is living your own life, but also leaving your fingerprint on society. You can only do that through voting in a democracy. I lost my city and don’t want anyone else to.

Tarek, the university student studying economics, politics, and social thought, did not yet commit to pursuing citizenship due to an uncertain future:

I don't want to say yes or no now. Because I've learned the hard way that sometimes you cannot push for something that's going to happen to you; you just get yourself to the next day and you keep going. So maybe. By the end of my studies here I think my residency will be done as well. So at that point I will have a decision between staying and leaving. Also by then I will also have all the requirements that the government will ask for an open Visa where you can just stay here. And I could also have the requirements to ask for citizenship. So at that point those two options will be open. I'm pretty sure I will go with one of them because I still need some papers for wherever I go after this. Or if I find a program here for a master's degree, I might end up staying here for more years. But I'm very open and flexible to other things. When I see an opportunity that works and fits with what I want, I go for it, whatever it's going to be.... Some people just want to forget about where they came from because they don't remember anything good, especially if they came here very young. And for other people, they can't wait until things get safe and want to go back. It's still in my mind.

This precarity in status reveals a fundamental contradiction to the education-investment model. Policies that prevent a secure future in Germany yet mandate linguistic and civic training contradict at their core. Tarek urges the nation to consolidate its legislation with coherent logic:

If you're still pushing the rhetoric that we are going to push people to go back home, some of the economic theorists will say that this is a waste of money. Why are we going to give all this money and then not use the manpower after this? So that is one of the policy issues. Either you lay low on the idea of 'we're going to push people back' and you invest in this manpower that you have here now and it's going to be a good investment in the long run. Or you keep pushing for [return], but in that sense you also need to change your foreign policies of how to work with the Syrian government, how to work with other governments around Syria, to push for a solution there that you could make it easier for them to go back for whenever it is safe enough for them to go back. So it's one policy or the other. You can't push for both. That's how I see it. If you are going to fund people to do or learn or whatever they are doing here, in the end you want them to work here. Then if they want to go back, they can go back, but at a certain point you need to collect the money that you put up. And that could happen if you make it easier for them to work as soon as possible.

4.4.3 Neighbor

The Syrian refugees I interviewed emphasized the importance of language for comprehensive independence. As Tarek says, "You cannot be financially stable if you're not, you can say, socially

or psychologically sufficient.” However, they interpret their expected relation to society to include a humble lifestyle in addition to linguistic and cultural education.

First, as “self-sufficiency” was a buzzword for Bhutanese in Pittsburgh, so “integration” was a key word among Syrians in Berlin. In the US, self-sufficiency is linked to work and financial independence. In Germany, integration is linked to linguistic and civic education. To some degree, refugees may have repeated this word as part of learning to speak the language of authority. Rasha’s answers highlight this. When asked what “integration” means to her, she replies:

Integration in life, or in the course? I understand this word as...Germans do not want these people to feel strange. It is to always live together, work, speak, make contact. Well, that is how I understand that word. It that right?

Later, Rasha says she would feel integrated when she has obtained the C1 language certification (one level below heritage speaker). When asked how long she has been in Germany, she again ends her reply with a question of affirmation to ensure that her language level matched what was expected of her:

[I have been in Germany] about one and a half years. But I think that what I understand now is good, right?

The insecurity she expresses in her answers and request for my affirmation may indicate a degree of attempting to mirror particular language or reproduce an answer she believes I expect.

Beyond fulfilling the figure of an educated, skilled laborer, the interviewed Syrians individually declare that German language competency is important for both societal and labor integration. Language was perceived as a precursor to respect. Many expressed that newcomers must understand the German language and culture in order to respect it and, in turn, earn respect. Sayid, the former factory owner, explains:

Without language, people look at you like a child. They cannot give you value or see your experience.... Integration is two-sided. In Germany, many refugees feel like only they are being told to change. To have integration, you need language so people can explain their

perspective. Before language, it's not real integration. You can't just open your mouth and shove everything down... How do you build a bridge community? Know about the culture and lifestyle and respect it. When you handle people with respect, no one will deal with you in a harsh way. People will respect you even if they don't love you. When I say I respect you, that doesn't mean I am German. Difference is normal; you have to change your mind about how you think about it.

