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# From Malta to the United States: Addressing refugee needs

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From Malta to the United States: Addressing Refugee Needs

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An Honors College Project Presented to  
the Faculty of the Undergraduate  
College of Arts and Letters  
James Madison University

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by Elizabeth Lynn Brannon

May 2017

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Accepted by the faculty of the Department of Political Science, James Madison University, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Honors College.

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## **Abstract**

There are currently 21.3 million refugees worldwide, who have been driven from their homes and are searching for a new life. The current refugee crisis has created a sense of controversy over the integration of refugees, making it further imperative to determine what leads to effective integration of refugees into host societies and how organizations can aid in this process. To determine these factors, I completed field research in Malta and Harrisonburg, Virginia, interviewing a total of ten refugee organizations. In this study, I explore the how community connections, adaptability, and funding constraints determine the effectiveness of organizations in aiding refugees in integration. I determine that there is no clear mold of “success,” as that each organization fills a specific gap in the refugee services continuum, but that the local organizations that serve through programming and have high levels of adaptability are able to aid in the most levels of integration.

## **Introduction**

The motivations for refugee flight are inherently complex and often traumatic. The choice to flee is only the first step of many potentially difficult choices refugees may be faced with in the future. They must find a way to flee, whether that is by foot, by boat, or by plane. Once they finally arrive to a safe destination, they face extensive scrutiny throughout the process of gaining official refugee status. Then, they must try to adapt to their new surroundings, which may or may not be their final destination. Across the board this is a difficult process that involves resources and coordination on behalf of states, intergovernmental bodies, and organizations. The needs of refugees vary greatly. Some refugees previously had lives that did not look so differently than the western ideas of a “successful” life and career. They may have been a doctor or a lawyer. However, once a refugee resettles into another country, they likely will be unable to continue practicing their profession and find themselves working jobs significantly beneath their qualifications. On the other hand, refugees who have spent their entire lives in camps will face very different challenges once they are resettled. These refugees may be unaccustomed to certain everyday aspects of western life, such using a washer and dryer machine. This variation in needs can present a unique challenge to refugee organizations. Organizations often must cater to a wide range of populations and are likely limited in resources and capacity.

Despite the difficulty that organizations face in working to serve varying populations, it is imperative that the correct services are being offered. Determining the “correct” services is not an easy task, however the use of top-down methods offers little benefit to the refugee population (Smith 2013). The organizations have the benefit of experience, but the refugee population must be the one to identify needs in order to be effectively served. At the point in time, it is imperative to consider the factors that lead to effective services. Throughout 2015, over one million refugees

entered Europe—half of whom were fleeing the Syrian civil war (Greenhill 2016, p. 317). The current “refugee crisis” has left the international community at a loss for how to create sustainable solutions that address the mass influxes of refugees fleeing conflict from different areas of the world. While the refugee influxes have sparked political debate and extensive media coverage, the “refugee crisis” is not a new phenomenon. There are 65.3 million displaced peoples worldwide, with 21.3 million of these people being refugees (UNHCR). Over half of these refugees are being hosted within the global south, leaving the global north relatively isolated from managing these refugee crises. 53 percent of the refugee population fled from Somalia, Afghanistan, and Syria (UNHCR). The recent influx of refugees into Europe, however, has sent many into crisis mode. Far right movements throughout the European Union and the United States have proliferated the idea that refugees present a threat to stability (Greenhill 2016). Rather than working to manage the population and aid in integration, the media portrays avoidance and exclusion.

While this is the interpretation that is spread through the popular media, this is not the situation on the ground for those within the refugee regime. Instead, there are a plethora of organizations that are working hard to combat negative perceptions and advocate on behalf of refugees. Each organization serves in a unique and particular way, fulfilling a portion of the necessary spectrum of refugee services. Given these differences, organizations assist integration in different ways. The question central to this study is what factors determine a refugee organization’s ability to effectively aid refugees in integration. For this study, I interviewed a total of ten organizations that serve refugees in some capacity in Malta and in Harrisonburg, Virginia. These organizations demonstrated contrasting perspectives than the negative ideals that are portrayed within the media. They were dedicated to assisting refugees in integration and to

bettering their lives in any capacity they could. Most utilized bottom-down tactics and worked to ensure that they were providing the services that the refugees wanted. In this study, I discuss the factors that lead to successful integration and how organizations can best aid refugees. Based on research conducted in Malta and Harrisonburg, I evaluate the efforts by organizations in each location. By studying the community connections, adaptability, and funding constraints, I determine that each organization contributes meaningfully to the needs of refugees.



## Literature Review

There are 21.3 million refugees worldwide, each with a unique story. These different stories and experiences create vastly different needs. The refugee regime—the conglomerate of intergovernmental bodies, powerful states, governmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations—is tasked with the great responsibility of serving these 21.3 million refugees. The unfortunate reality is the refugee population will experience extreme differences in the aid they receive. Some refugees will spend their entire lives in camps with hundred of thousands others, all of whom are being served basic necessities by a few large international organizations like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees or the International Red Cross. Others may risk their lives traveling through equally dangerous countries, only then to further put themselves in danger by crossing the sea on an overcrowded boat. If they are lucky enough to make it to land, they may be granted refugee status and after a few years undergo third-country resettlement.

Organizations are responsible for meeting the needs of each of these refugees regardless of the situation, whether they are in a host state or have been resettled. Across these situations, there is a similar goal: to aid in integration. Integration will be reached at different levels depending on the individual. Different organizations will aim to reach different marks of integration, but each aims to this in some way. However, the services offered by organizations can differ drastically in development and execution. There is currently little consensus on “best practices” among refugee organizations. Determining what these practices are could help the refugee regime overall improve the services and subsequently the lives of those they serve. The research question central to this paper is:

What factors determine a refugee organization’s ability to effectively aid refugees in integration?

In this chapter, I will review the literature on integration and refugee organizations that I will use later in this thesis to develop my theory and hypothesis.

## **Integration**

If the purpose of refugee organizations is to aid in adaption and integration, it is important to consider the factors that facilitate success in these areas. The term integration has no single, cohesive, and overarching definition. Instead, scholars have disagreed about its meaning and this has led many to create their own definitions. Ruth Farrugia (2009) defines integration as “the complex participation of the immigrant in more-or-less organized and also institutionalized fields of social, economic, occupational, residential, and communicative systems of social action in the host society,” (p. 52). Farrugia (2009) emphasizes the importance of the analyzing the social, economic, and cultural role that refugees take in their new society (p. 52).

### *Contextual Factors*

In order to be legally considered a refugee, individuals must meet the qualifications outlined in the 1951 Convention on Refugees and be processed and approved by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR). Under the 1951 Convention on Refugees, a refugee is defined as:

Someone who owing to a fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside of the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself to the protection of that county (UN General Assembly 1951).

An asylum seeker is defined as “someone who says he or she is a refugee, but whose claim has not yet been definitely evaluated” (UNHCR 2015, p. 28). This process in itself can be quite challenging and exhausting, as individuals are forced to recount their stories many times to different individuals to ensure that they are being truthful. Once the status is gained, refugees face an entirely different range of problems, which they will work to overcome over time as they integrate. The nature of their integration, however, will depend on the type of location they are in. Refugees will likely have varying levels of motivation to integrate depending on if they are in a camp, a transitory host state, or a place of resettlement.

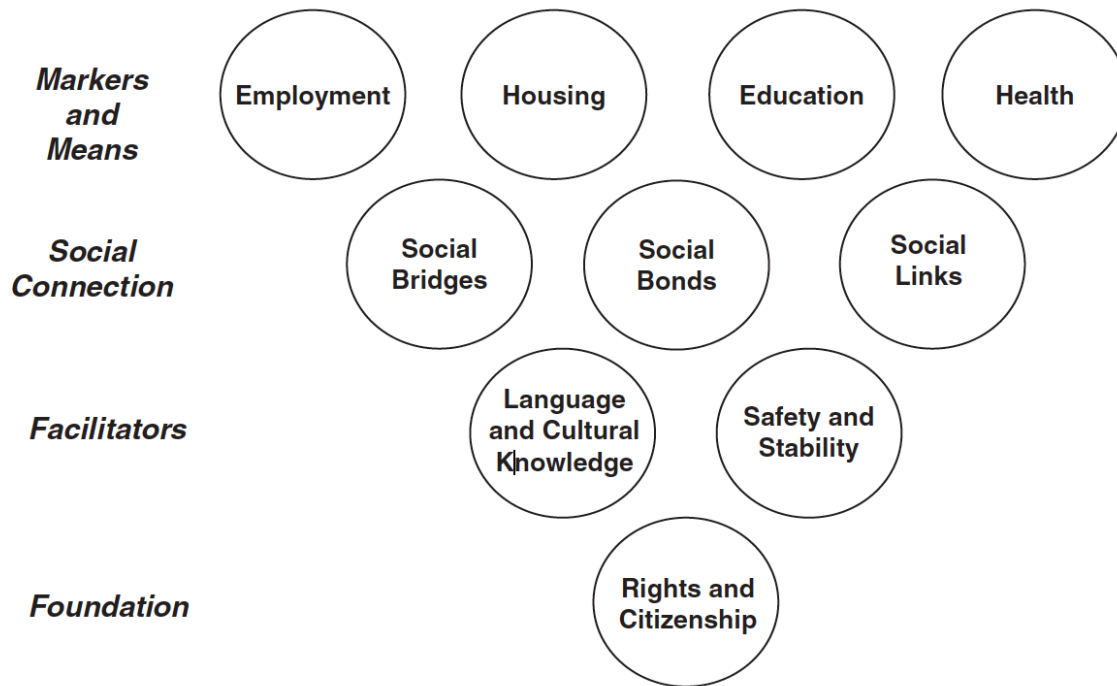
In camps, refugees are much more dependent on legitimized organizations such as the UNCHR to provide their basic needs (Lori and Boyle 2015, p. 71). The responsibility falls on the host state, the UNHCR, and other nongovernmental organizations to account for basic needs and safety. These provisions can be restricted considering the influx of refugees and the limited resources. Refugees have concerns over not only a lack of food and water, but also are recovering from the danger and distress of fleeing (Lori and Boyle 2015, p. 71). The needs refugees have in camps are therefore very different than those of individuals in other transitory locations or in resettlement areas. Their focus is often more directly on basic needs and trauma, rather than integration. These factors, in combination with restriction of movement, can make it very difficult for refugees to be self-reliant and self-sufficient while in camps, hindering integration (Lori and Boyle 2015, p. 71). After refugees move to a location where their movement is less restricted, but they are not entirely permanent, their needs shift along with the opportunities for integration.

Third-country resettlement locations, such as the United States, Canada, Australia, and the United Kingdom are permanent sites. Here, refugees can focus on becoming self-sufficient

and integrating (Capps et al. 2015, p. 344). They still may have concerns over food and other basic needs, however greater attention will be given to learning cultural norms, language, and everyday practices (Smith 2013, p. 489). Transitory host states, where refugees initially arrive after flight, are a unique middle ground between camps and resettlement areas. They have greater freedom of movement, but there is a sense among refugees as they wait to be resettled that their host state is an impermanent home. The perceived impermanence of the situation can hinder refugees from trying to integrate (Farrugia 2009, p. 64). However, across both transitory and permanent locations, it can be seen that refugees will put an emphasis on finding a community. While studying a group of young African males in Malta, a transitory state, Damian Spiteri (2012) found that refugees sought out individuals from their own country or general region that they felt they could trust and form a community with (p. 337). Similarly, Tamar Forrest and Lawrence Brown (2014) found that “secondary migration,” meaning moving after resettlement, in the United States was strongly influenced by the communities where refugees live (p. 26). If refugees were unable to find a similar community, including people from their country or the region, they were likely to move somewhere where more people of their culture lived because they believed they would feel more comfortable (Forrest and Brown 2014, p. 26).

Ager and Strang (2008) argue that integration builds from the foundation of rights and citizenship and is further facilitated by language and cultural knowledge as well as safety and stability (p. 169). The social connections that refugees have, such as social bridges, social bonds, and social links will then help refugees to meet what Ager and Strang (2008) call “markers and means” which include employment, housing, education, and health (p. 170). This model acknowledges that the different factions of integration build on one another and that it is challenging to facilitate one aspect if another has yet to be met. Connecting Farrugia (2009) and

## A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration



Note: Ager and Strang. 2008. "Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework." P. 170.

Ager and Strang's (2008) theories, the markers and means can be interpreted as economic integration. Having a job, maintaining steady housing, accessing education, and accessing healthcare are reflections of economic security. The social connections Ager and Strang (2008) identify can be interpreted as overall social integration, including building social bridges, bonds, and links. Finally, language and cultural knowledge as well as safety and stability can be included under cultural integration. Learning the language and cultural cues is an important and apparent part of cultural integration. Safety and stability, while maybe less obvious, indicated the level of comfort, trust, and confidence of refugees to integrate into their new community (Ager and Strang 2008, p. 184).

## *Cultural Integration*

As previously stated, cultural integration can be interpreted as knowledge of the language and culture as well as levels of safety and stability. Learning the language is a central component of cultural competence (Ager and Strang 2008, p. 182). Many refugee organizations offer language lessons and programs so while it is a barrier to integration, there is less of a deterrent in accessing to language lessons than other services. However, cultural integration, like all other aspects of integration, is a two way process. This means that key service providers, like healthcare providers or education systems, need to have materials translated and employees who can communicate with refugees. This can at times be a barrier for both refugees and the community because the service providers may not have the resources they need to accommodate for individuals whose first language is not English. (Ager and Strang 2008, p. 182). In addition to language, gaining cultural knowledge, such as traditions or general etiquette, is important. Developing cultural knowledge can be more difficult if refugees do not have adequate social links to the community because they then are not exposed to different cultural customs. Feelings of safety and stability in a community can determine how “at home” or accepted refugees feel and subsequently affect how open refugees are to integrating (Ager and Strang 2008, p.183). Without feelings of security and acceptance, there may be an underlying fear or hesitancy that comes with integration and joining a new community. Gaining stability as a part of integration means finding a consistent community in which refugees can find support and comfort with (Ager and Strang 2008, p.183).

### *Social Integration*

Again, integration is a shared process between those entering the community and the community itself (Farrugia 2009, p. 53). Therefore, integration is also highly dependent on how accepting the society is to newcomers and how welcome or unwelcome the incoming refugees feel. Farrugia (2009) finds that refugees or migrants in general have a much harder time with the social aspect of integration in areas where they either feel unwelcome or have little contact with the local population (p. 68). Developing social bridges, bonds, and links is key to building social connections (Ager and Strang 2008, p. 184). Refugee organizations can help with building social connections, but depending on their focus, the role of organizations may be more central to economic and legal aspects of integration.

Overall, the makeup of the host society can be a very important factor in levels of immigrant integration. If the host society has a very homogeneous society where outsiders are immediately apparent, social integration may be significantly harder. Bradford and Clark (2014) describe this situation as a “circular and self-perpetuating process” that is constantly trying to balance between the “we-ness” among the host society and the “outside-ness” of those who are migrants (p. 19).

### *Economic Integration*

Despite these characteristics of resilience and resourcefulness that refugees embody, resettlement can be very difficult, especially considering the presence of significant language and cultural differences. Given that aspects of integration build on one another, it is logical that economic integration would grow from cultural and social integration. If some of the facilitating aspects of integration are missing, such as language or cultural knowledge, refugees may have a

harder time integrating economically. Yda Smith (2013) argues that refugee services are not always organized in a way that helps refugees adapt and integration successfully—especially when considering aspects of economic integration (p. 482). Looking at the Somali Bantu refugee population in the United States, Smith (2013) contends they have been hindered by a lack of formal education and the necessary language skills (p. 482). It is possible that the skills and capacity that refugees have are ignored in an attempt to encourage conformity to the American economic system. Before the Reagan Administration, there were programs that would retrain refugees so that they could become certified to practice their former profession in the United States. However, after 1981, these programs became classified as “welfare dependency” and were dissolved (Smith 2013, p. 489).

Smith (2013) maintains that the current employment policies for refugees in the U.S. is formed around a business model and lacks a focus on education and training that could better position refugees to succeed in their economic integration (p. 490). This represents yet another hurdle that refugees must overcome after resettling. Employment opportunities, access to education, stable housing, and access to healthcare services, according to Ager and Strang (2008) are indicators of successful integration (p. 169). However, if organizations are not facilitating the other aspects of integration and jumping ahead to economic integration, this may create a more challenging situation for refugees overall.

### *Identity*

Refugees’ perceived self-identity could also play a role in their integration. While studying African refugees in Malta, Spiteri (2012) found their identity was in a state of fluctuation. Their perceived self-identity reflected their home countries and also where they were



currently living and was strongly influenced by the relationships they had forged in their new communities (Spiteri 2012, p. 369). Many had created a community with other refugees, including those from their region and from other regions. Spiteri (2012) argues that this demonstrates that “the root of asylum seekers’ migration experiences lies in persecution and failed states” (p. 372). Even if they do not directly share the same culture, they can find connections and support among people who understand generally what they have come from.

Forming a hybrid identity, the refugees that Spiteri (2012) studied said to be “still belonging, in a way, to my homeland and, at the same time, belonging to Europe” (p. 369). The combination of these two identities can be seen as a testament to their resilience and resourcefulness (Spiteri 2012, p. 372). Each acknowledges that their country was no longer safe and took the risk to travel to their destination. Additionally, they are each making a new life after arrival in a safer country by finding a community and working to establish roots (Spiteri 2012, p. 372). This contradicts the negative ways in which refugees are often depicted. Smith (2013) argues that refugees are often viewed as “helpless objects of pity” who need “top-down intervention” instead of focusing on the resilience and self-determination that refugees embody (p. 487).

## **Organizations**

Since the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees, the United Nations High Commissioner on Refugees (UNCHR) has become an invaluable institution to the livelihoods of refugees and arguably holds the most legitimacy among refugee organizations. Over the past half-century or so, the number of organizations involved has grown greatly as the refugee process has become

systematized. The types of organizations can vary significantly and offer an assortment of services based on their location, their funding, and their mandate. Government organizations, faith-based organizations, local organizations, and refugee community organizations are among those commonly present. The differences among these groups affect the types of services offered and how they are offered. While the sheer number of organizations means that services can be offered to more people, it also increases competition for funding, confusion about who does what, and can delegitimize major organizations by moving service outside of their realm.

### *Refugee Regime Complexity*

The participation of such a variety of organizations serving refugees represents the “refugee regime complexity” (Betts 2013, p. 69). Regime complexity refers to the choices actors have in contracting services. For example, instead of solely relying on one organization to provide services to refugees, such as the UNHCR, states can select different organizations—whether they be nongovernmental organizations (NGOS), faith-based organizations, or secular local non-profits—to provide the services refugees may need (Betts 2013, p. 69). Betts (2013) contends that the refugee regime has grown increasingly complex in the past few decades as other regimes have come to intersect with the refugee regime, such as labor, travel, humanitarian affairs, security, human rights, and development (p. 72). These regimes intersect in a variety of ways. In regards to refugees, the labor regime may be primarily concerned with the right of refugees to work within host states, while the travel regime may be concerned with the migration flows across borders. Similarly, the security regime may be focused on controlling migration flows into states to prevent perceived threats to security. The human rights regime focuses on the treatment of refugees in camps, while the development regime concentrates on conditions in the country of flight.

Internationally, the expanding regime complexity brings both benefits and challenges. It ensures that there are more organizations on the ground providing services to refugees. On the other hand, Betts (2013) argues that the complexity at times shifts politics regarding refugees into other regimes and therefore puts certain policy decisions directly out of the UNCHR's control (p. 75). For example, if a state chooses to tighten its border security, refugees might be turned away at the border and their safety could be further compromised. For less powerful organizations, such as local agencies, refugee regime complexity could have more adverse affects, particularly for groups that are underfunded or are solely funded off of grants. The increasing number of organizations working towards the same purpose increases competition for available funding and can push organizations towards an outcomes-based approach in which employment is the biggest goal.