Rasha similarly confirms:

We have to learn and speak. Not only be with Syrians and Arabs and so on. We must. If someone does not understand and then makes chaos or confusion, that will not work. We have to understand everything, ask all questions, and so on. But step by step. Not everything in a minute.

These recommendations confirm that integration is not assimilation. Sayid maintains that refugees should not be compelled to "become German" in culture and lifestyle. Indeed, differences are not incompatible with mutual respect. An important factor in regarding one another with dignity is language. Communication is vital for effectively sharing one's perspective, asking questions, and understanding situations.

In addition to a refugee's responsibility to understand and respect German culture, Sayid maintains the need for Germans to reciprocate respect. Such a relationship affirms refugees as fellow dignified individuals rather than dehumanizing them as burdens or patronizing them as victims. One aspect of respect, dialogue, and genuine welcome involves rejecting paternalistic aid. When Germany initially opened its borders in 2015, volunteers responded with the essentials: food, water, clothing, shelter. Once the emergency condition has stabilized, though, one must invest in sustainable livelihoods. Sayid explains:

This is my message for the Germans: you can give the refugees enough motivation if you give them enough respect. You cannot just be saying 'welcome' from a distance. We need dialogue.... Help by stop thinking they need help.... Don't come with food and clothes now, one year later. Thousands of organizations do basic help, but there is no deep or sustainable help. If you're an engineer, look for refugees with experience to employ. A German doctor can help a refugee doctor. A carpenter can help a carpenter. They have a similar connection and can help connect them into their circle. That would make a quick integration.

Sayid was expressing his frustration with being treated as a victim rather than being allowed to take advantage of opportunities that would facilitate self-sufficiency. He also highlights the irony of a distant welcome. He feels the iconic images of German citizens greeting refugees at the train station with posters, stuffed animals and smiles were not followed by sustainable, long-term efforts. Two years after the initial arrivals, there must be a plan to move past a perpetual emergency state characterized by food and clothing donations. Refugees must be afforded the opportunity to become independent of government aid or philanthropy and enter the workforce.

Another aspect of rejecting paternalism is equipping refugees to understand the system and advocate for themselves. Rasha describes her wariness of Germans coming to them without a proper introduction of who they are or where they work and yet expect refugees to sign papers and enroll in courses. Someone had come to Rasha for enrollment in an integration course even before she had received a residence permit. She signed the papers and was enrolled in a private school with an ineffective teacher. She wishes that the RWO staff would better protect the refugees or give them tips rather than simply letting anyone tell them what to do. Tarek similarly argues that the orientation course must integrate practical tips for navigating the bureaucracy rather than simply colors of the German flag or the symbol of Berlin:

For the parents going there, they need to learn about where to send their kids. [The teachers need] to advise and then give them tips: this is how the system works, do this this and this, these are the options that you have.

Language skills would also combat the isolation of refugee populations. Such exclusion was evidenced with Turkish guest workers in the 1960s. Turks are the second largest immigrant group in Germany yet rank last in the Berlin Institute's integration rating. Sayid acknowledges that Germany is requiring the language and orientation courses to avoid the mistake they made with the guest workers.

Interviewees furthermore identify the same challenges RWO staff members mentioned that hinder interactions between refugees and their neighbors. When asked why she does not have contact with Germans, Rasha explains:

I do not know. I think everyone has no time maybe. But they are all nice, they do not do anything [to] me. But I have no contact. In my apartment building, it is only “good morning,” “good morning.” They do not ask, where are you from, or do you need to help or something, no.

Burhan says he feels Germans are not scared, but careful. He describes how his street in Aleppo was one big family. In Berlin, though, each house has its private life.

Both Burhan and Rasha further add that they are too shy to approach a German for a conversation. Making contact without sufficient language skills to truly communicate or fear of being laughed at also creates a stressful situation.