Rather than coordinating to provide services, Smith (2013) finds that, "competition for funds has become a disincentive" and is preventing organizations from effectively serving all refugee needs (p. 491). If the organization's funding is especially limited, finding clients employment is more emphasized because the organization cannot afford to support them for a sustained period of time. Smith (2013) argues that this emphasis coupled with limited staff means that caseworkers cannot take the time to effectively match clients with jobs based on their specific skill set (p. 490). However, if funding is less of a concern, regime complexity can be very helpful locally because there are a multitude of organizations servicing different facets of refugee needs.

## *Government Organizations*

The mandate of refugee organizations can determine the kind of funding they receive and what their key priorities are. Government mandated organizations are more likely to have very defined services and guidelines determining how money is spent. Resettlement organizations are typically mandated by their governments and therefore receive the majority of funding from their governments, but also may receive some from private sources such as grants (Capps et al. 2015, p. 344). The United States has the largest refugee resettlement program, with about 70,000 refugees resettled per year, each having undergone an extensive process—including interviews and background checks done by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (Capps et al. 2015, p. 347). After immediate arrival to the U.S., basic needs are met with a push for employment and adjustment. Capps et al. (2015) state,

The Department of State . . . provides resettlement agencies with funding to support refugees' reception and accommodation for the first 30 days after their arrival, including food, housing, clothing, and support for employment guidance and language training . . . . Local resettlement agencies provide ORR funded employment, language, and other services to refugees during their first five years in the United States, though these services are mostly concentrated during refugees' first few months in the country. (p. 348)

The United States has nine key national resettlement organizations that the Department of State works through to resettle refugees (Darrow 2015, p. 92). Each of these organizations then works through various local agencies, totaling to more than 350 organizations throughout the U.S. to “implement the provision of reception and placement services to refugees” (Darrow 2015, p. 92).

Historically, the faith community played a significant role in resettlement in the United States, both through formal faith-based organizations—including the nine organizations that the Department of State contracts through—and additionally through churches, synagogues, mosques, and other congregations (Eby et al. 2011, p. 587). Within the U.S., these faith-based

organizations are government-mandated to resettle refugees. The faith community in the U.S. has worked to serve refugees since before the 1951 UN Convention on the Status of Refugees was ratified. The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, dating back to 1881, was notably involved in helping Holocaust survivors resettle to the U.S. after World War II (Forrest and Brown 2014, p. 13). Church World Service, another prominent organization, was formed in 1946 with a focus on refugee resettlement (Eby et al. 2011, p. 589). These organizations, in combination with other significant ones such as the Episcopal Migration Ministries, the Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services, and World Relief, have had a significant role not only in aiding in resettlement but also with advocating for legal reform such as the Refugee Act of 1980 (Eby et al. 2011, p. 590). While these organizations are technically faith-based, they are government contracted to organize resettlement and can be seen as government organizations in that function.

#### *Faith-Based and Local Organizations*

Around 70 percent of resettlement in the United States is done by faith-based organizations, which Eby et al. (2011) argue is a testimony to the effectiveness of these organizations in the refugee community (p. 591). Faith-based organizations have other purposes outside of their involvement in resettlement. Faith-based organizations can provide a uniting factor among refugees who come from strongly religious cultures, even if they are of a different religion. The congregations provide refugees with a community to integrate into that may offer a more comfortable fit. Forrest and Brown (2014) maintain that social networks are pivotal in refugees' comfort in a community and whether they choose to stay or move to another community (p. 23). Faith-based organizations can provide an intermediate social network that eases them into the new culture. They may be better positioned to help refugees integrate socially as they can relate to refugees on something that unites them culturally, such as religion, while

introducing them their own culture and helping them build networks with others in the community.

Despite having faith-based roots, these organizations serve refugees while being conscious to not impose any religious beliefs on them. One of the prominent organizations, Church World Service, will often work through local congregations to “co-sponsor” refugees (Eby et al. 2011, p. 593). A co-sponsor may help with finances for the family, but more commonly they serve as an immediate community connection and can help with cultural adjustment (Eby et al. 2011, p. 593). Local organizations work similarly in the community as faith-based organizations do. They work locally with refugees to integrate them into the community and focus on issues that affect them in that area. Both faith-based and local organizations employ strategies to focus on connecting local communities together and to foster levels of comfort and security.

While resettlement groups play an important role in refugee integration, it can be seen that faith-based and local community groups have a more long-term effect on refugee well-being both in resettlement locations and in transitory locations. Darrow (2015) argues that “community stability” has a strong influence on levels of integration among refugees (p. 95). This could include the consistency of the services offered, such as housing and employment opportunities. Similarly, the character of the local community is impactful as well; the concentration of other refugees or immigrants in their area can ease their cultural adjustment and help them to build more socially networks (Darrow 2015, p. 95).

One way that organizations build connections between refugees and the broader community is to hire former refugees. It is fairly common for resettlement agencies to hire

former refugees as caseworkers (Shaw 2014, p. 285). These caseworkers serve as “cultural brokers” and “bridge builders” between the refugee community and the service providers (Shaw 2014, p. 288). Caseworkers who are former refugees may have a better understanding of the community that refugees are joining and have also lived the refugee experience. They can have a stronger impact on building confidence and comfort because they serve as a model for successful integration (Shaw 2014, p. 286). Overall, the role of former refugees as caseworkers is effective as they serve as an intermediary between organizations and refugees.

### *Refugee Community Organizations*

The community networks formed among refugees can often turn into informal and formal groups, termed “refugee community-based organizations.” Refugee community-based organizations (RCO) can be defined as “organizations rooted within, and supported by, the ethic of national refugee/asylum seeker communities they serve,” (Lacroix et al. 2015, p. 64). Unlike resettlement organizations, RCOs are found in both transitory locations and the resettlement areas and their various functions reflect this. Griffiths et al. (2006) found that the crucial factor uniting RCOs is their services offered upon the basis of ethnicity (p. 891). RCOs give refugees the opportunity to find an identity in their new society while uniting with others who have a shared culture and experiences (Griffiths et al. 2006, p. 891). Lacroix et al. (2015) contend that RCOs are “vital instruments” to maintaining culture, but also are invaluable to the integration process for refugees (p. 67). They further that RCO functions include but are not limited to,

. . . Empowering individuals, providing a communal voice and a form of representation, bringing a flexible and immediate response to local needs, playing a mediating role between refugees and service providers, filling gaps in existing services, and serving as an important organizational training ground. (p. 67)

While RCOs have been fairly successful in forging integration and building networks for refugees, like many other organizations serving refugees, they have difficulty with funding and resources (Griffiths et al. 2006, p. 892). Similar to the local organizations, as the number of groups continues to grow, RCO complexity grows and the available funding is spread out among the various groups making it increasingly difficult to provide formal trainings and resources to community members (Griffiths et al. 2006, p. 893). Griffiths et al. (2006) conclude that the role of RCOs is often limited to “gap-filling” and can be seen as complementary to the functions of other agencies with more formal mandates (p. 894).

For this study, I will be focusing on government organizations, faith-based organizations, local organizations, and refugee community organizations (RCOs). While studying the literature, key factors became apparent regarding organizations’ services. First, it is pertinent for integration that refugees can forge connections with the broader community and the refugee community. Faith-based and RCOs demonstrated within the literature a strength in facilitating these bonds. Second, the use of bottom-up tactics by organizations to develop is important to ensuring the services are effective. Smith (2013) asserts that the use of top-down methods often include a handful of assumptions about refugees that can result in doing more harm than good. The literature also reinforced the limitations that funding can put on organizations. Organizations are often limited in how their funding can be spent, either in their mandate or by grant-providers, or having too little funding. These limitations often can determine what kinds of services are offered and how effective they are. Finally, the literature discusses the key aspects of integration, including foundations, facilitators, social connections, and means and markers (Ager and Strang 2008). In order to effectively aid refugees in integration, it is pertinent that organizations are facilitating these four indicators.



## **Theory and Methodology**

While reviewing the literature, it is apparent how drastically refugee services vary across organizations. This variance is necessary as refugee needs may differ on a case-to-case basis and reflect where they have fled from and where they are currently living. Therefore, the functions of refugee organizations vary based on the needs apparent to them and their location. In this thesis, I will work to identify factors within organizations that contribute to effectively aiding in integration across two very different cases, Malta and Harrisonburg, Virginia. For the purpose of this study, refugee organizations will include any organizations that provide some kind of service to refugees. The research question central to this paper is:

What factors determine a refugee organization's ability to effectively aid refugees in integration?

In addition to this, are certain types of organizations (government, faith-based, refugee community organizations, etc.) better positioned to serve the refugee population than others? It is important to note the tendency of many, including relevant scholars, the media, and large organizations that employ top-down strategies, to view refugees as lacking agency and deserving of pity. This contradicts the strength and diligence that refugees embody as they flee their homes in search of a better life. Therefore, this paper emphasizes refugees' resilience and resourcefulness and views the goal of refugee organizations as helping refugees adapt and integrate into their new communities. In this section, I theorize my hypotheses, discuss my case selection, and outline the methods that I use to evaluate my research question.

## Hypotheses

There are many definitions for integration. A multitude of scholars have defined integration for their own scholarly purposes, but there is no single widely accepted definition. According to Farrugia (2009), integration is “the complex participation of the immigrant in more-or-less organized and also institutionalized fields of social, economic, occupational, residential, and communicative systems of social action in the host society” (p. 52). Farrugia (2009) emphasizes the importance of the social, economic, and cultural aspects of integration. Integration is innately a complex and multi-faceted process. Most importantly, integration is a two-way process, meaning that not only must newcomers find ways to adapt to a new culture and society, but also that the community must be open to the newcomers entering their community.

Ager and Strang (2008) argue that integration is a process that builds off of itself. At the foundation of integration are rights and citizenship, which are exercised through “facilitators” such as cultural knowledge and safety and security, which contribute to cultural integration (p. 184). From cultural integration, individuals are able to build their social integration. Social integration included creating social bridges, bonds, and links. Finally, from social connections, individuals can build their economic integration, which Ager and Strang (2008) define as the “markers and means,” including employment, housing, education, and health. For the purpose of this study, the social, cultural, and economic facets of integration will be highlighted as they incorporate the fields that Farrugia (2009) and Ager and Strang (2008) identify.

The ability of refugees to adapt culturally and socially may determine their level of economic security, according to Ager and Strang’s (2008) model. Cultural and social integration are likely mutually reinforcing. A basis of cultural integration, including cultural knowledge and

a sense of safety and stability, may be necessary to begin fostering social integration, including building social bridges, bonds, and links. However, as refugees integrate socially, it is likely they will continue to grow their cultural knowledge and feelings of safety and stability. Further, as they build their cultural integration, they will likely feel more confident and comfortable and therefore start to branch out even more socially. To adapt socially would mean to find a niche not only within the refugee community, but also within the greater community.

Similarly, refugees may find themselves negotiating two cultures—their own culture and the new one they have entered. Connecting newcomers to other refugees who have been in the community longer may ease integration for newcomers. Refugees can work together to create a support system of individuals who have not only experienced similar traumas while fleeing their home countries, but have also already begun to adapt to the new society. Those who are more established in the area may be able to relay the cultural norms of the community to newcomers and can identify the nuances of the varying cultures easier than others who do not have those commonalities. Newcomers may also be able to develop a level of trust and comfort with people who have these shared experiences quicker than they would with the broader community. To help foster the creation of these relationships, some refugee organizations employ refugees as caseworkers. These caseworkers can become “cultural brokers” and “bridge builders” between the two groups (Shaw 2014, p. 288). Having refugee workers or leaders within refugee organizations ensures that services are in line with refugee needs and are not “top-down” interventions as Smith (2013) criticized (p. 487).

It is important that social integration is fostered among the refugee community in the host country and between the refugee community and the broader community. Without fostering cultural and social integration, the refugee community could become isolated and have a harder

time adapting to a new society and could struggle more to reach economic integration. Economic integration, including stable employment, education, housing, and health access, is seen by Ager and Strang (2008) to be a kind of culmination of the integration process. Refugee organizations, particularly those that are government-mandated, often focus on helping refugees meet economic integration by providing housing, helping them find work, and facilitating access to things like healthcare and education. However, at times this focus means that these organizations neglect the other aspects of integration, such as cultural competence and feelings of safety and security, which are important foundations for fostering successful economic integration.

This is where the strengths of both faith-based organizations and refugee community-based organizations lie—they focus on connecting the refugee community with the host community. Lacroix et al. (2015) argue that refugee community organizations (RCOs) in particular are vital to helping refugees navigate between their home culture and their new culture (p. 67). Integration is a two-way process, meaning that newcomers must find a way to adapt to their new society, but the community also must be willing to let them fold into their society. Fostering a welcoming environment can be important in ensuring that newcomers feel as if they can adapt into their new society. Organizations that foster connections between the refugee community and the broader community may create the opportunities that are critical in breaking down barriers between the two. These dynamics lead to my hypothesis that,

*H1: Organizations that are able to connect the refugees with other refugees and with the broader community will better aid refugees in integration.*

In order to effectively serve a population, it is critically important to know that population and its needs intimately. If services are not organized in a way that actually helps the population, they may not be serving in the way they are intended to and could even cause more harm than good. For this reason, it is crucial to communicate frequently with the population being served and to be responsive to their expressed needs. Taking a bottom-up approach means that the population being served has a hand in what is provided. However, many large international organizations are likely to take a top-down approach in serving refugees, rather than working with the refugee population to create a bottom-up solution (Smith 2013, p. 487). Rather than creating assumptions about what a population's needs are and how they can best be met, organizations ought to create programs that respond to the needs that refugees experience in everyday life—something that cannot always be assumed by an outside party (Smith 2013, p. 487).

The methods that individual organizations use to develop their programs and how they do or do not tailor them based on the feedback they receive from the population that they are serving is a reflection of the approach organizations take—whether it be bottom-up or top-down. Refugee Community Organizations (RCOs) are an example of a response to the inability or unwillingness of other organizations to adapt to needs expressed by refugees. These organizations developed as a “gap-filler” because the refugee community identified that there were services they wanted that were not being offered by the existing organizations. For example, if organizations are not helping refugees facilitate community with other refugees, a RCO may choose to form a peer-support group, where they could build community and share issues. However, RCOs' lack of funding can make it difficult—or near impossible—for them to provide a more well rounded array of services (Griffiths et al. 2006, p. 894). Regardless of the

limitations of RCOs, there is clearly a desire for programs to better represent the needs of refugees.

Though organizations are inherently limited in what they can offer to refugees, adjusting the existing programs to tailor them to the population can improve how effective the services offered are. Here, feedback is critical. Taking initiative to create new programs based on what the population expresses reflects the desire of organizations to work from the bottom-up. Organizations that are able to effectively assess what the needs of the population are and that respond to them in a purposeful way will be able to better serve the population in integration because they will facilitate the aspects of integration that refugees are struggling with. Rather than building off of their own assumptions, organizations that work from the bottom up will be directly responding to the needs of those who they are serving. These assumptions lead to my hypothesis that,

*H2: Organizations that are able to tailor their programs and resources to their population as well provide opportunities for feedback will better aid refugees in integration.*

Many organizations may face barriers, however, in tailoring and adjusting the programs and resources they offer refugees due to funding constraints. The obvious issue facing many organizations is the lack of funding they receive and the staff limitations that they face as a result. Organizations simply may not have the funds necessary to create many different programs or to provide the changes that are seen as needed. In this case, organizations that have more funds could be assumed to have more flexibility with the programs and resources offered. However, even well funded organizations can find their funding to be a hindrance to their effectiveness as many grant-funded projects have particular constraints that must be followed.

Organizations may be constrained by grants to do exactly as they proposed—despite whatever changes seem to be necessary—or they must embody certain interests of those who provide the grants.

In order to compete for grants, organizations may find themselves providing only specific resources and programs to refugees so that they can fulfill some sort of checklist set out by grant-providers. Communities that have organizations that are largely constrained by funding may find that they are offering overlapping services rather than coordinating to complement one another's services due to competition over funding grants (Smith 2013, p. 491). Therefore, organizations that are less constrained by funding—either by a lack of funding or due to grant stipulations—may find more flexibility in the services and programs that they offer to the refugee population. When the organizations in an area are less constrained by funding requirements, there may likely be less overlap of services among refugees. Here, organizations could have niche services offered and could come together to complement the services offered by other organizations. The more adaptable an organization can be to expressed needs of the population, the better they may be able to aid integration in the ways refugees need. Those without constraints will have an easier time adapting their services and programs to the needs. These assumptions lead to my hypothesis that,

*H3: Organizations that are less constrained by funding requirements will be able to better aid refugees in integration.*

## Case Selection

The cases selected for this study are Malta and Harrisonburg, Virginia. Malta, a small archipelago, is located south of Italy in the Mediterranean Sea. Malta's proximity to Northern Africa, as well as its membership within the European Union, has greatly increased its refugee arrivals in the past decade and a half (Farrugia 2009, p. 57). Harrisonburg, located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia in the United States, has similarly had an increase in its refugee population in the past few decades. Harrisonburg, with a large agricultural industry, was chosen to receive a resettlement location due to its poultry factories and farms that can easily employ newcomers who cannot speak English or have little education (though neither are the case for all refugees). The UNHCR estimates that about 19,000 asylum seekers have arrived in Malta since 2002, although only about thirty percent of that population has remained in Malta (UNHCR). As of 2016, many of the refugees arriving in Malta were coming from Libya, Syria, Eritrea, and Somalia respectively (UNHCR). With a population of approximately 400,000 people, Malta has among the highest refugee population per capita in Europe (D'emilio 2105). Between 2004 and 2013, about 1,600 refugees were resettled to Harrisonburg, Virginia. Many of these refugees came from Iraq, former Soviet Union states, Eritrea, and Cuba. The city's foreign-born population is around 15 percent.

Though the two communities do not present an immediate connection at face value, the comparison presents an interesting puzzle. Malta and Harrisonburg are very similar in size (though one is a country and the other a city). The religious communities heavily influence both locations. Malta is heavily influence by its Catholic roots and for from this foundation many in the community developed a charity focus that has evolved into the presence of various non-



profits and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Harrisonburg has a strong Mennonite community that is likewise very dedicated to service.

Malta is a transitional location for many refugees. Many arrive hoping to gain access into the European Union and move onto another country (Farrugia 2009, p. 64). Harrisonburg and the United States more broadly serve as a resettlement location for refugees. Of the arrivals to Malta in the fast few years, the largest percentage has resettled to the United States (UNHCR). The comparison of the two cases presents a continuum of the refugee experience, exhibiting both immediate arrivals and transitions into a more permanent resettled life. The two cases may have different outcomes because the needs of refugees in these stages are different. These differences between the two locations may contribute to richer results, however. Given that most refugee organizations present high levels of variability, identifying factors that are influential to organizations in Harrisonburg and Malta may indicate that similar aspects within organizations are necessary across the board. The differences between the two cases may increase the applicability of the study to other cases.

### **Data Sources and Measurement**

The collection of data for both cases, Harrisonburg, Virginia and Malta, was done through semi-structured interviews with individuals who work with organizations that serve refugees, through participant and non-participant observation, and through reviewing the relevant literature. Organizations were selected on the basis that they served refugees in some way. Individuals from these organizations were contacted via cold calling and snowballing and either agreed to interview or referred me to someone else who was available. Organizations selected to

interview after the initial contact were chosen based on availability. Five interviews were conducted in Malta and five were conducted in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

Interview questions were centered on themes of social, cultural, and economic factors of integration that correspond to the hypotheses. To analyze the data, interview transcriptions were first reviewed to identify major themes. Then, the transcriptions were reviewed a second time to identify how those themes connect to the hypotheses. To supplement any gaps that the interviews did not cover, participant and non-participant observation and secondary sources were used. The participant and non-participant observation took place through attending events or meetings put on by the organizations being studied. These observations complement the knowledge gained through interviews.

The organizations included in the study may impose a threat to reliability in the study because of the variation of service offered per organization. However, only interviewing government agencies or only interviewing non-profits would have hindered the study more because of the interconnectedness of these organizations within their communities. Most communities with large refugee populations only have a few large international governmental organizations or government agencies so studying them alone, or non-profits alone, would not give a complete picture of the refugee situation in a community. Further, the IGOs and governmental agencies tended to be very connected throughout communities and each provided important pieces of a larger need.

### *Dependent Variables*

The purpose of this study is to measure how effective different organizations are in aiding refugees in integration. However, effectiveness is not easily defined. How well an organization

aids refugees in integration is inevitably a subjective measure, which is a weakness of this study. To combat this limitation, whether the organization offers resources and programs that aim to assist in social, cultural, or economic integration will be used as a basis of effectiveness. While serving refugees can take form in many different ways, the services and resources offered by organizations tend to focus on aiding refugees in adapting to their situation and their new surrounding. The dependent variable is therefore measuring the degree of effectiveness of organizations have in aiding refugees in integration, as determined by the explanatory variables.

### *Independent Variables*

The explanatory variables measure the degree to which organizations are able to employ bottom-up measures in creating and altering their services. This is operationalized through organization's community connections, their ability to tailor and adapt their programs, and their funding constraints. The explanatory variables work to determine the degree of effectiveness that organizations have in aiding the refugee population in integration. The degree of effectiveness then is determined based on if organizations do or do not embody these three characteristics. Data about each of these variables was collected through interviews with individuals who work for refugee organizations.

### *Community Connections*

Community connections are operationalized based on how organizations connect with refugees, how they connect refugees to others in the refugee community, and how they connect refugees to the broader community. In order to collect data about how connected an organization is to the refugee community and the broader community, organizations were asked questions such as:

- What does the organization identify to be the top priority in serving the refugee population?
- How does the organization identify the top priority in serving the refugees population?
- How does the community affect the refugee population?
- How does the refugee population affect the community?
- What kinds of programs and resources does the organization offer?

### *Ability to Tailor and Adapt Programs*

The ability of organizations to tailor and adapt their programs are operationalized through how organizations develop their programs, changed their make to programs after development, and how they utilize the feedback received from the refugee population they are serving. In order to collect data about how an organization is able to tailor their resources and program to the population's need, organizations were asked questions such as:

- How are programs developed?
- How do programs evolve after their development and what kinds of changes are made?
- Does the organization tailor programs and resources to the population?

### *Funding Constraints*

Organizational funding constraints are operationalized through how organizations receive their funding and whether or not the funding has any particular restrictions or parameters associated with it. In order to collect data about how organization were or were not constrained by funding, organizations were asked questions such as:

- How does the organization receive its funding?
- Does the funding have certain constraints attached to it?

For each case, I will analyze the types of community connections organizations forge, how adaptable they are, and the extent to which they are constrained by funding. Then, I will

analyze how the different levels of these factors influences how effectively organizations are aiding in integration. I will first discuss the case study of Malta and then discuss the case study of Harrisonburg.

## Case Study: Malta

Malta is an archipelago state located in the Mediterranean Sea about 288 km east of Tunisia, 333 km north of Libya, and 80 km south of Italy (CIA 2016). The nation consists of three islands, Malta, Gozo, and Comino, totaling to about 316 square kilometers (CIA 2016). With a population of around 413,000, Malta has the highest population density in the European Union and one of the highest in the world. The state also has the smallest economy among the European Union, with a GDP of \$9.8 billion (CIA 2016). Its geographic location, coupled with its membership in the European Union, has made it a desired landing for asylum seekers and refugees for approximately the past decade and a half. However, given restrictions of physical space and resources, along with a cultural resistance to outsiders, the country has found itself at odds with the migration patterns that have emerged into Europe.

Malta has a history dominated with invasion and colonization by foreign parties. The small state has fallen victim to invasion by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Arabs, the French, and finally the British (BBC 2017). The Knights of St. John of Jerusalem controlled Malta from 1530-1798, at which point Napoleonic France gained power until 1800 (Mitchell 2003, p. 381). From 1800-1964, Malta was a colony of the British Empire (Mitchell 2003). Malta's two official languages, Maltese and English, demonstrate the country's legacy as a melting pot of culture. Maltese is an Arabic dialect that was originally introduced around 1050 when the Arabs invaded the state and infused the culture of Malta (*The Economist* 2015). The Maltese language continued to be influenced by Sicilian, Latin, and Italian in the centuries to come. English was established as an official language of Malta during British rule. Both Maltese and English are prevalent throughout the country today.

## **Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers in Malta**

Despite the evident influences of outsiders on Malta throughout its history, the society today remains very wary of foreigners. In such a small and densely populated state, two factors work against migrants entering Malta. First, the society has extensive social and family networks, ensuring that it feels as if everyone knows each other (Bradford and Clark 2014, p. 10). National identity plays an important role in Maltese culture, particularly after a history of colonialism. People are circumspect of foreigners who could taint what they perceive to be “Maltese.” This has obvious contradictions given their complex history of cultural mixing. These characteristics of Maltese culture lead to the second factor, which is the ease with which outsiders can be identified and therefore ostracized (Bradford and Clark 2014, p. 10). These factors make it very difficult for foreigners to blend in. With the growing number of migrants, including refugees and asylum seekers, entering Malta over the past decade, the presence of racism and xenophobia has become evident (Bradford and Clark 2014). The overall societal response is also in contradiction to the heavy influence of religion in Maltese society, with more than 90 percent of Maltese people identifying as Catholic (CIA 2016). Malta’s religious features have promoted the practice of charity throughout society, although not necessarily inclusion.

Waves of migrants began arriving to Malta around 2002, with many of them coming from Sub-Saharan African states such as Eritrea and Somalia (Bradford and Clark 2014, p. 12). The number of migrants coming to Malta continued to increase particularly after Malta joined the European Union in 2004, which made it a key entry point into Europe. In the past few years, the demographics of asylum seekers have shifted from a sub-Saharan African population to populations arriving from Libya and Syria (UNHCR 2015). Originally, there were many single male refugees entering, however as the countries of origin have changed, more families are

arriving. These demographic shifts affect what services are needed and what organizations offer refugees. The method of refugee arrivals has also shifted. Between 2002 and 2010, Malta had 13,148 asylum seekers arrive by boat (Bradford and Clark 2014). The arrivals are now prominently by plane rather than boat. This creates a challenging dynamic for organizations dedicated to serving refugees. When refugees arrived by boat, they would immediately be transferred to detention centers and then open centers. Organizations were given direct contact to the detention and open centers so that accessing the population was simple. However, Malta has now ceased using detention centers. Open centers are still used, but less often. Many of the more recent arrivals from Libya and Syria have more resources and money available to them than those coming from sub-Saharan Africa typically do. These incoming families are now settling directly into the community, rather than staying at the open centers. This makes contact much more difficult for refugee organizations. In Malta today, refugees either stay in the open centers or they live on their own in apartments throughout the country.

Many have described the increasing refugee influx into Europe from Africa and the Middle East as a “refugee crisis.” As of 2015, the number of refugees worldwide had increased by 4.7 million people over four years, bringing the total to around 15.1 million refugees (UNHCR 2015, p. 4). Today, there are some 21.3 million refugees (UNHCR 2017). The highest numbers of refugees are coming from Syria, Afghanistan, Somalia, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, respectively (UNHCR 2015, p. 6). Due to its proximity, southern Europe, including Malta, has felt a vast majority of the immediate influx, with many refugees arriving by boat and plane, gaining access into the European Union, and then moving onward to other European countries (Bradford and Clark 2014, p. 12). As the number of incoming refugees increases, it becomes especially difficult for the immediate receiving



countries to accommodate the huge influx. Malta and the Republic of Cyprus, another small state, received the highest number of asylum applications per capita compared to 44 other industrialized countries between 2005 and 2009 (Mainwaring 2014, p. 104). The two countries have taken on campaigning for equal “burden” sharing among EU members, putting an emphasis on their small size (Mainwaring 2014, p. 104). The two have worked to highlight that they do not have the physical space, nor do they have the personnel, resources, or material power to accommodate the large number of refugees (Mainwaring 2014, p. 104). Klepp (2010) argues that Italy, Greece, Cyprus, and Malta have all taken very proactive roles in trying to prepare and then accommodate for influxes, but regardless they are each at a disadvantage purely due to their location (p. 18). Despite however unequal the burden may be among states, Malta has still worked to find solutions to the pressures at hand.

### **Organizational Responses**

Overall societal perceptions of refugees and asylum seekers in Malta are thought to be very negative (Bradford and Clark 2014). However, the efforts shown by organizations throughout Malta to offer varying support and resources to refugees and asylum seekers have been strong. To gather data on organizations in the area and the overall refugee community, I interviewed five organizations that serve refugees in some capacity during May 2016. In addition to conducting interviews, I collected data from a handful of participant and non-participant activities. For non-participant activities, I attended an art exhibition and talk titled “You Are What You Eat,” which was hosted by the Aditus Foundation and Blitz art studio. The talk discussed how cultural immigration in Malta is reflected in the food that they eat. The talk began

discussing food and its cultural meaning and moved to incorporate views on immigration and migration in Malta. For participant observation, I attended a few meetings of the Migrant Women's Association of Malta (MWAM). The organization included women from countries such as Germany, Romania, Australia, Libya, Syria, Sudan, and many others. Some of the women were refugees and others considered themselves migrants. During the MWAM meetings I attended, they discussed challenges they face as migrant women and meaningful ways to improve the lives of other migrant women in Malta.

The interviews I conducted lasted between twenty minutes and one hour and forty minutes. Individuals interviewed were selected based on availability or on referral. Those interviewed ranged from directors to staff members. Interviews were conducted with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Malta, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Malta, Kopin, Integra, and the Organization for Friendship in Diversity. Other notable refugee organizations in Malta include the Jesuit Refugee Service Malta and the Aditus Foundation. The Jesuit Refugee Service Malta is one of the longest-serving refugee organizations in Malta. They offer services related to legal issues, psychosocial support, and outreach (Jesuit Refugee Service Malta 2017). The Aditus Foundation, comprised of a group of young lawyers dedicated to human rights issues, works mostly with legal rights for refugees and asylum seekers (Aditus 2016). Unfortunately, I was unable to interview either the Aditus Foundation or the Jesuit Refugee Service Malta. It is worth noting that all of the individuals that I interviewed were Maltese, including those who worked at the UNHCR and IOM. None of the individuals were refugees nor did any of their organizations employ refugees, with the exception of translators.

At the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Malta, I interviewed Fabrizio Ellul, who serves as UNHCR Malta's media correspondent. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees established an office in Malta in 2005 to respond to the high number of boat arrivals coming from Libya (UNHCR Malta 2016). UNHCR's role in Malta includes ensuring legal protection for persons of concern, including asylum seekers, refugees, and stateless persons, and advocating on the behalf of these populations. They also work to provide durable solutions for these populations, which could include voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement. The UNHCR works with the government of Malta and other organizations dedicated to serving refugees to ensure that services are being offered across the board (UNHCR Malta 2017).

At the International Organization of Migration, I interviewed Martine Cassar, who served as the director of IOM Malta. Cassar now is the Refugee Commissioner for the Maltese government. The International Organization of Migration (IOM) is an inter-governmental organization that works in 146 member states and 13 observer states, with offices in over 100 of the member states (IOM 2017). IOM is dedicated to four areas of migration management including migration and development, facilitating migration, regulating migration, and forced migration. In Malta, IOM works closely with government departments and other organizations to ensure migrant interests are protected. IOM Malta works with integration, resettlement, and repatriation, along with hosting a variety of other projects to aid migrants.

At Kopin Malta, I interviewed Federica Di Guilo, who serves as a program manager for Kopin. Kopin Malta is a non-governmental organization that raises awareness and empowers individuals to be global citizens. Kopin has three pillars of their work. These include fighting poverty in Ethiopia, supporting refugee women and children in Malta, and promoting access and

inclusivity in educational services (Kopin 2017). Kopin began their work with asylum seekers and refugees in 2010 (Kopin 2017). Their work with women and children in Malta includes working in the open centers, training services, psychosocial support, and anti-trafficking programs. Kopin's focus on children also lead them to partner with the school systems to implement programs for both teachers and refugee students in the schools.

At Integra, I interviewed Maria Pisani, who is one of the co-directors of Integra. Integra is a non-profit organization based in Malta that works to support marginalized individuals and groups by ensuring that they receive the rights, respect, and justice deserved (Integra 2017). Integra's main areas of work are advocacy, research, community development, and international development. Their work is geared towards issues surrounding refugees, forced migrants, individuals with disabilities, LGBTI, human rights, and environmental issues. They offer a variety of programs for refugees including English and Maltese lessons, integration, and sexual and reproductive health.

At the Organization for Friendship in Diversity, I interviewed Paul Galea, who serves as a volunteer. The Organization for Friendship in Diversity (OFD) is a youth-led non-governmental organization based in Malta. OFD was founded in 2009 with a goal of creating friendship and understanding among a diverse community, especially between local and migrant communities. OFD hosts a youth peer support program, in addition to providing service opportunities to youth in the community. Their aim is to break down stereotypes and promote positive relationships between different communities.

The three hypotheses, as detailed in the Methods and Theory chapter, will be used to analyze the organizational responsiveness and success. The hypotheses are as follows:

H1: *Organizations that are able to connect the refugees with other refugees and with the broader community will better aid refugees in integration.*

H2: *Organizations that are able to tailor their programs and resources to their population as well provide opportunities for feedback will better aid refugees in integration.*

H3: *Organizations that are less constrained by funding requirements will be able to better aid refugees in integration.*

I will first discuss how organizations facilitate connections with the community, how adaptable they are, and how many funding constraints they face and then will analyze how these factors influence organizations' ability to facilitate integration. Broader themes that emerged throughout the various interviews will also be discussed as a part of the analysis and contribute to the broader context of the refugee crisis.

As iterated throughout the literature review and the methods and theory, integration is a two-way process. Newcomers must actively work to adapt to the new culture they have moved into and simultaneously the community must create a welcoming environment in which newcomers feel comfortable and stable. Malta, with a large refugee, asylum seeker, and migrant population entering its country, faces a greater challenge when it comes to integration of these populations. The rise of racism and xenophobia throughout Europe combined with Malta's exclusive ideas of who is "Maltese" and bias against outsiders makes it even more difficult for these populations to feel at home. Further, the Maltese society demonstrated resistance towards creating that welcoming environment that is crucial to integration. These factors put increasing pressure on the organizations that serve the refugee population in particular to work to foster these comfortable and stable environments throughout the community.

## *Community Connections*

The ability of organizations to connect refugees to the broader community and the broader community to refugees is seen in multiple facets throughout Malta. It can be demonstrated through the types of programs and resources they offer, the advocacy they do, and the opportunities they create to foster interactions between the two communities. Each of the organizations interviewed—the UNHCR, International Organization for Migration, Kopin, Integra, and the Organization for Friendship in Diversity—have individual mandates and missions that set them apart from one another. However, it is important to look at the services offered by each as contributing to the larger pool of services among organizations.

The UNHCR Malta offers both advocacy and support to the refugee population. Fabrizio Ellul notes that while many of the other UNHCR offices throughout Europe focus solely on advocacy, the Malta office does a hybrid of the two. In Malta, they work with the immediate needs of refugees arriving into the country as well as taking on a role of advocacy throughout the country. Ellul describes their work in Malta as being split into three units: the protection unit, the representative unit, and the solution unit. The protection unit, referring to success through asylum, includes assessing the protection and asylum needs. Ellul notes that the UNHCR Malta's main priority is success through asylum. They make visits to the centers where many refugees and asylum seekers originally are housed, such as the detention centers and the open centers, as well as visiting the homes and offices of refugees to assess needs. The representative unit completes more of the office's work with advocacy. In the past few years, Malta has made strides in not only implementing new legislation on issues regarding migration, but they have also organized new departments within the government such as the Office of the Refugee

Commissioner. The prominence of the UNHCR makes them a key advocator to government offices.

Ellul argues that integration has become a main secondary focus for UNHCR Malta. As a part of their solution unit, UNHCR Malta has a strong resettlement program that most frequently sends refugees to the United States. As the situation in Malta has evolved, it has become evident that there needed to be a greater focus on long-term integration. Given their limited direct contact with refugees, UNHCR Malta's integration support has been in the form of advocacy for policy that will aid integration. There has been an overall trend among the organizations throughout Malta and the UNHCR has been able to partner with multiple organizations to put on programs and events that promote interaction between refugees and the community. In comparison to other organizations, UNHCR focuses more on individual needs of refugees rather than building bridges between the two communities. Given UNHCR's mandate, it is difficult to say that they do not employ enough resources to connect refugees to the community. Though Ellul notes that they are shifting to employ a secondary focus on integration in Malta, UNHCR overall does not aim for promoting connections between communities, but instead has the ability to throw their support behind other organizations that are working with those issues. Their role of advocacy in the government is another avenue in which they can push for a focus on integration throughout the nation. Therefore, while UNHCR does not necessarily employ programs and resources that aim at connecting the refugee community to the broader community, the support and advocacy they give to others can be seen as working towards these connections.

The International Organization of Migration, like the UNHCR, also has an international mandate that gives them a pivotal influence over the government. IOM uses a project-based approach to develop programs that work with voluntary return, resettlement, and integration.

Voluntary return and resettlement are programs that are implemented internationally by IOM. Similar to UNHCR, IOM also is well connected with the government, NGOs, and other agencies in order to advocate for refugee issues. According to Martine Cassar, these connections allow them to gain a deep understanding of the country's needs when it comes to migration. Similarly, the relatively small size of Malta gives the organization a bigger pull when it comes to advocating for refugee issues. The third main pillar of IOM Malta's work is integration. Cassar feels that this focus is important because it helps ensure that there is an understanding among refugees and asylum seekers of the culture of Malta and what the country has to offer them. At the time of the interview, IOM Malta was implementing a counter-trafficking project, which also includes training and awareness raising for government officials in Malta.

Parallel to UNHCR Malta, IOM Malta's work responds to individual needs by finding durable solutions and also working closely with the government to advocate on behalf of refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants. It is possible to draw assumptions that they do not focus on creating connections with the broader community. However, working within the government to understand the needs of the country, as well as give their own perspective on needs based on their experience working with populations, and implementing integration programs demonstrates that this is an important pillar of their work. In both the cases of the UNHCR Malta and IOM Malta, it is apparent that the connections they draw between refugees and the broader community may look differently than those drawn by more local organizations because of their international mandate and focus.

Kopin, a Maltese organization, takes a much more hands-on approach. Kopin has three main pillars of work, one of which being refugee women and children. In serving that population, they view integration, particularly in the schools, to be their top priority. Kopin



provides a number of programs and resources as well as volunteer opportunities that connect the refugee community to the broader community. They collaborated with the UNHCR and IOM to implement the project Not Just Numbers in the school systems. This project trained teachers in primary and secondary schools to work with refugee children. Kopin also has an ongoing sexual reproductive health program that includes both a support group for refugee women and workshops with midwives at the hospitals to work with pregnant women who have undergone female genital mutilation. Another of Kopin's projects, FARO, works with children in the schools who may have experienced instances of trauma coming from war. Federica Di Guilo of Kopin notes that each of their projects employs experts related to the subject, such as consultants and cultural mediators.

Di Guilo also told of the many volunteer opportunities that Kopin facilitates. Their volunteers help with language support, recreational activities, and intercultural courses. Kopin's focus on programs that are directed at both the refugee population and the broader community, as well as the volunteer opportunities connect the communities in a meaningful and impactful way. As Di Guilo mentions several times, Kopin strongly believes integration to be a two-way process and works to ensure that they implement programs that reflect that.

Integra, also a Maltese organization, takes a very hands-on approach in serving the refugee community as well. Their main pillars of work are advocacy, research, community development, and international development. Maria Pisani, one of the co-founders of Integra, highlights that they often work closely with other organizations to co-sponsor programs and also at times collaborate broadly on research endeavors. Their focus on advocacy entails working with policy making, lobbying, and speaking with the press on critical issues. In terms of community development, Integra has a variety of programs implemented throughout the

community to get populations talking about critical issues. Connect Cultori, one of their programs focused on community development, works to create dialogue between the refugee, asylum seekers, and migrant community with those from the broader community. Like Kopin, Integra has a strong team of volunteers. Integra runs a drop-in center for refugee populations that is staffed entirely of volunteers. The center offers English lessons and helps write CVs, as well as having a library and Internet access.