Another challenge to interactions are presumptions Germans have towards refugees. Sayid, the former factory owner, expresses frustration with the media’s portrayal of refugees. News stories magnify the vulnerability of refugees, which influences German perceptions:

The media focused on refugees in camps, where they are not in a good situation. Where they cannot work. Where there is fighting among cultures. When you try to interact with them, they’ve broken down. Then people say, “they don’t want to be active people.”

Perpetually portraying refugees in a vulnerable state is another aspect of paternalism. On the one hand, it evokes savior-complex urges. On the other hand, viewers can interpret these images to mean that refugees are lazy or incompetent, occupying space and utilizing federal resources while contributing nothing. This would be a false conclusion. When in a refugee camp in Germany, asylum seekers are legally not allowed to work, regardless of how much they might like to. Even when asylum is granted, refugees have to meet the language requirements described above to receive permission to work. A number of other factors, such as mental and physical health, also contribute to an individual’s work ability. Sayid now works as a tour guide with a

project that offers walking tours of Berlin from the perspective of a refugee. He says he is proud of these tours because they help people change their mind and learn not to just get information from the media. He feels a part of building a bridge community.

Again, a refugee's relationship to the government and federal regulation shapes their relation to other aspects of society. Regarding the workforce, refugees must subordinate themselves to strict labor regulations. The overly ambitious refugee who wants to be self-sufficient before the authorized time is penalized. This dependent refugee figure is enforced by society as well: refugees are expected to live a humble lifestyle. Their legitimacy as persecuted individuals in need of asylum is questioned when they are seen with smartphones, nice clothes, or a car. Giorgio Agamben explains this expected modesty by distinguishing "between *zoe* (bare life, the fact of being alive) and *bios* (full life, the social presence in the world)" (Fassin 2005:367). This separation of *zoe* and *bios* is mirrored in the separation of humanitarianism and politics. German society supported humanitarian refugee reception on the grounds of moral duty and thus protects *zoe*. Yet the political ideals of universal human rights were not invoked, and thus the flourishing of *bios* is rejected. In his reflection of Agamben's ideas, Fassin (2005) says, "The refugees thus occupy a central place in our moral economy because they reveal the persistence of bare life in contemporary societies: deprived from their human rights by lack of citizenship, they can only claim to stay alive, most of the time confined in camps settled in countries near the one from which they have fled" (367).

Since the rhetoric of compassion underpins popular support of refugees in Germany, the perception of unwarranted *bios* can quickly cause public outcry. Burhan, for example, interacts with refugees through his work. As such, refugees have his phone number and call him all hours of the day for help with something. To separate his work and personal life, he found it appropriate

to acquire a second phone. His German co-workers likewise have two cellphones. It seems standard to have both a work and personal phone; when I began interning at the RWO, the staff apologized for not having the funds to offer me a second phone. Yet Germans who see Burhan with two phones assume both were paid for with their taxes and that refugees are living a luxurious life without working. Burhan describes the justification he feels he has to give to Germans for owning two cellphones:

The German government does everything for these people, but the same time it is wrong for the refugees.... For example, I have two cellphones. I bought the new phone and the old one belongs to [my employer]. But I did not buy the second phone just like that. Why? Because people know my cell phone number and at two or three o'clock in the morning, people call me and tell me "Burhan, I have a problem." I think it is a big problem, and then they tell me "No, my WhatsApp does not work." What can I do? To answer their call I hung up on my family. In my home in Syria, in Aleppo, there is no internet anymore. Sometimes there is internet and sometimes there is not. If there is no internet, I cannot talk to my mother. And sometimes it comes on at two or three o'clock at night. And I wait for the phone call of my mother or father. I want to hear my mother and hear my father. But if I turn off my phone, I will miss [the call]. Why did I buy the mobile phone? Because if I buy a mobile phone for maybe one hundred Euro or so, maybe with taxes, and I need money one day, I can sell it for three hundred Euro or four hundred Euro, and the money will come back to me. But if I take a cheap one, that's not the case. It is an investment.