Integra has unique combination of characteristics similar to those such as UNHCR Malta and IOM Malta, but at the same time is similar to Kopin and other local organizations. They are able to advocate on the national level and could possibly move to the international level in the future. Pisani conveyed that her larger concern now in regards to refugee issues and migration is the discourse moving through Europe that, in her opinion, is using securitization to justify turning away refugees. In combination with their advocacy, Integra is able to employ grassroots tactics in developing and implementing their programs. Their programs work directly to ensure that integration is a two-way process by connecting refugees and the broader community.

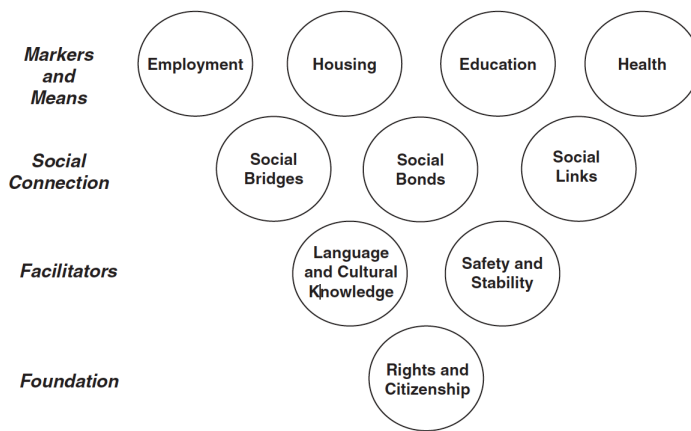
The Organization for Friendship in Diversity is a smaller local organization with a focus on refugee youths. They have a peer support group for youths that offers a platform to voice their concerns and problems and to build relationships with others experiencing similar issues. OFD has volunteers who help with English lessons and homework help. The organization does home visits to check on the kids and also to be a point of reference for their parents. Paul Galea, a volunteer with the youth group, describes the energy that the youth they work with have that motivates the organization to work to change perception of the broader community. OFD employs a bottom-up approach that helps connect the youths to the community, while supporting issues they may experience themselves.

Each of the organizations in some way creates connections between the communities they serve and the broader community in Malta. UNCHR Malta and IOM Malta foster connections in less tangible ways, through advocacy at an international and national level, but still have a crucial role. Integra stands on somewhat of a middle ground by focusing on advocacy at the national level and also implementing programs at the local level that directly connect the refugee population and the broader population. Kopin and OFD work exclusively with refugees at the local level to connect them to the broader community, aiding overall integration.

Each organization contributes to the integration of refugees, but in slightly separate ways. Referring back to Ager and Strang’s (2008) model, which includes foundations, facilitators, social connections, and markers and means, almost every domain is reached by one of the organizations.<sup>1</sup>

What is significant is that no single organizations is aiding in every core domain. UNHCR and IOM meet the foundational and facilitator domains. The foundation includes rights and

**A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration**



citizenship. UNHCR quite literally provides this by administering the process for which refugees gain citizenship. UNHCR and IOM both also organize refugee resettlement, which provides the right to move and eventually gain citizenship in another state. Aside from support that UNHCR

<sup>1</sup> Note: Ager and Strang. 2008. “Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework.” P. 170.

provides to other organizations to host programs, the UNHCR does not meet any of the other domains of integration. In addition to the foundation, IOM primarily aids in the facilitator aspects of integration. Their counter-trafficking project is an example of their efforts to aid in the facilitator domains of integration. It increases their cultural knowledge by teaching them signs that they are being taken advantage of or tricked, as well as increases their safety and stability by raising levels of comfort and confidence in avoiding deceit.

The local organizations and RCOS foster many more domains of integration than the government organizations do. Kopin and Integra both aid in the facilitator, social connection, and means and markers domains of integration. Their programming offers cultural competency classes to both refugees and others in the community. They each foster social connections by building bridges across communities. Finally, they each work to improve refugees' access to the means and markers. Kopin's focus on education ensures that they facilitate refugee children's access to inclusive schooling. Integra's various workshops regarding resumes and interviews helps prepare refugees to gain employment. OFD focuses on the social connections domain. They help refugees to build these bridges, bonds, and links through their peer support group's work within the community. Comparing the five organizations, it is evident that Kopin and Integra aid in more levels of integration than any of the other organization. While analyzing the community connection, Kopin and Integra also demonstrated the highest levels of community connections. Therefore, it is clear that in these cases the higher the levels of community connections, than the more effective the organizations are in aiding integration.

Table 1a. Malta: Community Connections

H1: Organizations that are able to connect the refugees with other refugees and with the broader community will better aid refugees in integration.		
UNHCR Malta	Fosters connections between the legislation and refugees through advocacy	Aids through foundational level
IOM Malta	Fosters connections between legislation and refugees through advocacy and connections between refugees and the broader community through programs	Aids through foundational and facilitator levels
Kopin	Fosters connections between refugees and the broader community through programs	Aids through facilitator, social connection, and marker and means levels
Integra	Fosters connections between legislation and refugees through advocacy and connections between refugees and the boarder community through programs	Aids through facilitator, social connection, and marker and means levels
OFD	Fosters connections between refugees and the broader community through programs	Aids through social connection level

*Ability to Tailor and Adapt Programs*

The ability to tailor and adapt programs and resources to the population for which they are intended is key to ensuring said population is being served effectively. The inability to adapt programs could represent the use of top-down policies that can turn out to be ineffective and unhelpful. The effectiveness of programs and resources aimed at aiding refugees can determine the degree to which they experience successful integration. The five organizations overall identified the need to change as the population’s trends and needs change. Further, many commented on the efforts of Malta to change its approach to serving the refugee population. Ellul of UNHCR and Pisani of Integra both observe that Malta has transitioned from an

emergency-approach to a management approach when responding and implementing policy for the refugee community.

Ellul, as detailed previously, describes the UNHCR Malta as a hybrid organization because they provide both advocacy and support throughout Malta. This in and of itself reflects adaptability of the mandate of the UNHCR based upon the needs of Malta. While UNHCR Malta does not tailor tactics to certain populations within the refugee community or target certain groups, for instance women or children, they are flexible in how populations are reached. Ellul, along with many others throughout the interviews, explains that the arrival trends in Malta have shifted as different nationalities began arriving. When the refugee arrival initially began to rise in Malta, about a decade ago, many of the newcomers were boat-arrivals from sub-Saharan Africa. In the past few years, the incoming population has been mostly Libyans and Syrians arriving by plane. Previously, the UNHCR had direct access to refugees through the detention centers or open centers they would have been taken to after the boats arrived in Malta. Now, according to Ellul, many of the arrivals are coming by plane and they are able to immediately settle into the community. This shift in arrival trends has forced the UNHCR to adapt the ways in which they interact with the refugee community. They instead have to make home visits and assess their situations from there. Given that UNHCR Malta does not offer the same kinds of programs that the local organizations do, it is difficult to directly compare the ways in which they adapt their programs. The UNHCR Malta has been able to change certain tactics that they use and therefore demonstrates a level of adaptability and flexibility.

IOM Malta has more flexibility than the UNHCR despite also having an international focus and mandate. The demographics that are served by their projects are based upon the projects that are implemented. If they partner with another organization to implement a program

in the school system, then the program will mainly be serving children and their parents. As described above, the projects are developed based upon the needs shown by working with the refugee population and by working with the government to ensure they are offering the right services. For instance, their counter-trafficking project was developed after seeing a presence of trafficking victims throughout Malta. Cassar comments that the projects they have that are implemented internationally, such as their awareness-raising project, are catered to their own country. Cassar argues that this is necessary; otherwise the projects may not work. The way in which IOM develops their own national programs and their dedication to ensuring that international programs of IOM are tailored to fit Malta demonstrate the ability to adapt and tailor their programs based on the needs that they see.

As the incoming refugee population has changed, Kopin's Di Guilo describes having to alter their programs. Originally, the refugee population included mostly single males. Now, there is a larger presence of families. Aligning with their focus on women and children, these changing dynamics led to them implementing larger programs aimed at women and children refugees. In addition, Kopin is heavily involved in the open centers where many immediate refugee arrivals live and has felt the various shifts among populations. Di Guilo relays that Kopin bases the programs and resources they offer off of the needs they see present in the open centers. As the arrivals have shifted from mainly sub-Saharan African populations to Libyan and Syrian populations, Di Guilo notes that they are working to combat Islamophobia among the community. This shift has also included many more families, which puts much more stress on the school systems. The stress on the school systems moved Kopin to develop its teacher training, Not Just Numbers. Overall, Kopin has shown to be very receptive to changing needs

and has worked to adapt its work to address those needs. They adapt and tailor their programs to the needs and therefore are able to better aid in integration.

Integra also has been consistently dedicated to having flexibility in the programs that they offer to aid refugees in integration. Pisani conveys that the organization highly values being only answerable to the population that they are serving—the refugee population. Similar to the experience of Kopin, Pisani describes a changing trend they have seen in their drop-in centers. As the population has shifted to Libyan and Syrian populations, there have been many more individuals who want to start at the university or need a copy of their university degree from their home country. These dynamics lead Integra to reach out to different agencies to help relay these needs and if appropriate refer individuals to other agencies. Pisani notes that every project and program is a process that evolves with time. Integra's bottom-up approach to developing resources and programs demonstrates their dedication to adapting and tailoring their programs.

OFD is committed to ensuring that their programs are entirely based on the needs of the youths that they are serving and employs a bottom-up approach similar to that of Integra. Galea describes the dedication and energy in which the youths interact with the organization and their peers and how this determines the direction of the organizations. Galea matter-of-factly conveys that the group revolves entirely around the youth because it is intended to support and benefit them. Therefore, OFD has shown to be responsive to the needs that the youths demonstrate and to adapt their programs as they move along.

The local organizations including Kopin, Integra, and OFD proved to be the most flexible and adaptive with how their programs are developed and how they evolve. Kopin and Integra described how the changing populations have transformed the programs they employ and the



resources they offer. OFD, a younger organization, has not felt as much of the population shifts, however their strong dedication to those they are serving shows a bottom-up approach that is committed to flexibility and adaptability in order to best serve the youths. IOM Malta and UNHCR Malta are both have different mandates and are therefore more difficult to directly compare to the most local organizations. IOM Malta, while offering consistent programs on the international level, works to ensure that these programs are tailored to their country. In addition to this, the Malta office creates projects to implement throughout the country that address identified needs. These two aspects prove IOM Malta to be able to tailor and adapt their programs based on the needs seen. UNHCR Malta seems to have significantly less flexibility in terms of the programs, projects, and resources they offer. This is likely given to their overarching and international mandate. However, in areas that it was possible, such as the tactics used to interact with the refugee population throughout the community, UNHCR Malta demonstrates flexibility and adaptability.

The ability to adapt and develop programs gives organizations the opportunity to shift into different domains of integration, as the need for this aid becomes evident. This allows organizations to gap-fill and coordinate to ensure that they are not offering overlapping services. The organizations that are flexible demonstrated that they are able to simultaneously fill more domains by having a multi-dimensional program or through a variety of programs. Kopin, Integra, and OFD demonstrated their dedication to only offering needed services and utilizing constant feedback. This ensured that they were able to meet many different domains and shift as necessary. IOM had higher levels of adaptability that gave them the opportunity to create new programs as different needs become apparent, also showing an ability to cover more domains, though this flexibility was less than the local organizations. UNCHR, however, had low levels of

flexibility that prevented it from expanding services and therefore domains. This constricts UNHCR from moving across domains despite apparent needs. Overall, the adaptability of Kopin, Integra, OFD, and IOM allowed them to move throughout domains, contributing to their more comprehensive integration services. It is evident that adaptability influenced these organizations' ability to effectively aid integration.

Table 1b. Malta: Adaptability

H2: Organizations that are able to tailor their programs and resources to their population will better aid refugees in integration.		
UNHCR Malta	Does not have the ability to adapt and tailor programs; can adapt tactics used to interact with populations	Can not easily expand into other domains of integration
IOM Malta	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs implemented internationally to the country; adapts and tailors programs they offer only in Malta based on the needs displayed by the government and the population	Can sometimes expand into other domains of integration
Kopin	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs; services responsive to the changing population	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
Integra	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs; holds themselves entirely answerable to the refugee population	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
OFD	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs; holds themselves entirely answerable to the youth refugee population	Can easily expand into other domains of integration

### *Funding Constraints*

The funding constraints that organizations face can limit the services and resources they offer. This can restrict organizations from offering what may be needed. Further, many local not-for-profit organizations rely partially on grant funding or private donors and can be bound to the mission and ideology behind the funders. This may constrain organizations from creating programs that directly address the present needs or from adapting programs once they have begun. Among the five organizations, there is significant diversity in funding sources, particularly among those that are of an international mandate.

UNHCR Malta receives its funding from the United Nations and is restricted from accepting any other sources of funding. Given that UNHCR Malta is not implementing Malta-specific projects, the funding would not necessarily be considered constraining, though it is inflexible. According to Ellul, UNHCR Malta often partners with other organizations throughout Malta to sponsor events and programs. In these instances, they are able to provide some funding for these events and programs in collaboration with another organization. IOM Malta, with a similar mandate, does not receive all of its funding from one source. Cassar notes that the projects that they implement are highly dependent on the funding. Some of their funding is from the government of Malta and some is from the European Union. Many of their projects are financed from other outside institutions. For example, their counter-trafficking project is funded through the Irish government. The dependence of projects on the availability of funding and the potential limitations associated with a certain funding source can be seen as very constraining and could hinder IOM Malta from providing effective services.

Kopin, similarly, receives their funding from a variety of sources. They receive some funding from the European Union, some from the U.S. Embassy, and some from an assortment of other private sources. The source of funding differs per project, according to Di Guilo. Many of their projects are co-financed by multiple sources. Di Guilo argues that their reliance on many different sources of funding allows them some flexibility. She also notes that the organization plans to create a more substantial financial strategy so that they can become increasingly flexible. While funding does not seem to have been a major constraint to Kopin so far, it is possible that it could prove to be one if they are unable to piece together the resources they need for a project.

Integra takes a very strong stance on the issue of funding. The research they do receives funding, but otherwise Integra remains entirely voluntarily run. Pisani feels that their freedom in this aspect relieves them from any restraints coming from some kinds of funding mechanisms and notes that Integra only wants to be answerable to the population that they are serving. Their strong set of volunteers enables them to still have efficient and effective programs without funding. Integra also often collaborates with other organizations while implementing programs and this gives them flexibility in times when a program may need funding. Integra's stance on funding gives them freedom from many of the challenges that can emerge from funding and while it could theoretically limit what they are able to offer to the population they are serving, they have worked to ensure that they can offer programs and resources that are effective and useful. It is possible though that their reliance on volunteers could restrict Integra in the future if there was volunteer fatigue or a high turnover.

Much of the resources that are needed for OFD are also volunteer-based. When funding is necessary for certain events or programs, they turn to other organizations they can partner with

such as the UNHCR Malta or the Jesuit Refugee Service to help with the resources. Galea says though that much of the work is done through good will. With a large reliance on volunteer work, OFD, similar to Integra, can be seen as largely unrestrained by funding, but could find itself constrained in the event there is a project that requires it. They also could struggle if their volunteer corps were to become fatigued or begin having a high turnover.

While funding can provide organizations with limitations based on what they can financially afford to do and can present certain the requirements from the funding source, it is an issue that is likely unavoidable in many organizations' work. Integra and OFD are unique in that they can rely mostly on a volunteer base, leaving them unconstrained in the present but at threat of struggling to find volunteers in the future. Kopin and IOM Malta showed to be much more affected by funding in terms of the projects that they offer and therefore can be seen as constrained in these aspects. UNHCR Malta is rather unrestrained by their funding, however, being that they can only offer certain services and resources, they can be seen as constrained in other aspects of service.

IOM and Kopin's higher levels of funding constraints lead to more difficulty in develop and execute new projects. The availability and level of funding determines how and what projects are offered, meaning that the refugee needs can become a secondary priority. This partial reliance on funding makes it more difficult for them to expand programs, limiting them in their movement across domains. Without the consistent resources to provide the services needed, they are in this aspect less effective in aiding integration. UNHCR is fairly unconstrained in the size of their budget, but is limited by their mandate in what they can offer, similarly making them less effective because they cannot simply move across domains. Integra and OFD are fairly unconstrained by their funding and demonstrate an ability to move throughout domains

regardless. Their lack of reliance of funding means that they can execute projects quicker and ensure that the projects are not being altered to meet donor interests. They work to provide services that are identified by the refugee population and subsequently provide the most effective integration services.

Table 1c. Malta: Funding Constraints

H3: Organizations that are less constrained by funding will be able to better aid refugees in integration.		
UNHCR Malta	Unconstrained by funding, but otherwise constrained in the projects they can offer	Can not easily expand into other domains of integration
IOM Malta	Constrained in funding; project implementation dependent on funding	Can not easily expand into other domains of integration
Kopin	Constrained in funding; project implementation dependent on funding	Can not easily expand into other domains of integration
Integra	Unconstrained in funding; relies mostly on volunteer basis; could become constrained in future if lacking volunteers	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
OFD	Unconstrained in funding; relies mostly on volunteer basis; could become constrained in future if lacking volunteers	Can easily expand into other domains of integration

### Overarching Trends

The organizations present in Malta worked to create dedicated and consistent services that aid in integration for refugees and asylum seekers. Throughout the interviews, there were key themes regarding the organizations and the broader community that these refugees were trying to integrate into. The individuals interviewed spoke of rising racism, xenophobia, and Islamophobia, as well as an inflation of the “refugee crisis” by the media. On the other hand,

they talked about the strengths of not only their own organizations, but also other organizations and individuals in the community who have made a concerted effort to step up and help in whatever way they can.

The organizational structures of those interviewed varied. There were no faith-based organizations interviewed in this study. Surprisingly, given Malta's strong Catholic roots, the Jesuit Foundation is the only prominent faith-based refugee organization in the country. The UNHCR and IOM are both government organizations—though they are technically inter-governmental. UNHCR and IOM have many similarities in structure and formalization. Both have less flexibility in their services and programs. They each have to answer to a higher regional office and are expected to be fairly involved with government policies. They also were each less involved with providing refugee services that improved their daily life. Instead, they focused on bigger-picture issues, such as delivering refugee statuses and resettlement.

The Organization for Friendship and Diversity (OFD) and the Migrant Women's Association of Malta (MWAM), which I did not formally interview, are both examples of refugee community organizations (RCOs). They each have informal structures and were created by refugees (or migrants) for their own benefit. These organizations faced more hurdles in establishing their presence and receiving funding, but were extremely in sync with refugee needs. Finally, Kopin and Integra could be classified as local organizations. They were created by Maltese who saw identified the needs of refugees. In the spectrum of refugee organizations, with RCOs at one end and government organizations at the other, these local organizations are in the middle. They are more in touch with refugee needs than government organizations, but less than RCOs given the absence of refugee staff. The local organizations have considerable flexibility, but are more formal than RCOs.

From the perspective of those individuals who have been in Malta since the influx of refugee arrivals began in 2002, there has not been a recent “crisis” of refugees flooding into their country. Many noted that the largest stress on the country occurred when the original arrivals began and while the number of arrivals stayed fairly consistent for a handful of years, they have actually decreased in the last few years. What has changed is the country of origin. When the arrivals began, it was largely a sub-Saharan African population, but in the past two years it has shifted to a mainly Libyan and Syrian population. Another major change that has coincided with the population shift has been the media coverage. In some ways this is positive—an important issue is receiving the coverage it deserves. However, to those that have been working with refugee populations for the past decade, it seems that the issue gained traction once those who are “whiter” were affected. There were clouds of misunderstanding surrounding the African refugees, including a lack of understanding at the variety of ethnicities and cultures that they represented and also an assumption that they were here to steal Maltese jobs, rather than seek refuge. The Libyan and Syrian populations have faced challenges of their own. Many of the interviewees note strong feelings of Islamophobia throughout the broader community and Europe overall.

Despite these challenges, the organizations in Malta serving refugees have worked tirelessly to break down barriers between populations, to change perceptions, and to make the lives of everyone in their community better. Each organization that serves refugees in Malta can be seen as a part of larger whole that is dedicated to improving the lives of the refugees that enter their country. No organization is exactly alike nor do any of them offer identical services. Each organization has its niche area and works to complement the services offered by others in the community. This ensures that any and all kinds of aid are available to refugees entering and



living in Malta. The organizations are each working in some capacity to bring the refugee population and the broader population together, to provide the most helpful services by maintaining aspects of flexibility and adaptability, and to persevere despite the funding constraints that may be present. It can be seen that the local organizations and the RCO were able to foster the highest levels of integration. They also fostered the most community connections and highest levels of adaptability. The effect of funding constraints was less clear. While the refugee situation in Malta is not without flaws, the organizations on the ground are working diligently and passionately to make the lives of refugees better.

## **Case Study: Harrisonburg**

The city of Harrisonburg is nestled within the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia. The city is located within the greater Rockingham County. Harrisonburg is estimated to have about 50,000 residents and Rockingham County is estimated to have about 80,000 residents (The Cooper Center). Harrisonburg was founded in 1779 and played a role in both the Revolutionary War and the Civil War (The National Park Service). In the early 1800s, Rockingham County became a prominent agricultural producer, for which Harrisonburg served as a market hub (The National Park Service). The agricultural-based economy of the area now plays a crucial role in the city's hosting of refugees and migrants. Today, Harrisonburg is home to a large refugee and immigrant population. The city is estimated to have a 15 percent population that is foreign-born, compared to 11 percent in Virginia and 13 percent in the United States (United States Census Bureau).

The populations found in the city of Harrisonburg versus the county of Rockingham are perceived to be very different. Harrisonburg is often celebrated for its diversity and openness, while the county is seen as much more homogenous—though this is beginning to change as more refugees move to Rockingham County. Of its total population, Harrisonburg is approximately 80 percent white, 9 percent African American, 5 percent Asian, and 3 percent two or more races (The Cooper Center). About 20 percent of that population is considered to be of Hispanic origin (The Cooper Center). Rockingham County has a population that is approximately 95 percent white, 2 percent African American, and 1.5 percent two or more races (The Cooper Center). About 6 percent of that population is considered of Hispanic origin (The Cooper Center). The Harrisonburg school system is known to be particularly diverse, with 51 different languages. The median household income in Harrisonburg is about \$38,000 and an estimated 28 percent of the population is believed to be living in poverty (United States Census Bureau).

## **Migrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers in Harrisonburg**

Due to the agricultural economy, the area has always attracted immigrants. According to Alicia Horst, Director of New Bridges, before September 11, 2001, immigrants—mostly from Latin American countries—were much freer to travel to and from the area to work seasonally and then could move back home for part of the year. Once the immigration policy changed, it became much harder for this kind of travel. These policy changes, directed at facilitating national security, have included greater border security, greater visa controls, more thorough screening of international travelers and immigrants, and the extensive collection of data about individuals who could be potential threats (USCIS 2017). Despite these changes, the large Latino population has remained in the Harrisonburg area. Horst argues that the natural corridor through the Shenandoah Valley connecting one region of the United States to another region has always made it prone to this kind of migration. The churches present in the area have played another role in the presence of immigrants. Many churches have connections with churches in other countries, again particularly in Latin American countries, and have chosen to host immigrants through those connections.

The refugee population in Harrisonburg has been present for close to thirty years. Harrisonburg was chosen to receive a Church World Service Refugee Resettlement Office in the late 1980's due to the availability of jobs in the agricultural sector. Many incoming refugees work at one of the area's many poultry factories. The Refugee Resettlement Office usually resettles about 150 to 170 refugees a year. However, in 2015, they resettled closer to 270 refugees. This increase is a result of former President Obama's pledge to raise the number of resettled refugees in the United States from 75,000 to 80,000 per year. The refugee population has changed over the past 30 years as the international refugee population has changed.

According to Jim Hershberger, Director of the Harrisonburg Refugee Resettlement Office, at the office's inception in the late 1980's, many of the refugees were arriving as a result of the Vietnamese war. There were primarily Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians refugees arriving. Then in the early 1990's, a large number of refugees from former Soviet Union arrived. Many of them were Protestant Christians who were being persecuted for their religion. Starting around 1996, many Kurdish refugees resettled to the area and since then Harrisonburg has accumulated a large Kurdish-Iraqi population. From this point until about 2015, Harrisonburg resettled mostly Iraqi refugees, both Kurdish speaking and Arabic speaking. There have been handfuls of Eritreans, Sudanese, and Afghani refugees resettled as well. Since 2015, the arriving population has consisted of mostly Congolese and Syrian refugees.

Harrisonburg overall is perceived to be welcoming and open to the diverse population. In August 2016, the city council voted to become a "Welcoming America" city. A "Welcoming America" city is one that plans to ensure all sectors of the city are working to create a welcoming environment and foster long-term immigration, commits to promoting long-term inclusion in economic and social sectors, builds community between newcomers and the broader community, communicates unity and shared values of inclusion, and sustains policies and practices that create positive relationships between newcomers and the broader community (Welcoming America). The initiative to become a "Welcoming America" city was led by Faith in Action, a local organization. The president of Faith in Action, stated, "We are receiving immigrants and refugees from all different parts of the world and in addition to needing to acquire a new language, there are some obstacles to flourishing here," after the initiative was passed (Stouffer 2016). The acknowledgement of the challenges, as well as the message sent by passing the

initiative communicate the community's perception on the refugee and immigrant population in the area.

Ideally, the movement will help refugees, immigrants, and migrants alike feel that they are wanted and welcomed in the community—particularly within the political climate that has evolved in the United States and throughout Europe over the past year. While much of the media had demonstrated that there are many individuals and state leaders who are opposed to hosting refugees, Harrisonburg has demonstrated that they feel positively towards these populations. Based on the actions taken by individuals and by the many organizations in the area to serve refugees, Harrisonburg appears to be serving the population well.

### **Organizational Responses**

As the population evolves, of course, the needs of refugees are going to evolve. Many of the Iraqi refugees who arrived have lived in what would be perceived as a functioning society. Many of them received educations and lived in similar housing situations. The Congolese population, on the other hand, lived in refugee camps located in Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi for about the past twenty years. The needs that the Congolese populations have are therefore very different. They are likely unaccustomed to many daily elements, like learning what goes into a refrigerator, how to cook with an electric stove, and what kinds of soap are meant for different purposes. The organizations throughout Harrisonburg are faced with the challenge of providing services to refugees, while accounting for these differences among populations. The Church World Service Refugee Resettlement Office is in charge of many of the initial tasks regarding

resettlement, but cannot manage to meet absolutely all of the needs present. This is where many of the other organizations throughout the city and county fit in and excel.

To gather data on organizations in the area and the overall refugee community, I interviewed five organizations that serve refugees in some capacity during October 2016. The interviews lasted between twenty minutes and one hour and twenty minutes. I selected individuals to interview based on availability or on personal relationships. Those interviewed ranged from directors to staff members. The organizations interviewed were Church World Service Refugee Resettlement, NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, Faith in Action, and the Peer Leadership Program. Only one of the individuals interviewed, Rabab Hasan of the Peer Leadership Program, is a refugee. Church World Service is the only other organization interviewed that had refugee employees.

At Church World Service, I interviewed Jim Hershberger, the director of the Refugee Resettlement office. Church World Service is federally mandated to resettle refugees to the area and therefore receives their duties and funding from the federal government. They offer what is called “core services” that take place within the first 90 days. This includes picking refugees up from the airport upon arrival, finding them an apartment, having the apartment furnished, buying them food, setting up health screenings, obtaining a social security card, finding employment, enrolling their kids in school, and other very basic needs. Church World Service employs caseworkers, as well as individuals who specialize in employment, education, and healthcare services. While Church World Service is limited in what they can do for refugees, they often partner with other organizations to provide services.

At NewBridges Immigrant Resource Center, I interviewed Alicia Horst, the Executive Director of the organization. NewBridges was founded in 2000 and works to provide resources to immigrant and migrant communities—including refugees—and aims to connect different groups of people throughout the community. They often work as a referral agency to connect individuals to the groups that can provide for their needs. NewBridges has a law clinic that serves individuals with immigration cases. They also work with a variety of organizations in the area on different initiatives.

At Rocktown Rallies, I interviewed Alysia Davis. Rocktown Rallies is a young organization that started in 2015 after the photo of Aylan Kurdi, the young boy who drowned in the Mediterranean Sea and washed up on a Turkish beach, went viral. Unsettled by the photo, Davis posted on Facebook and found that many others felt similarly. A group connected by Facebook decided that they wanted to do something positive to contribute to the crisis and formed Rocktown Rallies. Since 2015, the group has worked to spread awareness and fundraise for the cause. They have hosted a variety of initiatives in Harrisonburg to support refugees, such as a welcoming party for newcomers at the local children’s museum, as well as worked towards international initiatives, such as a coat and blanket drive. They work with local organizations to help provide certain resources that the other organizations cannot cover alone.

At Faith in Action, I interviewed Art Stolfus, who serves on Faith in Action’s Fundraising Committee. Faith in Action is made up of 19 different congregations throughout Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Each year, after conducting a listening tour throughout the community, the organization chooses one issue to focus on. For this past year, they chose to focus on refugee issues. Since, they have backed the “Welcoming America” city initiative, conducted a listening tour among the community, and worked to campaign for a more open,

welcoming community. Stolzfus describes Faith in Action's work as more of a "campaign" to raise awareness and advocacy rather than direct service providing.

Lastly, at the Peer Leadership Program, I interviewed Rabab Hasan, who serves as supervisor to the program. The Peer Leadership Program is hosted at the high school and provides support and community for refugee students. The program pairs a group of established refugees with newcomers in the hope that they can help the newcomers adjust to the new environment. The program meets once a month to host speakers and facilitate workshops on a variety of topics. The program aims to make the students feel loved, supported, and empowered as they navigate a new and potentially challenging environment.

The three hypotheses, as detailed in the Methodology and Theory chapter, will be used to analyze the effectiveness of organizations in aiding integration. The hypotheses are as follows:

*H1: Organizations that are able to connect the refugees with other refugees and with the broader community will better aid refugees in integration.*

*H2: Organizations that are able to tailor their programs and resources to their population as well provide opportunities for feedback will better aid refugees in integration.*

*H3: Organizations that are less constrained by funding requirements will be able to better aid refugees in integration.*

Broader themes that emerged throughout the various interviews will also be discussed as a part of the analysis and also to contribute to the broader context of the refugee crisis.

As iterated throughout the literature review and the methodology and theory chapter, integration is a two-way process. Newcomers must actively work to adapt to the new culture they



have moved into and simultaneously the community must create a welcoming environment in which newcomers feel comfortable and stable. Harrisonburg overall has done well to ensure that they are helping refugees integrate. An important factor to highlight, that will not be as apparent throughout the discussion of the organizations, is how supportive and flexible the school system has been for refugees. With over 51 languages spoken in the school system, a lot of time and resources are demanded to ensure that students are proceeding at an adequate rate with their studies. While, as the representative from Faith in Action indicated, there is always room for improvement, both the school system and the community overall has worked to ensure that progress is being made to achieve this improvement.

### *Community Connections*

The ability and willingness of organizations to connect refugees to the broader community in order to ensure that they feel welcomed and supported is an important factor in facilitating integration among refugees. This can be demonstrated through the types of programs and resources an organization offers, the advocacy they do, and the opportunities they create to foster interactions between the two communities. The organizations interviewed—Church World Service, NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, Faith in Action, and the Peer Leadership Program—have different missions and mandates. This is important to keep in mind while reviewing the services offered by the organizations. Looking at the larger picture, they each contribute in some way to ensuring there are well-rounded services within the community.

Jim Hershberger, director of Church World Service (CWS), lists their two main goals while serving refugees as helping them to achieve self-sufficiency and to integrate. In achieving self-sufficiency, CWS is limited to providing the core services that are described above. They set

refugees up with an apartment and employment, as well as aid in initial adaptation. These primary services that CWS offers are only intended for refugees and do not necessarily connect refugees to the broader community. While enrolling children in school and securing local employment would place refugees within the community, these actions are simultaneously necessary for refugees to support themselves and to abide by child education laws. Hershberger feels integration is a long-term process. He describes integration as, “You’re involved in community events. You’re involved in organizations in the community. In other words, you don’t just go to work, come home to your apartment, sleep, eat, and then go to work again. You know, it’s much more. You’re involved in the community and you understand what’s going on in the community.” CWS offers cultural orientation classes upon arrival for refugees and then offers vouchers for individuals to attend the Career Development Academy at James Madison University, which provides English as a Second Language (ESL) support.

Linking Communities is a program hosted through CWS that works to directly connect refugees to local families. The families from Harrisonburg attend cultural awareness training and then are matched up with a refugee family to help welcome them to the community and serve as a support system. The program aims to connect different communities and to foster long-term integration. It teaches the local community all of the challenges and struggles that refugees face upon immediate arrival—potentially motivating them to further spread awareness and help in the future. CWS also partners with a number of other organizations to provide other services. They have partnered with local bike shops and driving courses to provide workshops on how to ride a bike and longer courses on how to drive. They have worked with the Collins Center to provide support groups for domestic and sexual violence, which has been especially helpful for the

growing Congolese community in the area. They have also partnered with the local 4H club and have had many refugee children join the club.

Many of the services Church World Service offers fulfill specific needs that refugees have, rather than directly connecting them to the broader community. They are largely limited though in this aspect by their federal mandate to provide the core services. However, they have still made large strides, through Linking Communities and their other partnered programs, to connect refugees to the larger community. It is clearly a priority for the organization to make those connections between communities and they have worked to in specific ways to ensure that those initial connections are fostered.

Alicia Horst, director of NewBridges, says that the mission of their organization is to provide resources and to connect different groups of people within the community. She specifies that these groups are congregations and professional groups. NewBridges specializes in referrals to other organizations and legal immigration counsel. Some examples of the referrals they would offer are to the Department of Social Services, the Social Security Administration, or to a health care provider. They have a partnership with Skyline Literacy and Church World Service that aims to prepare individuals for citizenship tests. Skyline Literacy is a local organization that specializes in ESL training. NewBridges does not work to connect populations in the way that I have described with the other organizations. They are not necessarily connecting populations for the sake of building community and fostering integration. Rather, they are fostering connections with organizations that can fulfill particular needs of refugees and help them to move towards a better life. These connections are still critical to refugees' long-term integration. These services help to improve quality of life and to build a sustainable life in Harrisonburg. Even though these

connections are different than what I have described previously, they are still just as relevant and important.

Alysia Davis of Rocktown Rallies describes their organization as an advocacy group. Because the group is relatively young (founded in 2015), she says that they are still working to find their exact place. One of their main projects thus far is the welcoming party for newcomer refugees. The first one took place in the fall of 2015 at a local children's museum and offered newcomers an opportunity to meet individuals from the community and to establish a location where they feel safe and welcomed. There will be another welcoming party in the fall of 2016. In addition to this, they had a blanket drive, a bike drive, and a cell phone drive. The blanket drive was intended to benefit refugees in Europe, but the bike drive and cell phone drive was intended for refugees in the Harrisonburg area. While their overall goal of advocacy does not necessarily entail directly connecting refugees to the broader community, it does create awareness among the broader community about the refugees in their own community. Fostering understanding between communities could be an important part of fostering overall integration. The bike drive and cell phone drive are helpful and impactful for refugees and work to meet specific needs, but again do not necessarily connect communities directly. However, the welcoming parties are effective at directly connecting the communities together. Additionally, Rocktown Rallies has created a platform for others to share their various events and programs, such as encouraging others to participate in Linking Communities that help refugees in some way, providing more opportunities for community members to get involved and engage with members of the refugee community.

Faith in Action's work with refugees, Art Stolfus tells, has similarly been a campaign of advocacy. Faith in Action worked to help pass the "Welcoming America" city designation. They

have also conducted listening tours among the refugee population. Because Faith in Action's work with refugees is short-term, they are limited in the direct services they can provide. Stolfus also argues that it is a challenge for their congregation, which is primarily made up of middle-class white families, to overcome the idea of "We know how to do this. We know how to make a difference. We want to make a difference." While Faith in Action has worked to develop a more supportive and welcoming atmosphere in the area, they have not necessarily connected the refugee population and the broader community.

The Peer Leadership Program serves as a support program for high school aged refugee students. Their primary purpose is to provide support for the younger refugee community, but their monthly meetings invite individuals from the community to present about a variety of topics. Rabab Hasan, the program supervisor, says the presentations have been on sports, personal safety, mental health, and many others. Through these presentations, the program builds among the young refugee population, while connecting them to individuals from the broader community. Their hope is that students will both learn more about the Harrisonburg community and feel more comfortable to engage with it.

Certain organizations appear to be doing better than others at fostering direct connections between the refugee community and the broader community. Faith in Action can be seen as offering little to no opportunities to create connections between the two communities. Rocktown Rallies offers some connections, primarily through their welcoming party, but otherwise does not offer any. NewBridges does offer connections between the communities, but not in the way that many others do—instead they offer connections to services and organizations that refugees may need. Church World Service and the Peer Leadership Program both offer direct connections between the refugee community and the broader community through their programs. The

variation of connections made by the refugee organizations in Harrisonburg is a positive aspect on the larger scale. Offering complementary activities ensures that gaps are being filled and there are not overlapping services. Some organizations offer close connections, while others focus on advocacy and encourage individuals in the community to make the first step.

Focusing on Ager and Strang’s (2008) four levels of integration, including foundations, facilitators, social connections, and means and markers, Church World Service, NewBridges, and the Peer Leadership Program offer the most comprehensive services. CWS’s mandate primarily is aimed towards the foundations, facilitators, and means and markers. They ensure that refugees are receiving the services that the federal government outlines. They then help refugees to become acquainted with their new area, teaching things like how to use local transportation and take care of household chores,

meeting the facilitator level. CWS

then jumps ahead to the means

and markers domains, helping

refugees to secure employment,

enroll their children in school,

and securing adequate housing.

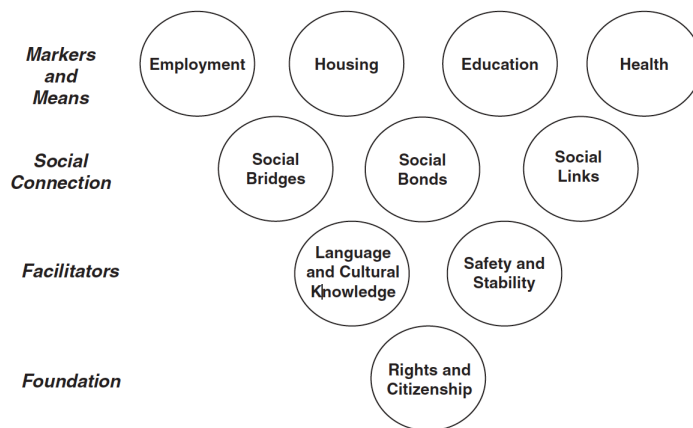
Finally, CWS does not forge

social connections on their own, but supports many other programs that work to build these

connections. Out of the five organizations interviewed in Harrisonburg, CWS offers the most

comprehensive services that aid in integration.<sup>2</sup>

**A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration**



<sup>2</sup> Note: Ager and Strang. 2008. “Understanding Integration: A Conceptual Framework.” P. 170.

After CWS, NewBridges and the Peer Leadership Program offer the most programs that aid in integration. NewBridges provides referrals that connect refugees that can help them with three of the integration levels, foundation, facilitators, and markers and means. At the foundational level, they connect refugees with organizations that can prepare them to apply for citizenship. For facilitators, they can connect individuals with organizations that offer cultural comprehension courses and English classes. Finally, for the markers and means, they offer a number of referrals that can help individuals secure or improve their employment, housing, education, or health situations. NewBridges reaches many of the same domains as CWS, however because NewBridges does not provide these services themselves, CWS is better aiding in integration. The Peer Leadership Program supports three levels of integration as well, including facilitators, social connections, and markers and means. They work together to ensure that students feel comfortable in their schools and communities, improving their overall safety and security and language and cultural knowledge. They form multiple social connections among the refugee community, but also focus on connecting refugees to the general community by inviting different community members to meetings. Finally, the Peer Leadership Program meets the educational domain within the markers and means. The supervisors serve as mentors who can help students through challenges in school. In addition, the program invites individuals to speak to the students about the different routes they can take their education after graduating high school.