Burhan's perceived need to justify his possessions indicates that while owning assets in America deems refugees as successful, in Germany it deems them as freeloading, unjustly siphoning resources often perceived to be paid for by German tax dollars.

Tarek suggests that the combined classroom and work system, like the one Burhan proposed, can help combat such sentiment. This compromise furthermore benefits the government in the long-run, he argues:

For a lot of anti-immigrants, that is the only issue—that they work. "We're paying for them, paying all these taxes for the refugees and they're not working for us." Ok, so you need to put them to work as soon as possible. And in a couple of years, whatever the government paid for them, that is going to come back. When you have all those workers coming in, at a certain point it's going to work.... Either you give people more opportunities for a job or you don't complain about the refugee program and how much money it is

taking. You can have one or the other, it can't be both.

True community is thus not based in subordinating oneself to a particular language or culture, or in dependence to the government. Rather, these linguistic and cultural competencies are valuable for becoming an independent and respected member of a democratic society. As Tarek describes:

If you're in a democracy, this is how it should work. People should be able to do whatever they want until the point that they are going to hurt other people.... As a lot of Germans do. Look at two Germans, and you cannot say that they are close in any way. But they are under the same law, under the same government, and they will apply both to the same laws. That's what you could push for. Abide by the laws, do your thing, and keep part of this community. Just as any member of this community tries to put something to this community. When you do that, you are integrated.

5.0 Conclusion

This thesis contributes to an analysis of refugee subjectivity by considering it as the intersection of institutional subjectification and individual agency. This addresses the call Milner and Wojnarowicz (2017) set forth: “We must begin to trace linkages between global decision-making procedures and local implementation. How are global refugee policies experienced in the lives of refugees?” (14). State-mandated and locally-enforced regulations envision a particular future for the refugees within their borders. This is manifest through the enforcement of a multi-dimensional refugee subjectification. The expectations comprising this subjectification shape the individual refugee experience. Refugees thus respond with the agency to reproduce, appropriate, and resist such subjectification. The result is a complex refugee subjectivity comprised of both institutional and individual expectations. Deconstructing the different dimensions of a multi-faceted refugee subjectivity is thus crucial for understanding policy implications on individual lives. Data from this ethnography of US and German refugee re/settlement highlight three elements of the subjectivity in particular: a refugee’s relation to the state (a citizen figure), to the economy (a laborer figure), and to society (a neighbor figure). Refugees do not become one or the other; rather, I have explored *the type* of laborer, citizen and neighbor that is envisioned for refugees by both themselves and the federal context in which they live.

In the United States, emphasis is placed on training refugees to become hardworking, self-sufficient laborers in order to be non-demanding citizens and inconspicuous neighbors. This was manifest in limited state support. If a refugee fails to achieve self-sufficiency, he must rely on his social network or voluntary community assistance. The German case evidences a different combination emphasizing a dependent citizen, supported by the skilled laborer and multicultural neighbor figures. Refugees rely on the government for fundamental aspects of livelihood. Yet

this support is contingent on linguistic and cultural integration. If a refugee demonstrates commitment to integration by attending language and orientation courses, he is supported by the government and does not need charity.

Yet ethnographic accounts from time spent with refugees highlight a grave contradiction within both the US resettlement and German integration frameworks. The state emphasizes a particular dimension of subjectification while creating conditions of precarity or uncertainty precisely around that figure. The data evidence that federal policy priorities thereby play a significant role in shifting refugee priorities to match the host nation's ideal. While the refugees interviewed resisted or appropriated for their own goals certain expected figures, they still mirrored the highest priority figure of the host country. Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh continually repeat "self-sufficiency," a word fundamental in the discourse of US refugee resettlement representing the financially independent laborer. Syrian refugees in Berlin repeat "integration," the very name of the UNHCR durable solution Germany practices.