Rocktown Rallies works to develop the social connection and facilitator levels of integration. They aim to create a more welcoming and supportive community, improving feelings of safety and security. Through events such as their welcome party, Rocktown Rallies works to forge social connections between the broader community and the refugee community.

Out of the five organizations interviewed, Faith in Action did the least to contribute to integration and did not meet any of the domains. However, they, as well as Rocktown Rallies, view themselves as more of an advocacy group, rather than direct service providers. While advocacy may not directly contribute to integration levels, it is still important within the larger refugee regime. The three organizations that created the strongest connections between the refugee community and the broader community, CWS, NewBridges, and the Peer Leadership Program, also aided through the most levels of integration. Rocktown Rallies and Faith in Action, who foster fewer connections, also aided throughout less levels. Therefore in this case, the more connections organizations can foster, the more they will aid in integration.

Table 2a. Harrisonburg: Community Connections

H1: Organizations that are able to connect the refugees with other refugees and with the broader community will better aid refugees in integration.		
Church World Service	Fosters connections between refugees and the broader community through programs	Aids through foundational, social connection, and markers and means levels
NewBridges	Fosters connections between refugees and services and organizations that they need, but does not foster connections between refugees and the broader community directly	Aids through foundational, social connection, and markers and means levels
Rocktown Rallies	Fosters few connections between refugees and the broader community through programs	Aids through facilitator and social connection levels
Faith in Action	Does not foster connections between refugees and the broader community	Does not meet any of the levels
The Peer Leadership Program	Fosters connections between refugees and the broader community through programs	Aids through facilitators, social connections, and markers and means



### *Ability to Tailor and Adapt Programs*

Organizations that are able to tailor and adapt programs are more likely to ensure that the services offered are the services needed. It is key to guaranteeing that the population is being effectively served. The utilizations of top-down and rigid services can at times cause more harm than good and consequently cause the services to become underused. In order to best serve, organizations ought to be responsive to refugees' expressed needs and be willing to make alterations in areas that are not functioning as intended. The five organizations interviewed identified the various ways that they attempt to embody this flexibility, though some may be more responsive than others. It is important to note that at times, rigidity and inflexibility is a result of the mandate that organizations are required to follow rather than simply an avoidance of change and flexibility.

Church World Service's Refugee Resettlement Office is federally mandated and therefore they cannot deviate from that they are supposed to supply. This includes the core services that were discussed earlier, such as finding an apartment and enrolling children in school. These aspects of their services are entirely unchangeable. They have a set amount of funding to supply a set amount of materials within 90 days. The other services that CWS offers, however, are much more flexible. Hershberger, in fact, defines adaptability as a core part of what CWS does. According to Hershberger, CWS's reliance on grants to support their other programs leads to frequent change in what is offered, along with alterations to the job descriptions and duties of workers. In this way, they have no choice but to be flexible. Hershberger also notes the differences in needs between populations that are resettled to Harrisonburg and how this affects what is provided. For the Congolese population in particular, who have mostly lived in refugee camps for the past twenty years, more attention must be given to explain certain processes such

as going to the bank or household items like cleaning materials. Similarly, they try to offer various programs that can address the needs demonstrated by different populations. The bike-training course that they offered began as a way to empower Iraqi women to have freedom over their mobility. The support group for domestic and sexual violence was developed while preparing for the arrival of the Congolese population because CWS knew that this was a large problem with that population. Despite the rigidity associated with the core services offered by CWS, they have been very flexible in what they offer through their other programs.

Similarly, NewBridges has found a need for adaptability as new populations arrive to the area. Horst says that it is common for the highly educated population to experience different frustrations than the population with less education. For those with more education and training, it can be frustrating to be placed in Harrisonburg and be unable to practice the same career they were trained for. For these populations, NewBridges can help individuals to navigate the educational system in the United States and inform them of the steps of applying for and taking out loans, which Horst says can become complicated very quickly. For the Latin American population, they address the vulnerability towards predatory lenders and those looking to take advantage of others. Horst notes that these examples are gross generalizations, but they shape the kinds of referrals they give and the people that they work with. She argues that they have developed many of their services after hearing what is needed from their clients. Horst also conveys that their office is currently undergoing a strategic planning process to ensure that they are offering key services. This dedication to responsiveness and adaptively ensures that they are offering the services that are needed and serving the population in the best way they can.

Rocktown Rallies has served as somewhat of a gap filling organizations thus far. Davis describes the process of developing their programs as, “We have a Facebook group . . . that’s

where if a specific need comes up, we will post it on there and try to, you know, see if anyone can fit it.” Rocktown Rallies is a key example of how social media can be used to mobilize people in today’s world. They often hear about specific needs from other organizations, such as Church World Service, and see what they can do to address that need. This relieves some of the burden on strained organizations, while giving various individuals an opportunity to contribute. Their cell phone drive was developed after CWS identified the need for affordable phones. Being that Rocktown Rallies develops their initiatives solely based on need, they can be seen as highly flexible and adaptable.

As an organization, Faith in Action can be seen as overall very flexible and adaptive based on their rotating annual focus. Their dedication to ensuring that they are picking a focus that is important to their congregation shows that they want to serve the desires presented to them. Given the organization’s short annual focus, it is harder to determine whether they are flexible in the way they serve the refugee population. The listening tour that they did among the refugee population shows that they want to address the needs of population in the way they best can. However, Stolzhus’s statement that the organization struggles with ensuring they are serving in the best way possible versus the way they think is best may be telling in how responsive they are towards the population. It appears that they are flexible with their own members, but may not be as flexible with the population they intend to serve.

Hasan, supervisor of the Peer Leadership Program, describes many structural changes that took place within the program over the past year. Originally, each student who had been at the school for at least a year was to be paired up with a newcomer student. They intended to match the students up by gender and ethnicity; however, the numbers did not always match up to do this in every case. The program met once a week after school for one hour and much of that

time was spent handing out surveys with the intention of tracking student progress. As time went on, the program struggled because the high school students did not like the idea of having a mentor who was placed “above them.” They wanted to be equals with their peers. Further, the students often did not have time to meet weekly and felt that the surveys were intrusive and brought no direct benefit to them. Using this feedback, the supervisors decided to change the program so that there were no pairs among the group, simply peers who were equally supporting one another. They changed the meetings to once a month and got rid of the surveys. Since making these changes, the program has done much better and student buy-in has increased greatly, according to Hasan. This willingness to change based on the student feedback proves the program to be highly flexible and adaptable.

Each of the organizations is responsive in different ways. Faith in Action is responsive to its member congregations, but has not yet proved to be very responsive to the refugee population—perhaps because they serve as more of a campaign than as a service provider. Church World Service is in some ways completely inadaptable, given its federal mandate. However, with the programs that they can be flexible, CWS proves to be highly adaptable. NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, and the Peer Leadership Program each demonstrated adaptability and responsiveness. NewBridges and Rocktown Rallies provide services based on what they are told are need from either clients or other organizations. The Peer Leadership Program was able to entirely change its structure in order to serve the population in the way they wanted. While each of these organizations interacts with refugees in different ways, the ways in which they develop their programs demonstrate their own levels of flexibility and adaptability as well.

In terms of integration, adaptability and flexibility ensures that organizations can move throughout domains based on the needs communicated to them. The ability to move through domains means that the aspects of integration that need assistance are being addressed. Though CWS has some flexibility, they are limited in other areas. However, where they do have flexibility, they have shown that they can move throughout domains fairly easily. This can largely be explained by their strong relationships with other organizations in the area. For their sexual trauma workshop with the Congolese population, CWS partnered with the Collins Center. This example demonstrates the ability of the organization to forge new partnerships that can ensure needs are being met and further allowing them to move throughout domains as needed.

Similarly, NewBridges referral system means that they can connect individuals to any services—therefore moving easily to new domains—as long as that service exists. The Peer Leadership Program forms its programming based off of requests from students, meaning that the domains they cover will expand with need. Rocktown Rallies has shown a similar willingness and ability to move through domains based on what they are told is needed, however they still cover fewer domains than the other organizations. Finally, Faith in Action demonstrated less of willingness to expand domains due to their short annual focus. The relationship between flexibility and integration were less conclusive in the Harrisonburg case study. All organizations demonstrated levels of flexibility and most of the organizations demonstrated the ability to move throughout domains. However, the ability to move may ensure that they can in the future aid different aspects of integration, but it does not mean that they are currently aiding integration to the best of their ability. Here, all organizations showed the ability to be flexible, but there are still higher levels of effectiveness in aiding in integration among certain organizations.

Table 2b. Harrisonburg: Adaptability

H2: Organizations that are able to tailor their programs and resources to their population will better aid refugees in integration.		
Church World Service	Does not have the ability to adapt and tailor the core services provided; can adapt and tailor the rest of their programs with high flexibility	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
NewBridges	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs they offer based on the needs clients demonstrate	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
Rocktown Rallies	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs they offer based on the needs demonstrated by the population and other organizations	Can somewhat easily expand into other domains of integration
Faith in Action	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs to their members; does not adapt the services offered to the population	Can not easily expand into other domains of integration
The Peer Leadership Program	Has the ability to adapt and tailor programs; holds themselves entirely answerable to the youth refugee population	Can easily expand into other domains of integration

### *Funding Constraints*

The services and resources offered by organizations are often determined by funding constraints. Funding can be limiting in multiple ways. If an organization receives funding from a grant, as many local non-profit organizations do, then they may be obligated by the grant provider to offer very specific services or may be restricted from deviating from the original proposal they submitted to the provider. This could prevent organizations from being able to adapt their programs as needs come up. Similarly, if the government or an international mandate funds the organization, they likely are also restricted in how the money can be spent. Organizations may also simply not have enough funding to achieve all of the goals they deem

necessary. Among the five organizations, there is significant variance among funding sources and how funding impacts their functions.

According to Hershberger, Church World Service receives its funding from three sources. The first comes from their federal mandate to provide the core services to refugees upon arrival. They are required to provide these services and are restricted in what they can provide beyond that with the money provided by the government. Their second source of funding is the Virginia government. They provide a number of grants that CWS uses to pay their employment liaison, their health liaison, and a number of other staff. Their third source is the many volunteers that CWS has. They receive volunteers from the local universities, the local churches, and a variety of other areas. The volunteers they have provide some flexibility that does not require financial support, but CWS's other two sources of funding can be seen as extremely constraining. CWS does accept donations from the community, but the donations are not a significant source of funding. While there are a number of opportunities and services the organization would likely pursue in addition to what they currently offer, they do not have the staff or the resources to do so. Their federal mandate restricts them from doing any more with the funding provided besides the core services. While the money provided by the state in the form of grants helps CWS to offer a number of other programs, they are still limited monetarily in what they can do.

The funding that NewBridges receives is primarily from private sources. Horst notes that a large portion has come from individuals in local church congregations. The organization has a small city grant and also receives some funding from United Way, as well as some from fundraising efforts. Horst argues that they do not chase funding because they do not want to have to be dependent on funding that is subject to fluctuation and could result in having to cut staff or programs. She also says that the time needed to manage grants is simply too much and because

they do not need many materials, they would prefer to get by without many grants. While this is constraining to what the organization offers, Horst feels that their current strategy will help them sustain the agency long-term. They are not limited by the constraints that are associated with grant stipulations, however they do experience strain due a lack of resources—which in turn constrains them nonetheless.

Rocktown Rallies strictly relies on volunteer work and fundraising efforts. None of their members are paid and all of the fundraising they do is to raise money for other causes, such as the bike drive or the cell phone drive. Davis suggests that the organization may eventually look to become officially recognized as a non-profit and could therefore have funding in the future. Similar to others, the lack of money does limit what the organization can offer. However, it appears that they have simply counted on individual donations informally in the place of a grant or other formal funding in the instances that it was necessary. Their lack of dependency on funding makes the organization entirely reliant on manpower and unrestrained in what they have to offer. While this has not yet been an issue for Rocktown Rallies, it is something that could be problematic in the future.

A majority of Faith in Action's funding is from its member congregations. Stolfus notes that each of the congregations has annual dues that are based on the size of the congregation. In addition to this, they received a small community grant last year and have applied for another. Similar to many of the other organizations, they also rely on volunteer work from the member congregations. Because Faith in Action is not providing as many direct services, the funding they require may be less than other organizations. The nature of the organization, combined with the funding provided by member dues, appeared to position Faith in Action in a relatively stable



place. Were they to take on any larger activities or programs, they likely would face funding constraints.

The Peer Leadership Program is funded through a grant from the Center for International Stabilization and Recovery, which is housed at James Madison University. The supervisors receive a small stipend for their role, but overall each of the supervisors involved in the program receives salaries for their full-time jobs in the school system—jobs which are separate from their involvement in the program. Though each of the supervisors receives separate salaries, the program would not continue were the grant not to be renewed. The program's meetings do not necessarily require funding and so what the program does is not constrained by funding. Funding is a factor in keeping the program at the high school, but it does not necessarily determine what the program does. Therefore the program is largely unconstrained by the grant as long as they have it, but without funding the group would likely be more student run, as the grant attaches formal responsibility to the supervisors.

Funding poses short-term and long-term issues for every organization. Either because of a lack of funding or due to grant stipulations, organizations are limited in some way with what they can provide. Church World Service is constrained by both the limitations of what they can do because of their mandate and their lack of funding. NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, and Faith in Action do not rely heavily on grant funding and therefore are not constrained in that aspect. NewBridges however is limited financially in what they can afford to implement from the funds they have. Rocktown Rallies relies at this time entirely on volunteers. Faith in Action can afford to be primarily funded by their members, but may eventually require more grants similar to the one they have now. The Peer Leadership Program is not constrained in what they offer by their grant, but needs the grant in order to stay functioning.

CWS's funding, including federal funding and grant-based funding, overall is very constraining. In order to create a new program, they must secure a grant, which then is subject to changes year to year. This makes it harder for them to develop new program and move to different domains based on need. However, as we see, CWS is still effective in ensuring that comprehensive programming is offered. NewBridges is limited only by a lack of funding, meaning that they cannot easily develop new programs. The nature of their referral services does not necessarily require large amounts of funding, so they are able to move easily throughout domains despite any funding constraints. Rocktown Rallies similarly is constrained only in a lack of funding, but does not necessarily need it and will move regardless throughout domains. Faith in Action is overall unconstrained both due to a secure budget and a lack of funding-needed projects. Finally, the Peer Leadership Program has small funding constraints, but does not generally rely on it for funding. They, regardless of funding, are able to move throughout domains. The funding constraints that organizations in Harrisonburg have inconclusive influences on how organizations aid in integration as while some groups that currently services across many domains have many constraints, others who have less restraints fail to move into other domains.

Table 2c. Harrisonburg: Funding Constraints

H3: Organizations that are less constrained by funding will be able to better aid refugees in integration.		
Church World Service	Constrained in funding; mandate requires specific action and further project implementation dependent on funding	Can not easily expand into other domains of integration
NewBridges	Constrained in funding; does not rely on grant funding, but is then limited in what is offered due to a lack of funds	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
Rocktown Rallies	Unconstrained in funding; relies mostly on volunteer basis; could experience funding limitations long-term with program expansion	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
Faith in Action	Unconstrained in funding; relies mostly on volunteer basis and member dues; could experience funding limitations long-term with program expansion	Can easily expand into other domains of integration
The Peer Leadership Program	Constrained in funding; funding is required to keep the program function, but does not determine what is implemented	Can easily expand into other domains of integration

### Overarching Trends

Overall, each of the organizations is working to aid the refugee population in integration in the most effective and useful ways they can. The organizations interviewed for this study represent a combination of organizations that work primarily to provide services to refugees and those that work to advocate for refugees and spread awareness among the broader community. Both of these aspects are important parts of integration. It requires effort on part of both the

refugees and the broader community. The situation in Harrisonburg has some challenges, but is overall very positive. Many of the individuals interviewed were realistic about the reality of being a refugee in the United States and the obstacles that these individuals must overcome, but were overall optimistic about the future of incoming refugees.

An important development throughout Harrisonburg has been the yard sign campaign that has now spread nationally. A local Harrisonburg church, Immanuel Mennonite, created the signs in the fall of 2016 to respond to the hateful rhetoric spreading throughout the country (Domonoske). The sign (pictured to the right) reads, “No matter where you are from, we’re glad you’re our neighbor,”



in Spanish, English, and Arabic. The signs have now spread across the nation, being found in Pennsylvania, Detroit, Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Canada (Domonoske). The signs aim not only to make refugees, immigrants, and migrants feel welcome, but also to show that there are many individuals who do not agree with the hateful rhetoric that has spread concerning foreign populations.

The refugee organizations present in Harrisonburg incorporate a variety of organizational structures and formalizations. Church World Service’s Refugee Resettlement Office is primarily a government organization. Though Church World Service International could be classified as a faith-based organization, the Refugee Resettlement Office in Harrisonburg is government contracted and therefore respondent primarily to the government. Out of the organizations interviewed, CWS has the most formal structure and the least flexibility. Faith in Action can be classified as a faith-based organization. They have a fairly informal structure and flexibility, but

are most responsive to the needs of their congregations. The Peer Leadership Program, though funded by an outside organization, can be seen as a refugee community organization (RCO) because their two main supervisors are refugees, as are all of the participants. Their focus on serving the expressed needs of the students creates an informal structure and greater flexibility. Lastly, NewBridges and Rocktown Rallies can be seen as local organizations. NewBridges has a more formal structure than Rocktown Rallies and focuses on providing direct support through referrals. Rocktown Rallies, on the other hand, is focused mainly on advocacy. They have an extremely informal structure and great flexibility.

The atmosphere of Harrisonburg is welcoming and supportive. The city really does embody the “Welcoming America” principles. While there will always be pushback in certain areas, especially in those that are typically homogeneous, many of the interviewees described the differences they have seen in community members’ and their attitudes towards refugees once they realize that the refugees are not quite so different from themselves in essence. Since Harrisonburg is a location of resettlement, it is an even greater benefit that the city is so welcoming. Incoming families can feel welcome to make Harrisonburg their home. This is increasingly important given the rhetoric that certain domestic politicians and also many right-wing European politicians have been employing. In a time where many figures in the media are calling for a ban on refugees entering their country, it is especially critical that refugees can feel welcomed and wanted in their new homes.

Each of the organizations interviewed demonstrated a commitment to connecting the refugee population with the broader population, to creating bottom-up programs and resources, and to using their funds as best they can to fit the needs. Each organization did these things in its own way and with its own levels of success. It is also important to note the level to which they

each demonstrated a commitment to working among other organizations in the area so that the optimal amount of services can be provided. Instead of competing with one another to provide the best of a particular service, they appeared to work together to ensure that all of the gaps were being filled. Each had a niche area that they could specialize in. While there are always improvements that can be made, overall the refugee organizations in Harrisonburg are working tirelessly to make the lives of refugees better.

## Discussion

The comparison of Malta to Harrisonburg, Virginia creates an interesting juxtaposition. Malta is a location where refugees initially arrive and gain their refugee status. Because of its proximity to the coast of Libya, it is easier and closer to access than Greece or Italy. Further, its membership in the European Union (E.U.) ensures that asylum seekers who gain refugee status in Malta can then move forward to other countries in Europe that are perceived to have more opportunities. Essentially, Malta is a place of first-arrival and is often a transitional location. It is estimated that only about thirty percent of the refugees who have arrived in Malta since 2002 have chosen to permanently settle there. The other seventy percent of refugees migrate on their own to another country in Europe or they are resettled through third-country resettlement programs (UNHCR Malta 2016). Harrisonburg, on the other hand, is mainly a resettlement location. While it could be an initial location for some immigrants coming from Central America, for refugees arriving from non-continental North or South American countries, it is a resettlement location—a permanent location, though individuals may choose to move elsewhere in the U.S. after arrival. This juxtaposition between Malta and Harrisonburg can also be seen as a continuum. Both positions are found in the journey of refugees. Upon fleeing, Malta is where refugees will receive their official status and protections. Harrisonburg is where refugees resettle permanently and begin to acclimate and integrate into their communities.

Given these differences, the nature of refugee services offered is also different, particularly for integration. For this discussion, I will first detail the organizational differences and similarities found in Malta and in Harrisonburg. I will discuss how the organizations from each location compared in terms of my hypotheses. I will also look at how the structures, goals, and formalization differ, as well as how integration objectives vary. I then will move into a

comparison of the perceptions and cultural acceptance of refugees found in Malta and in Harrisonburg. Finally, I will look at the bigger picture in terms of policy. I will discuss policy aimed at refugees in Malta and Harrisonburg and then expand the scope to the European Union and the United States. The policy discussion is particularly important in today's political climate. Both the European Union and the United States have had far right movements that are greatly opposed to the acceptance of refugees, with the U.S.'s movements having recent significant impacts on refugees. These movements likely will continue to change the current situation of many refugees worldwide.

## **Organizations**

In Malta, I interviewed five organizations including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Malta, International Organization for Migration (IOM) Malta, Kopin, Integra, and the Organization for Friendship and Diversity (OFD). In Harrisonburg, I also interviewed five organizations including Church World Service (CWS), NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, Faith in Action, and the Peer Leadership Program. In terms of structure, there were many similarities and variations between the Malta organizations and Harrisonburg organizations. The formalization and goals of the organizations appeared to vary more between the two locations. The nature of integration is different in Malta than in Harrisonburg and therefore the organizations' missions differ at their foundation.

In Malta, the organizations interviewed fall under the categories of government organizations, local organizations, and refugee community organizations (RCOs). UNHCR and IOM are considered governmental organizations—though it is important to note that they are



technically inter-governmental organizations. They, however, function similarly to government organizations and have comparable restrictions. Kopin and Integra are local organizations. They were founded in Malta and work to serve only in Malta. OFD and the Migrant Women Association of Malta (MWAM), which I did not formally interview, are RCOs as refugees (and migrants) formed them for their own community.

In Harrisonburg, the organizations I interviewed fall under the category of government organizations, local organizations, RCOs, and faith-based organizations. For this study I consider the refugee resettlement office of Church World Service to be a government organization. Church World Service on national and global levels is a faith-based organization; however, their involvement in Harrisonburg is limited to the activities of the refugee resettlement office. They are contracted by the U.S. government to provide very specific services that are entirely separated from their otherwise religious foundation. I classify them as a government organization because of their government contract. NewBridges and Rocktown Rallies are classified as local organizations. Both groups were founded and serve locally. Rocktown Rallies serves both the Harrisonburg community and functions as an advocate for the worldwide refugee community, while NewBridges primarily serves the Harrisonburg community. The Peer Leadership Program is a RCO. While it is funded by an outside organization, the program itself is supervised by refugees and exclusively serves the refugee population in the high school. Lastly, Faith in Action is a faith-based organization. Their member body consists of congregations from the community and they are motivated to serve by their religious background. Because Faith in Action is the only faith-based organization out of the ten groups I interviewed and because of their short time frame for working with refugees, I do not include them in my comparison tables. Faith in Action could be defined as a local organization as well, as they are doing advocacy work, similar to

Rocktown Rallies. However, because they are more responsive to the desires of their 19 member congregations, for example in choosing what services they will offer, then to the community needs, they do not compare directly to the other local organizations. Additionally, the short time frame in which Faith in Action is working with refugees limits the possible analysis. Throughout my study, these organizational structures revealed patterns within each of the three factors analyzed—community connections, adaptability, and funding restraints. Community connections are operationalized based on how organizations connect with refugees, how they connect refugees to others in the refugee community, and how they connect refugees to the broader community. The ability of organizations to tailor and adapt their programs are measured by the way in which organizations develop their programs, changed their programs after development, and how they utilize the feedback received from the refugee population they are serving. Finally, organizational funding constraints are operationalized through how organizations receive their funding and whether or not the funding has any particular restrictions or parameters associated with it. I use Ager and Strang's (2008) model of integration to measure how each organization facilitates integration.

### *Government Organizations*

Among the three types of organizations presented in these comparison tables (government, local, RCOs), the government organizations had the most similarity in function, the three measures (community connections, adaptability, and funding constraints), formalization, and goals. However, they had variability in the levels of integration that were facilitated. The three government organizations, UNHCR, IOM, and CWS, do not foster community connections in the same ways as the majority of the other organizations. UNHCR and IOM are technically inter-governmental organizations. This differentiation is obvious when comparing the two to

CWS in the more hands-off ways that they serve refugees. UNHCR and IOM are more broadly focused on the political climate, legislation, and advocacy on a national scale in Malta and also in the larger European Union context. CWS is concerned with advocacy and legislation, but more locally restricted to Harrisonburg. Each of these groups provides crucial services that are necessary at the beginning of a refugee's journey in these areas. UNHCR determines official refugee status and works with resettlement programs. IOM similarly has a large resettlement program—with many of their resettlements going to the United States. CWS primarily offers the “core” services to new arrivals. They provide apartments and an initial sum of money to help individuals afford groceries and transportation. They then help refugees secure employment and do a variety of other initial activities such as registering children for school. These services only are available for the first ninety days of a refugees' stay in the United States. Outside of these crucial services, UNHCR, IOM, and CWS each partner with other organizations to support programs and services for refugees. While the partner programs they each support are similar to community connections fostered by other types of organizations, their core services are distinct, but equally necessarily—if not more—than the services offered by other organizations.

In terms of adaptability, each of the organizations had relatively low levels of flexibility when it came to the core services they offered. Given their mandates, they are required to implement the programs and services their governing body orders and are restricted in the changes they can make. However, each group did convey the ways in which they change tactics depending on the population that they are dealing with. In Malta, a big change has been the route of arrival of refugees, shifting from boat arrivals to plane arrivals. This has forced UNHCR and IOM to change the ways they reach the population. For CWS, they are presented with drastically different challenges when delivering the core services based on education. With the incoming

Congolese population, who has mostly lived in camps for the past twenty years, there is a much larger learning curve during their initial arrival that CWS caseworkers must help refugees through.

Similarly, the mandate of government organizations means that their funding can only be spent in very specific ways. Neither UNHCR nor IOM appeared to have a lack of funding. Instead, they have larger budgets but they cannot utilize the money freely. Some of the funding does go to implementing the partner projects, but it is mostly directed to their main services. CWS also is able to put some funding toward their partner projects, but the vast majority of their funding is directed to providing their core services and cannot be funneled elsewhere. Their funding comes from both the federal and state level and receives a small amount from private donations. The state grants and private grants that CWS receives are funneled towards programs and partner projects, such as the bike riding course. CWS, unlike IOM and UNHCR, appears to have a much smaller budget and is much more limited in the extent that they could aid organizations. The difference in budget size reflects a distinction between a national organization and an inter-governmental organization. IOM and UNHCR are large conglomerates on the international stage and receive a different funding and donor base, while the U.S. government is only willing to provide the minimum funding to fulfill the services needed.

These organizations also overlapped in their formalization and in their goals. Formalization is characterized by how bureaucratic, flexible, innovative, and centralized an organization is (Jaskyte 2013). The governmental organizations are the most formal organizations that I interviewed. Again, this formalization is a result of their mandate. They are required to fulfill specific actions dictated by their governing bodies and therefore walk a fairly straight path. They spend more time working with government officials and policy. They tend to

act as one of the “leading” organizations in the area that others look to for guidance or expertise. Looking at the whole of refugee services, each UNHCR, IOM, and CWS offer the initial necessary services and then allows other organizations to step in. They focus on short-term integration. Among the three organizations, CWS fostered fairly high levels of integration, meeting three different levels, while UNHCR and IOM were not able to do the same. What is distinctly different between the three organizations, besides location, is the types of support they offer. CWS is very hands-on during the period of initial arrival and provides very comprehensive services, while UNHCR and IOM tend to be fairly hands-off. Here, the difference in scope may be the influential factor. UNHCR and IOM must spend more energy with legislation, policy, and advocacy because they function on a national scale in Malta. CWS, on the other hand, is only working on a regional scale in Harrisonburg and therefore is expected to provide more direct services.

Table 3a. Government Organizations

<b>Government Organizations</b>				
	<b>Community Connections</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>Funding Constraints</b>	<b>Integration</b>
<b>UNHCR</b>	Legislation; advocacy	Low; higher with tactics	High	Aids through foundational level
<b>IOM</b>	Legislation; advocacy; select programs	Low; higher with tactics	High	Aids through foundational and facilitator levels
<b>CWS</b>	Partner programs	Low with core services; high with partner programs	High	Aids through foundational, social connection, and markers and means levels

### *Local Organizations*

Between the three types of organizations, the local organizations (Kopin, Integra, NewBridges, and Rocktown Rallies) presented the most diversity in function, the three measures, formalization, and goals. Out of the three groups of organizations interviewed, the local organizations on average fostered the highest levels of integration. Each of the organizations works to fill a particular gap. In this way, it is especially helpful that their services do not overlap. Kopin and Integra are the most similar in function among the group. They offer services that will help refugees with long-term and short-term integration, such as English classes, support groups, and cultural orientation. NewBridges similarly fosters both short-term and long-term integration. They mostly work through referrals, serving as an information center for refugees and migrants to guide them toward the services they need. For example, if an immigrant or refugee needed assistance preparing for a citizenship test, NewBridges could refer to them to a local organization that provides free classes for citizenship tests. Rocktown Rallies works mostly towards advocacy and fundraising.

The local organizations have the most diversity in the types of community connections they make. Kopin and Integra foster connections through programs that aim specifically to integrate the local community and the refugee community. They work to build awareness on both sides and break down barriers between communities. NewBridges builds connections in a slightly different but equally important way. Through referrals they are connecting refugees to the agencies and organizations in the community that can fill their needs. They are bringing clients to these organizations and they are building awareness among the refugee and migrant population about what kind of services are available to them. Similarly, Rocktown Rallies works to break down those barriers between communities, but through advocacy. They mostly focus on

the broader community by motivating them to get involved and to volunteer and/or donate. They work to educate the community about the challenges and realities that refugees face in the area and globally. Though the types of community connections being forged by these organizations are varied, they each are fulfilling an important need in the refugee service spectrum. Among the three types of organizations, the local organizations have the highest level of community connections. This is likely a result of their bottom-up tactics. They are familiar with the local community and work to ensure that the services they offer refugees are the ones they see as helpful.

Each of the local organizations interviewed were highly adaptable in their programming and services. They expressed a philosophy of wanting to be entirely answerable to the population they were serving. Like the government organizations in Malta, Kopin and Integra have had to change some of their services and programs as the population has changed. NewBridges and Rocktown Rallies both develop their services and activities based on the needs communicated to them directly by the refugee population or by other organizations. CWS provides an important link for the Harrisonburg local organizations by identifying the population to be served and the services most needed. IOM and UNHCR serve a similar role in Malta by alerting the local organizations of current challenges and needs. Among the local organizations, there is significantly more variability in their funding constraints than in the other measures. Each of the groups had a smaller budget available, limiting what they can afford to do. Kopin, Integra, and Rocktown Rallies rely heavily on a volunteer basis. Integra expressed strong sentiment against using any kind of grant funding. They prefer to rely only on a volunteer basis. Rocktown Rallies is a younger organization and has thus far relied only on volunteers, but could in the future look to gain formal funding. Both of these organizations, while currently succeeding with their

volunteer corps, could risk instability in the future if there were significant volunteer fatigue. Kopin relies on a mixture of grants and volunteer work. The grants do limit somewhat the programs they can offer because if they are not able to renew a grant then the program would not continue. Similar to Integra and Rocktown Rallies, were there to be an issue with volunteers, Kopin would face difficulty. NewBridges has a smaller staff than all of the other organizations interviewed and relies on few volunteers; therefore it could face difficulty from an overall lack of manpower.

The four local organizations have varying levels of formalization and a variety of goals. Kopin and NewBridges are at a moderate level of formality. They each have physical offices where clients and partners visit, as well as work formally with a number of other organizations to host programs. They each have smaller grants that present some formal requirements. Integra and Rocktown Rallies are at a low level of formality. They have no hired staff and rely on word of mouth to help develop partner relationships and to determine needs. In terms of goals, the four organizations are more similar. Broadly, they aim to help refugees integrate into their communities and to build bridges between the two communities. Kopin works specifically with women and children refugees. Integra works broadly throughout the community. NewBridges focuses on migrants, immigrants, and refugees. Lastly, Rocktown Rallies is focused both locally and internationally. Out of the three groups of organizations interviewed, government, local, and RCOs, the local organizations forged the highest levels of integration. Considering the three identified factors, it seems that adaptability has the strongest link with most effectively aiding in integration, as every single local organization had high levels of adaptability. During interviews, each of these four organizations identified how important it was to ensure they were entirely and only answerable to the population they are serving. This dedication has allowed them to offer the



most useful services, to change the services when it is needed, and to subsequently aid most effectively in integration.

Table 3b. Local Organizations

<b>Local Organizations</b>				
	<b>Community Connections</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>Funding Constraints</b>	<b>Integration</b>
<b>Kopin</b>	Programs	High	High	Aids through facilitator, social connection, and marker and means levels
<b>Integra</b>	Programs	High	Medium	Aids through facilitator, social connection, and marker and means levels
<b>New Bridges</b>	Referral	High	Medium	Aids through foundational, social connection, and markers and means levels
<b>Rocktown Rallies</b>	Advocacy	High	Low	Aids through facilitator and social connection levels

*Refugee Community Organizations*

Among the organizations interviewed, the two refugee community organizations (RCOs) were the most similar in function. Both serve as a peer support group for teenage refugees. OFD works to change perspectives toward refugees in the local community. The Peer Leadership Program, on the other hand, is more directed internally at introducing the students to aspects and individuals in the community. Both groups work to build confidence and competence among the members. They aim at long-term integration through community building. Though the two programs are situated differently—outward looking and inward looking—they each foster strong connections with the community. More notable is that they foster connections that give the

refugee students more agency in deciding how they want to interact and the perceptions they want to encourage. Among the types of organizations, the RCOs foster the highest levels of integration, second to the local organizations.

The programs are entirely responsive to the needs and desires of the refugee teens, making them highly adaptable. The supervisors allow the students to steer the direction in order to ensure that the programs are effectively reaching their goals. This flexibility gives both programs grassroots foundations. OFD does not make any decisions without having a group discussion and creating a consensus among the teens. The Peer Leadership Program has more hands-on supervisors, but over the past year they have implemented large changes based on the feedback they received from the students. In terms of funding, neither program requires much funding. Their meetings are largely support-group style and any funding merely pays for snacks. The Peer Leadership program does pay its supervisors, while OFD relies entirely on a volunteer basis. Both programs face a moderate level of constraint in terms of funding. Without funding support, the host high school would no longer allow the Peer Leadership Program to exist, though the funding has a minimal impact on activities. Theoretically, the program could continue at the high school as a student run group, however without paid advisor support and translators, it is likely that the program would experience major restructuring. Similar to some of the local organizations, OFD could find itself limited by their volunteer reliance. OFD also at times has desired to host programs fostering connections with the broader community, but can face challenges in finding the funding. Similar to the Peer Leadership Program, OFD receives minimal funding from an outside source.

Both programs have low levels of formalization, however the Peer Leadership Program is more formal. At their monthly meetings they have guest speakers come in and are more

restricted in what they can do while at the meetings. Because the Peer Leadership Program is hosted through the school systems, everything that the program does must be school approved. This means that any kind of field trips or special activities would require prior parental approval. OFD meets more frequently and has more informal meetings that are focused on community building among the group. Some of the differences in formalization may be a result of cultural aspects. In the U.S., there is much more restriction on minors, especially when they are in a school setting. The supervisors are legally responsible during this time for watching over the students and if anything controversial were to happen, the school system would be at fault. Malta, on the other hand, tends to be a much more relaxed culture and gives more freedom to young adults. Overall, the two organizations have very similar goals. They aim to build community and support among the teen refugees, while introducing them to the broader community. Both aim to create long-term integration among the teens and primarily focus on building those social connections, which many of the other organizations failed to do. Similar to the local organizations, the adaptability and programming proved to be more influential on the levels of integration that were fostered. Their programs allow them to reach a variety of domains and the flexibility ensures that they can move easily throughout other domains and levels of integration as the need is presented.

Table 3c. Refugee Community Organizations

<b>Refugee Community Organizations</b>				
	<b>Community Connections</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>Funding Constraints</b>	<b>Integration</b>
<b>OFD</b>	Programs	High	Medium	Aids through social connection level
<b>The Peer Leadership</b>	Programs	High	Medium	Aids through facilitators, social connections, and

<b>Program</b>				markers and means
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## **Cultural Perceptions and Acceptance**

The levels of openness and acceptances of refugees in Malta and Harrisonburg are drastically different, with Malta much more closed and Harrisonburg much more welcome. To reiterate, some of these differences are likely the result of the stage of protection. In Malta, only about thirty percent of the refugee population that has arrived since 2002 has stayed (Bradford and Clark 2014). Citizens may assume that many refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants will not stay in Malta long and therefore are less inclined to create connections between the communities. In Harrisonburg, on the other hand, refugees do not have the option to resettle into another country, though they could move to another community. It is understood that newcomer refugees will eventually become citizens and therefore others may be more incentivized to form relationships. Creating a true comparison of perceptions between the two locations is hindered due to a lack of formal research in Harrisonburg. There is an abundant literature on refugee life in Malta, but none on refugee life in Harrisonburg specifically; there is more literature on the broader U.S. For Malta, I will rely on both established literature and my own research. In Harrisonburg, I will rely largely on my research.

Each of the individuals interviewed in Malta listed racism and xenophobia to be major challenges for refugees in Malta. Though many of the organizations attempt to create connections between the refugee community and the broader community, it appeared as if general citizens of Malta have little interest in creating relationships with refugees. There is an unfound fear that refugees may be stealing jobs (Skov 2016). Interviewees also described

stubbornness among Maltese to hold on to what makes them distinctly “Maltese”—something that it is believed that refugees cannot assimilate into. Many explained common misunderstandings of refugees by Maltese people. There are assumptions that incoming refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants do not want to integrate; rather they want only to form communities among individuals from their home countries. Each of the interviewees also listed Islamophobia as a huge challenge in Malta. While the island-state has around 350 churches (with about ninety-nine percent Catholic), there is not a single Mosque. One church in Msida has allowed Muslims to hold their Friday prayers in the square in front of the church. In July 2016, a group called the Maltese Patriots (“Ghaqda Patrijotti Maltin” in Maltese) protested the presence of the Muslim prayers by handing out pork at the village square (Malta Today). This demonstration confirms the anti-Islam feelings that some Maltese citizens have.

According to a survey done by the European Network Against Racism in 2009, 66 percent of Africans in Malta reported having experienced discrimination while in Malta. 52 percent of those surveyed said they believed racism to be widespread in Malta (Bradford and Clark 2014, p. 12). Among the other countries in the EU surveyed for the study, Malta scored the highest for rates of discrimination (Bradford and Clark 2014). These levels do not fare well for the ability and confidence of refugees to integrate into the community. Spiteri (2015) finds while interviewing refugees and migrants at a vocational college in Malta that many feel insecure in their relationships with other students. Some students interviewed voiced fears that others may be kind to their face, but may voice negative comments about their race, religion, or ethnicity behind their backs (Spiteri 2015, p. 161). This finding conveys that even after relationships are formed, there is still a remaining feeling of being an outsider.