Although the refugee informants in both cities strove to reproduce the primary figure, their principal source of precarity flowed from state-mandated barriers to figure actualization. A key commonality among Bhutanese refugees in Pittsburgh and Syrian refugees in Berlin is thus that the figure with the most uncertainty is the one primarily emphasized by the federal re/settlement framework. This perpetuates chronic liminality, a neither here nor there existence. The refugees have been separated from their home government, economy and society, yet are not fully integrated into a reaggregated social order in the host country.

While US policies mandate immediate workforce integration, employment has been the most unstable factor of the Bhutanese refugees' new life. Those interviewed have held multiple jobs since arriving, sometimes staying at a job for only days at a time. About half were originally

resettled in a different city but moved to Pittsburgh to find job opportunities. Dawa described his precarious self-sufficiency as such:

Now I am independent. But in future I might need help from welfare if I am not able to earn money or if I am not able to do the job, I will need help.... It is difficult here. The thing is that we have to struggle, we have to work hard. If we don't do the work, we'll be in a problem.

Authorization to stay in the US, in contrast, is not a source of precarity for them. During the 2016 election Dorji explains:

There are so many news; so many postings on social medias like Facebook, email. I don't think we'll be having some kind of problem here because whoever comes into the chair of president, the Congress is there and sets up the rules and all. We are legal here, we came through DHS, I think that is one of the biggest international things of people coming and going. They have all the information over there. We are screened and everything, so I don't think we will have problems with that. If we don't break any laws or contracts here, we will be fine. But the other thing is, there are so many histories we have read that, when there is one king, and if another comes, he changes some rules. And if that is going to happen, it could be, but so far as I am concerned—this is not the old days, this is not the age of nineteen forty or nineteen fifty—this is the age of 2K. So, everything is clear. Even someone who is gossiping, they have pictures in social media because we have pictures everywhere. So, I think we will be safe. We will be safe.

In Germany, however, precarity revolves precisely around permanence in the country. Policy mandates that refugees invest in long-term language and civics education. Yet becoming part of German society in language and culture is not accompanied by a legal equivalent. Refugees have their residence approved for only one to three years at a time, and some fear that refugees can be sent back at any point in time.

This creates a fundamental contradiction: incentivizing refugees to become a particular figure without providing them assurance of being that figure for the long-run. States compel refugees to strive for the fulfillment of a particular subjectivity without facilitating its actualization. Bhutanese in the US are guaranteed permanent status without facilitating social and civic integration. Syrian refugees in Germany are equipped with education to facilitate

integration but are not guaranteed permanent status.

Lauren Berlant (2011) calls this “cruel optimism...when something you desire is actually an obstacle to your flourishing” (cover). Dima in Pittsburgh expresses this optimism:

If we work hard, everything is possible here. Everything is in our hands. What we have to do is struggle here.... Fulfill first our dreams—so when I complete my study and get a nice job and start looking for a house...fulfilling our dreams, then we will feel resettled.

Rasha in Berlin roots her optimism in further education and skills building, mirroring the refugee figure prioritized by the German framework:

I would like to continue education for my children. [For them to] do something, vocational training or studying at university. And then me too. My husband in Syria did car mechanics work. I also hope he finds this job in Germany. And yes, to work for yourself, to earn money yourself. I want to work, as an interpreter hopefully.

This precarity rooted in cruel optimism is bolstered by regulation of mobility. In the US, Volags try to resettle refugees in a city in which they already have family and thereby a support network, minimizing federal responsibility and magnifying the precarity of self-sufficiency. In Germany, refugees lament that their family is scattered all across the country and federal regulation bars them from moving. This positions refugees to depend on the government, yet their unstable residency makes the relationship fundamentally precarious.

The contradiction of emphasizing a particular dimension of subjectification while creating conditions of precarity precisely around that figure perpetuates the power of conditional refuge. Bhutanese refugees are selected for resettlement in the US and expected to become quickly self-sufficient in return to justify their reception. Syrian refugees in Germany are granted temporary residency, which can be renewed if they prove linguistic, civic, and employment success. Such conditional refuge raises larger questions around the nature of resettlement and integration and indicates that the “durable solutions” proposed by the UNHCR are not, in fact, durable.

Given the individual nation's relative freedom in policy development, this insecurity flows from federal agendas. I argue that states intentionally perpetuate conditional refuge to ensure the subordination of refugees. This is evident in the fact that national policies in the US and Germany do not align with the goal of the durable solution they supposedly enact. One might expect the permanent resettlement framework of the US to invest in language and civic education. The uncertain future framework in Germany, in contrast, might justify quicker workforce integration so refugees can sustain themselves rather than invest in the language and culture of a country they may be compelled to leave. These contradictions, however, maintain precarity and sustain an "existential condition" (Ramsay 2018:203) of an insecure livelihood in both the present and future.

In addition to a federally imposed subjectification, the cause of a refugee's flight may impact an individual's goals for the future and thus their response to expectations. The Bhutanese, for example, were exiled from their country. This bitter expulsion stripped them of hope for return and compelled them to move forward in a new country. Abhaya explains:

I feel fully integrated, I feel settled. I feel like [the USA] is my country. Whatever I do, do it for this country...before we became citizens, there could be fluctuating in my mind—like, maybe we should go back. But there is nowhere for us to go back to. We came in as refugees; Bhutan would never ever accept us. I really don't want to go back to Nepal. So where would we go? This is the country... we didn't look back; we wanted to look forward only. So that was the resettlement. We are here to progress. We are here to do something.

The Syrians, in contrast, fled war and persecution. They were not forcefully and systematically exiled by law, as the Bhutanese were. As such, for some there is still hope of return if regime changes. This preserved longing contributes to the precarity of their permanence in Germany as well. As Tarek explains:

For a lot of people they have different answers. Some people just want to forget about where they came from because they don't remember anything good, especially if they came here very young. And for other people, they can't wait until things get safe and want to go back. It's still in my mind...Some families who maybe didn't establish yet here or don't feel that they belong, they will go back--especially if they still have

something at home. If they still have a family there or their home is only partially destroyed they can still rebuild it or whatever they're gonna do. So that will be different every time but that also depends on how things are going back home.

To promote durability and secure livelihoods, I argue the need for a fundamental shift in the way policy is designed and implemented. Refugee integration and resettlement are components of a two-sided process involving both the migrant and host country. As such, a sustainable solution cannot be one that fulfills the envisioned future of the host country alone. The primacy of the federal imagination is evidenced in the fact that the same refugee will be compelled to become a drastically different citizen, laborer and neighbor in the US than he would have in Germany. Refugees are not involved in the process of shaping the vision of their own future. To address this fundamental disconnect, refugees must be affirmed as active partners, not passive subjects, in resettlement and integration.

Advancing this research is crucial for understanding how transnational trends such as economic globalization and liberalization, humanitarianism, and securitization continue to shape national agendas, and thereby federal paradigms for refugee re/settlement and refugee subjectification. These case studies contribute to an understanding of the refugee experience beyond the border-crossing moment and asylum approval. Further research can expand both the depth and breadth of this study. I hope to explore more refugee re/settlement models, such as the Canadian private sponsorship program and the Spanish rescue and reception model. To gain a better understanding of the complete reception picture, it is also important to study the expectations of refugee figures regarding activities such as consumption and political action.

Ultimately, understanding the on-the-ground implementation of policy-level decisions is crucial for developing sustainable frameworks that incorporate both state and refugee priorities. Currently, "given the highly institutionalized nature of the making of global refugee policy, only

a limited number of actors, namely states belonging to ExCom and UNHCR, participate in this process. Other actors, including NGOs and refugees, are not able to participate directly in the formal and informal process leading to decisions of UNHCR's Executive Committee" (Milner and Wojnarowicz 2017:13). There is thus great need to engage both the voices of local organizations, which implement federal policies, and of refugees, whose daily life is impacted by policy implementation. Nation-states must recognize both local communities and refugees as key stakeholders in the re/settlement process. This community orientation is vital for informing policy creation and implementation, and thereby for the durability of responses to forced displacement.

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