In a similar study, Spiteri (2012) surveyed young male asylum seekers in Malta on their evolving identities. Spiteri (2012) found that young asylum seekers often feel as if they are navigating two cultures, not completely fitting into one or another. They have confidence in where they came from and why they left, but are unsure about where they are going. Many also identified a willingness and openness to adapt to their new surroundings, despite the assumptions that many Maltese may have (Spiteri 2012, p. 377). It is possible that the unwelcoming culture that refugees find pushes them towards moving onward from Malta. While a lack of economic opportunities and physical space may also motivate refugees to move, Skov (2016) finds that a lack of opportunity for personal growth and social connections more often motivate refugees to leave Malta. While refugees acknowledge that they have found a safer life in Malta, they also reported that this was not quite enough (Skov 2016, p. 71). They longed for more opportunities to better themselves—to learn the language, to gain an education, and to form a social basis. Finding an absence of this, many will attempt to move onward to other European countries, though many are subsequently returned to Malta by immigration officials (Skov 2016). Overall, there is a lack of feelings of acceptance and comfort by refugees.

In Harrisonburg, there are much higher levels of acceptance and welcoming of refugees, immigrants, and migrants. In Harrisonburg, “The Friendly City,” the neighborhood signs are found scattered about saying “No matter where you are from, we’re glad you are our neighbor,” (Domonoske 2016). In many ways Harrisonburg can be seen as a “model of international coexistence,” with the school systems exemplifying this (Perrine 2017). With 46 countries represented among the student body, the Harrisonburg City School System works to not only support all students, but to also ensure that they are celebrated and equally a part of the community. After President Trump’s executive order banning immigration from particular

Muslim-majority countries, hundreds of protestors took to downtown Harrisonburg (Silvers 2017). This support directly contrasts the anti-Muslim protests that have taken place in Malta.

The misunderstandings given by the interviewees in Harrisonburg differed greatly to those found in Malta. The only similar misunderstanding was in regards to economics, with the assumption that refugees are there to drain resources and steal jobs. Otherwise, many of the misunderstandings listed are much more complex. Interviewees argued that they believed that many underestimated the trauma that refugees experience and the strength and resilience it takes to leave. They believe there is a lack of understanding about the legality of refugees—the protections that it provides and the pathways to citizenship that refugees are given. They argued that many did not understand how complex these refugee populations are, in that though refugees may come from similar countries, they may have lived in very different communities and had vastly different experiences. Finally, an interviewee said that they felt as if many people did not realize how many similarities they truly had with refugees—that at the end of the day, people are people. The misunderstandings and myths in Malta are very much focused on the surface level—believing individuals do not want to integrate or join the community—while those in Harrisonburg are focused at deeper, more individualistic factors—such as trauma, strength, and resilience.

As Perrine argued in the *Washington Post*, Harrisonburg, with its acceptance and welcoming, seems to be an anomaly compared to the rhetoric found in current U.S. politics regarding refugees and immigrants. According to a study by the Brookings Institute, Harrisonburg was the ninth city to be most affected by President Trump’s executive order (Berube 2017). Many of the cities listed ahead of Harrisonburg also have major resettlement offices. If these other cities have similar levels of diversity as a result of their resettlement

offices, would it be possible that they have similar levels of integration and peace among communities? Or is there something that makes Harrisonburg unique? The current political rhetoric would suggest that there are not similar levels of acceptance in other areas. However, the legitimacy of the claims being made by political figures in regards to refugees and immigrants could also be a factor. In Malta, the levels of acceptance and welcome seem to reflect the broader political rhetoric found throughout the European Union. Both have a more negative position.

### **Broader Contexts: The European Union and the United States**

Malta is unique in the European Union (EU), as it is the smallest member country with the highest population density. However, it is not unique in the presence of refugees. Throughout 2015, over one million refugees fled to Europe, with half arriving from Syria (Greenhill 2015, p. 317). This is of course not Europe's first major influx of refugees, however the crisis has persisted longer and stronger than others and has created an increasingly uneven burden among EU member states (Brenke 2015, p. 514). Comparing what an "even distribution" of refugees would be based on population density and economy size, Sweden, Germany, Hungary, Austria, Malta, and Cyprus received far more refugees than would be equitable (Brenke 2015, p. 513). Larger countries with booming economies, such as the United Kingdom and France, however have accepted far fewer refugees than equitable (Brenke 2015, p. 513). Within the EU, there seems to be extensive burden shifting. The overall rhetoric employed throughout European politics seems to have a very negative viewpoint on the presence of refugees in their states.

It appeared originally that Germany would lead the EU by exemplifying the commitment states should make to refugees. In 2015, Angela Merkel pledged that Germany would accept one



million refugees, with the thought that this action would incite other states to do the same (Greenhill 2016, p. 326). Others did not seem to be motivated however. A year after Merkel's pledge, public opinion in Germany was divided on the issue. Subsequently, Merkel and her party, the Christian Democratic Party, felt the discontent of many when they failed to gain reelection in two out of three German states (Greenhill 2016, p. 326). Many right-wing politicians and anti-refugee vocalists have employed a security discourse in order to persuade the public that they ought not to welcome refugees. The security discourse revolves around sovereignty—states are entitled to and responsible for protecting their own state and their citizens above all else (Biondi 2016, p. 211). These outside threats that refugees supposedly pose could be aimed at a country's economic, social, and cultural dynamics and their overall stability (Biondi 2016, p. 211). Throughout Europe, some of the discourse has invoked ideas that refugees would hurt the economy by requiring resources and support. However, of course in reality they could also bring benefits to the economy by participating in the workforce and boosting sales in many different sectors. Culturally, it has been argued that refugees will refuse to adapt and will contribute to an overall loss of culture among the host state. This comes with the assumption that refugees do not want to integrate. Refugees may feel a strong desire to maintain language, religion, and cultural practices, however these at times can clash with local practices, heightening tension between groups. The terrorist attacks that have occurred throughout Europe within the past couple of years have only heightened fears regarding refugees (Biondi 2016).

These fears have been influenced by the political rhetoric. Former British Prime Minister, David Cameron, spoke of the refugees in a way that “invoked insects when he warned of a ‘swarm’ of ‘illegal migrants’ invading Europe,” (Greenhill 2016, p. 318). The Hungarian Prime Minister, Viktor Orbán, said that the incoming refugees “look like an army,” while Swedish

Democrats leader, Jimmie Åkesson, claimed, “Islamism is the Nazism and Communism of our time” (Greenhill 2016, p. 318). This kind of language not only decreases feelings of welcome and acceptance among refugees, but it also could create a fear that they are going to be further prosecuted for their status as a refugee. Further, it creates a fear among the general public, lessening their desire to accept refugees. The handful of terrorist attacks that have occurred throughout Europe over the past year and a half, including the Paris attacks and more recently the Berlin Christmas market attack, do not help to quell fears among the general public. While the percentage of incoming refugees who would attempt to commit terrorist attacks is extremely marginal, the slightest risk puts the public at alarm.

Often coupled with anti-refugee and immigration are right-wing nationalist movements throughout Europe. These movements and politicians have gained momentum in Sweden, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, and most notably the United Kingdom (Shuster 2016). The U.K.’s Brexit was partially influenced by anti-immigrant rhetoric employed by the U.K. Independence Party, which has argued for the need to shut down borders (Shuster 2016). There has been little positive progress in regards to the refugee crisis in Europe. The perceptions found in Malta appear to differ very little from those found throughout the European Union. Neither is particularly content with the large refugee presence. It is important to note, however, that Malta has experienced a large refugee influx since 2002, meaning that they have now begun to transition to more of a management framework than an emergency framework when it comes to refugees. Many of the Maltese individuals interviewed echoed this sentiment. It is now critical that the European Union makes a similar shift in their management of refugee flows.

In the United States, there has been similar rhetoric dominating politics and media. However, what is different is that the U.S. is not feeling any of the immediate burdens as Europe

with the sudden influx of refugees. The U.S. is able to heavily vet and select which refugees enter the country, whereas Europe has little control over if asylum seekers enter and further where asylum seekers go if they are denied refugee status. Instead, the U.S. is in the position to decrease, maintain, or increase the numbers of refugees accepted, without having to manage flows of individuals fleeing directly into the country. Under the Obama administration, the U.S. admitted 84,995 refugees within the 2016 fiscal year—the highest number admitted during Obama’s presidency (Krogstad and Radford 2017). Between 2015 and 2016, the U.S. increased the number of refugees accepted by 15,000 people (Eilperin 2016). The resettlement office in Harrisonburg felt this increase in accepted refugees. While they typically resettle around 150 refugees per year, they resettled 250 refugees during 2016. For 2017, the Obama administration set a goal of admitting 110,000 refugees and the U.S. had been on pace to reach this goal if President Trump’s executive order on immigration has not been implemented—though it has now been repealed (Krogstad and Radford 2017).

During the 2016 presidential election, Trump utilized an anti-immigration and refugee platform. He also evoked a security discourse, arguing that the presence of these groups of individuals threaten state. He frequently connected Muslim refugees with terrorism and ISIS and also often claimed immigrants and “illegals” are stealing jobs from American citizens. As Trump is a prominent figure in U.S. politics, his views are constantly broadcasted in the media. Six days after President Trump’s inauguration, he issued the executive order: “Protecting the nation from foreign terrorist entry into the United States,” (The White House). The order denied entry of any citizens of seven Muslim-majority countries, including Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen (Stack 2017). It also halted all refugee resettlement programs for 120 days and declared that no Syrian refugees were to be admitted at any time (The White House). He

recommended that if after the 120 days had passed and it was judged acceptable to receive refugees, then only up to 50,000 resettlements could be permitted within the 2017 year (The White House).

In response to the order, there were protests across the U.S., with many occurring at international airports such as in Boston, New York City, and Charlotte (Dwyer 2017). Globally, the order received plenty of backlash. The U.K. and Germany condemned it, and it received harsher backlash from the seven countries targeted by the order (Dwyer 2017). Officials in both Iraq and Iran were reported saying that Americans similarly ought to be banned in their own countries (Dwyer 2017). The acting attorney general, Sally Yates, condemned the order by calling it unlawful in a letter written to the Justice Department (Shear et al. 2017). Yates was promptly fired by President Trump and thus replaced. The order was subsequently frozen after a federal New York judge issued a stay on the order, temporarily blocking it (Peters and Dwyer 2017). On February 9<sup>th</sup>, less than two weeks from when the order was issued, a federal appeals panel voted 3-0 to maintain the freeze on the executive order (Zapotosky 2017). With all of these incidents happening only a month into the Trump administration, the next few years do not appear to have positive developments in store for refugees. What is more positive however is the strong reaction many Americans had during the ban. Through social media and through protests, many demonstrated that they did not agree with the order and that they were dedicated to protecting these populations.

It is important to consider though that there are many representatives in American politics that strongly disagree with the rhetoric and recent actions taken against refugees and immigrants. The same can be said for representatives throughout the European Union. In both cases, those politicians and prominent figures who are anti-refugee and immigration may not be the majority,

but instead could simply be the ones who are the loudest and receiving the most media attention. Malta, as a nation, seems to have similar feelings towards refugees as have been expressed by those loudest throughout the European Union. The organizations present in Malta however are working diligently to combat these negative outlooks and to bridge the gap between the two groups. Harrisonburg, overall, seems to be at drastic odds with the larger rhetoric being employed throughout the U.S. Both the general Harrisonburg community and the refugee organizations present in Harrisonburg have demonstrated a dedication to welcoming and accepting refugees.

## Conclusion

The current refugee crisis is not the worst, nor the first or the last crisis the world will experience with refugees. Even calling the current refugee flows a “crisis” reflects heavy western bias—as the global south hosts the vast majority of refugees, while the global north, with the large concentration of political and economic power, does much less to benefit the refugee regime globally. It is important to acknowledge that this “crisis” is far from a new phenomenon to many host countries throughout the world. This study focused on how two different western countries, Malta and the United States, work to integrate their refugees. For this study, I interviewed a total of ten organizations between May and November 2016 that serve refugees in some capacity. In Malta, I interviewed UNHCR, IOM, Kopin, Integra, and the Organization for Friendship and Diversity. Within the United States, I specifically studied Harrisonburg, Virginia and interviewed Church World Service, NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, Faith in Action, and the Peer Leadership Program there. The organizations varied between government organizations, local organizations, refugee community organizations, and faith-based organizations.

Among the organizations, there was no clear indicator of “success.” For this study, I defined success as aiding refugees to integrate into their new communities, utilizing Anger and Strang’s (2008) measures of integration, including foundations, facilitators, social connections, and means and markers. I found that each of the organizations contributes in a meaningful way to the overall refugee regime, providing different and equally important services. However, I found that local organizations were able to most effectively aid in integration as they were able to cover the most levels of integration, through Ager and Strang’s (2008) model. Out of the three factors I studied, community connections, adaptability, and funding constraints, levels of

community connections and adaptability demonstrated the most influence of aiding in integration between the two cases.

Malta is typically a transitory location for refugees, with only about 30 percent of the refugees who have arrived since 2002 remaining in the country (UNHCR). Malta's membership in the European Union (E.U.) coupled with its proximity and accessibility from North Africa and the Middle East makes it a desired location for asylum seekers. However, the general perception of Maltese towards refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants tends to be very negative, with high racism and Islamophobia. With a high population density and a cultural aversion of anything that threatens what is considered to be "Maltese," the Maltese are generally not in favor of the presence of foreigners. Similar trends can be found throughout the European Union. Far right movements within many powerful countries within the E.U., such as the United Kingdom, have spoken out against the acceptance of refugees, often evoking a security discourse. Popular media has spread the idea that hosting refugees is a threat to the security of nations and could create paths for terrorists to enter countries and perpetrate violence. However, this is only one perspective within the global refugee regime. The organizations that I interviewed in Malta were working not only to combat trends such as Islamophobia and xenophobia, but are also working to aid refugees in every aspect of integration. UNHCR and IOM were the most formal and hands-off organizations of those in Malta. They broadly work within advocacy and legislation, handling the formal declaration of refugee status and of third country resettlement. Kopin and Integra are local organizations that revolve entirely around the needs expressed by refugees in Malta. Finally, the Organization of Friendship and Diversity is a refugee community organization that provides a support group for refugees.

In Harrisonburg, the general public has much more positive views of refugees. Harrisonburg is primarily a location of third-country resettlement. All of the refugees that enter are thoroughly vetted and are typically assigned an area based on other connections, such as a large population of refugees from the same country or family ties. The city of Harrisonburg has proved to be open to the presence of refugees but also dedicated to ensuring that refugees feel welcome and wanted. This stands in contrast to the trends seen throughout United States politics currently. Similarly to the E.U., the U.S. has had far right movements that have utilized the security discourse to argue against the acceptance of refugees. Since President Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2017, significant steps have already been taken to hinder the entrance of refugees into the country. President's Trump travel ban originally banned the entrance of individuals, refugees and others, from seven Muslim majority countries and barred the acceptance of all refugees for at least 120 days—with a permanent ban on Syrian refugees. The ban was subsequently ruled unconstitutional, however, President Trump signed another ban following the ruling that was identical except in that it removed Iraq from the ban, putting the ban on a total of six countries instead of seven, allows individuals who already hold green cards from those countries to enter, and removes the indefinite ban on Syrian refugees. For the time being, the U.S. will not be taking any more refugees, with the exception of those already approved, unless the ban is overruled. Despite these negative developments, the organizations I interviewed in Harrisonburg have positively contributed to the refugee regime within the United States. Church World Service, though limited in what it can do, ensures all refugees receive initial services that the government provides, as well as partners with other organizations to provide meaningful programs based on refugee needs. NewBridges, Rocktown Rallies, and Faith in Action work locally to discover what the refugee needs are and how they can be best met



within the community. Finally, the Peer Leadership Program serves as a support group for high school aged refugee students.

## **Findings**

Among the organizations interviewed, there was pattern in how the different types of organizations measured in community connections, adaptability, and funding constraints. The government organizations tend to form community connections in more formal ways, through legislature and advocacy. While they have less direct interaction with the communities through programing, they provide important links to the other organizations by helping to identify the community and general needs. Due to their formal mandates, they each demonstrated low levels of flexibility. Similarly, they had high levels of funding constraints. Both of these findings are a result of functions—because they fulfill a critical role in declaring refugee status and resettlement, they have strict guidelines for how things can be done. The local organizations fostered community connections through programs, referrals, and advocacy and had higher levels of consistent interactions with the refugee community. They each demonstrated high levels of adaptability, showing a dedication to serving the population as they need. There was a variety of funding constraints present within the local organizations. Many of these organizations benefit from a heavy volunteer presence, but have fairly low operational budgets. The refugee community organizations forge community connections through programming, including teen support groups. They had high adaptability and medium levels of funding constraints. They also benefit from volunteers and have low operational budgets, but do not necessarily require a large amount of funding.

Table 4a. Findings

		<b>Community Connections</b>	<b>Adaptability</b>	<b>Funding Constraints</b>	<b>Integration</b>
<b>Government Organizations</b>	<b>UNHCR</b>	Legislation; advocacy	Low; higher with tactics	High	Aids through foundational level
	<b>IOM</b>	Legislation; advocacy; select programs	Low; higher with tactics	High	Aids through foundational and facilitator levels
	<b>CWS</b>	Partner programs	Low with core services; high with partner programs	High	Aids through foundational, social connection, and markers and means levels
<b>Local Organizations</b>	<b>Kopin</b>	Programs	High	High	Aids through facilitator, social connection, and marker and means levels
	<b>Integra</b>	Programs	High	Medium	Aids through facilitator, social connection, and marker and means levels
	<b>New Bridges</b>	Referral	High	Medium	Aids through foundational, social connection, and markers and means levels
	<b>Rocktown Rallies</b>	Advocacy	High	Low	Aids through facilitator and social connection levels
<b>Refugee Community Organizations</b>	<b>OFD</b>	Programs	High	Medium	Aids through social connection level

	<b>The Peer Leadership Program</b>	Programs	High	Medium	Aids through facilitators, social connections, and markers and means
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This study was limited in that it is difficult to make a true comparison between organizations due to the high levels of variance in function. Each organization fills a certain niche in refugee services and has fairly unique framework and programming. While this is beneficial to the overall refugee regime because it ensures that all bases are being covered, it creates a barrier in directly comparing the organizations. Another challenge is the innate differences between Malta and Harrisonburg. As an initial arrival location, Malta faces inherently different challenges than Harrisonburg where refugees are being resettled permanently. This means that the services offered by organizations in these locations are geared towards different phases of integration. In Malta, the focus tends to be on short-term integration, while Harrisonburg focuses on long-term integration. Defining a clear measure of success by organizations in aiding integration was also a challenge throughout this study. Levels of integration are subjective and can vary greatly between individuals, making it difficult to evaluate on a large scale how effective an organization's efforts are. Without interviewing the refugees that these organizations served, the study only has an external view of how effective integration efforts are. However, for this study, access to refugees to conduct interviews was infeasible.

For future research, interviewing both organizations and the refugees they serve to determine how effective integration aid is would be significant for the overall refugee regime and

the individual organizations. It would demonstrate the degree to which organizations are actually being successful in their efforts, as well as reveal crucial gaps in services and ensure organizations are receiving feedback from the organizations they are serving. Another avenue for future research would be to conduct a study on general perceptions of refugees by the broader community, in order to determine ways in which the most positive perceptions can be fostered among the community and to identify areas that organizations could further aid refugees. Given Harrisonburg's seemingly unique friendly outlook on refugees—compared to the general rhetoric in the United States—compared to Malta's overall displeasure towards refugees, identifying the factors that lead communities to be more open or closed could help organizations and communities to increase the openness over time.

I recommend that organizations that serve refugees, particularly those that are working specifically at integration, encourage community connections and have high levels of adaptability. The organizations I interviewed that I believed were most successful in aiding were committed to being primarily answerable to the refugees. By using this bottom-up method of development, programs are created and changed to reflect what is needed at that time. Combined with these methods, organizations should be working to forge bonds between different communities. Doing so will help the refugees themselves become not only integrated, but also engaged citizens of their new society. This is where walls are broken down and perceptions are changed. Overall, the organizations working to aid refugees in Malta and in Harrisonburg demonstrate hope and positivity for the future of refugees, despite the increasingly negative perceptions that are found throughout the media and certain politics. At this time, it is crucial that organizations and communities come together to ensure that refugees feel welcome and wanted.

It is unlikely there will ever come a time where there are not refugees; therefore it is vital to find a solution rather than to keep calling it a problem.

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